

Forsake not the work of thine own hands (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 00] I desire your attention to Psalm 138, and the last clause of the psalm.

Psalm 138, verse 8, and the last clause. Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

The eighth verse reads, The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever.

Forsake not the works of thine own hands. It is suggested by these words that there was a fear in the heart of David that the Lord would forsake the works of thine own hands, as if he would withdraw and take away that which he had rooted and grounded in his very soul.

What a cry. Is it something strange, or is it indeed as new today as it was in David's time when he prayed this prayer?

[1 : 42] Was it only known by the saints of God in the times when the scriptures were being recorded? Or is it so now?

And is the temptation there, like it must have been with David, which caused him to cry, Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

I don't know how many people today would understand the language. I was talking to a dear friend yesterday. I went up to Harpington home to read and pray.

And I came across a friend I didn't expect to see there. And he said, you know, when you look at the state of our chapels, and I use his words, not mine, he said there's not many of us left.

And I thought about that. It came to me when I was in the house of God, Forsake not the works of thine own hands. That if we are among a people whom God has begun to teach, and begun to lead, and begun to guide, he has, in the commencement of it all, this may seem a strange thing to say, when the Lord puts his hand to your soul and mine, he begins to bless.

[3 : 08] And you say, well, I don't feel like that. Well, if you can only see that it is better to be under a gracious teacher than to be left to go your way and perish in your sins, you'll see then that the works of thine own hands is the beginning of blessings.

But dear David here thought that the Lord wouldn't forsake those works. A strange temptation for a child of God, you say?

Not so. Just the same today as it was then. We used to have a hymn, used to be recited at one of our Sunday school anniversaries, and it used to end like this, that God that ruled in David's day is just the same today.

And so is the pathway of the people of God. I seem forsaken and alone. I hear the lion roar, and every door is shut but one.

And that is the mercy's door. I never forgot that time when the Lord spoke back. I could take you to the place, the spot of ground. I was going to preach. What does it mean then?

- [4 : 25] What is this temptation? What is this trial? Will he do such a thing? We know he hides his face. Sadly, we don't say that carelessly.
- And I believe sometimes every purpose why he does it. Because we're such sinners. Shall guilty man complain? Shall sinful dust repine?
- And what is all our pain? How am I compared with thine? Finish, dear Lord. What is begun? Choose thou the way, but still lead on. Now you say, why did you read the 23rd of Job?
- I read it because of this. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him.
- There's no forsaken there. I suppose Job had every reason to feel in the dark, distressed, troubled.
- [5 : 24] There's no one I ever knew that walked a pathway as Job walked. No one. But it was faith that said, he knoweth the way that I take.
- When he hath tried me, when the trial is finished, I shall come forth as goal. But he had a perfect view of the Lord's work. Perfect view.
- We often quote those words in the first chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, where Paul says, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.
- He was writing to the church at Philippi. He wasn't speaking of his own soul. But he had a confidence in that the church of Christ at Philippi was taught of the Lord and that God would perform in those, the church of Christ and complete that work.
- But here is Job in a good place really. He performed it. The thing that is appointed for me and many such things are with him. And so it would be said by David, though he said, forsake not the works of thine own hands.
- [6 : 43] There is, we used to sing this sometimes, there is an overrule in providence that marshals every circumstance and over every work of grace is the hand of the faithful God who will begin, who will maintain, and who will bring to a glorious fruition that grace in the soul.
- Forsake not the works of thine own hands. It is in the plural. All those things which the Lord works in the soul by his grace.
- That is why if you watch these hymns tonight, they are hymns which speak of continuing. Not that we can continue, but the continuing of the Lord's work and the desire to see it continue.
- Unchangeable, unchangeable his will. Whatever be my frame, his loving heart is still eternally the same. My soul through many changes go, his love.
- No variation, no. Thou, Lord, wilt carry on and perfectly perform the work thou hast begun in me, a sinful worm. Mids all my fear and sin and woe, thy spirit will not let me go.
- [8 : 14] Sometimes I feel that we narrow down our words to perhaps those in the early part of the way.
- Perhaps we might be guilty of narrowing down our words to those that have been a long time in the way. But this is a word for all that are under grace.
- Wherever you are, however you are. Early in the way, in the midst of the way, no one knows. really, how long the work of grace and God's goodness and mercy to his people shall be.
- Sometimes it's a short work. I went to the grave many, many years ago of a man who was 25. And when they held that funeral address in the chapel at the dicker, dear Mr. Tyler said, this man's never been young.

Never been young. And I knew what he meant. But it was finished. Took him to glory. Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

[9 : 32] Whether you've been in the way a long time, or whether you are in the midst of the way now, or whether it is, shall we say, in those early days of teaching, the Lord's work.

The Lord's works. When he puts his hand then to it, will he remove it? Will he say the character is too far gone, too deep in sin?

Will he say that there's nothing there that will be of any profit or benefit to the church of Christ? Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

It's a sovereign work, my friends. Would you have chosen Saul of Tarsus? You could, on today's judgment, on Saul of Tarsus, you could have indeed concluded that he was guilty of murder.

Because he assented, gave his assent, agreement, to the death of the people of God. A man who harassed and troubled the church of Christ.

[10 : 43] doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman, you still receive the same treatment. Divine sovereignty in the councils of eternity.

the name of Saul of Tarsus was added to that number which no one can number. It's a sake not the works of thine own hands.

There's not a power in hell that can overcome this work, let alone any power within you and I. And God never changes his mind. And another thing, his blessings and his mercies are without repentance.

What does that mean, you say? The Lord never repents of the mercies and the blessings that he bestows upon his blood washed people. But this temptation, this dark time, this time of harassment to the soul and to the spirit, forsake not the works of thine own hands.

It may seem to be sometimes as if the Lord has given you up to your sin. And in those dark seasons, spiritually I'm talking about, it would seem as if they were going to be, to gain the ascendancy.

[12 : 14] And that the enemy of your soul is going to rejoice in hell over a lost sinner. But you know if one's insecure in the church of Christ, then all are insecure. But they are bound up with the cause of love and are bound in that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure and that covenant is sealed.

And it's sealed with Christ's precious blood. But the works must continue work day by day, week by week, month by month, we change years.

The works of the Lord continue. Having called his people by invincible grace, he will continue to work. For sake not the works of thine own hands.

Go back a couple of Sundays to that word in Luke concerning the prodigal.

forsake not the works of thine own hands. If sin could be the cause of the forsaking of the works of thine own hands, surely there was a character who deserved, and he knew himself he didn't deserve to be a son.

[13 : 35] In his meditation on the sad state he was, he said, make me as one of thine hired servants. There's some lovely things in that parable, you know.

It comes back so sweet, so sweet to my soul, when he was yet a great whale, his father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and he forsook him, and he took his love away, and he said, it's enough.

The older son, stability, never moved out of his father's house, always did as he was told, work for his father, this younger son, with wayward minds and wayward feet, spent his substance in riotous living, write him off, as a cumberer to the ground, you say, not so, not so, once a son, always a son, forsake not the works of thine own hands, he loved him when he went away, and he loved him when he came back, he loved him when he was dressed in respectable clothes, when he came back as a prodigal, as a beggar, without shoes on his feet, without food, and decent clothing, came back wretched, undone, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, was lost, and he failed, but he loved him just the same, forsake not, you know, once the

Lord's people, once the people of God are the subjects of his grace, they're always the subjects of his mercy, just think this, meditate on this for a minute, the poet says, he saw me ruined in the fall, yet loved me not withstanding all, just consider this for a moment, and you that look back on times of when he was walking the broad way to destruction, when he was as far from God as he was possible to be, when you didn't want anything to do with him, and religion, and Sabbath keeping, and Bible reading, and worship of his great and holy name, well it was for others, you think of those dark, dead days, and then think of this, what eye was upon you, but the eye of almighty God, there's a hymn there,

I seem to be always quoting hymns, but it's how I trust I can say this before the Lord, against the God who rules the sky, I fought with hand uplifted high, despised the mention of his grace, too proud to seek a hiding place, but thus the eternal counsel ran, almighty love, arrest that man, I felt the arrows of distress, found I had no hiding place, I believe there's something very wonderful, you know, when you can contemplate consider in your mind, think back on those days, where you went to, what you did, whose company you kept, and the Lord's eye was upon you, he didn't, perhaps he did, but in effect, perhaps it was like this, when Elijah was running from

[17 : 25] Jezebel, it was as if the Lord said as he did to him, what doest thou here, the Lord's eye was upon his, that's very wonderful to think, you know, when you didn't think of him, he thought of you, when you had no time for God or godliness, and the fill of this world was all that it was, yet the eye of mercy and compassion thus far, and no further, and that's when he began to teach, and to lead, and to guide you into truth that you once saw no beauty or goodness or anything, to shake not the works of thine own hands, oh, this temptation is not for David only, not for Job only, or those who fear the Lord are in this temptation, only those who fear the Lord, only those, but then someone might say, how do we know it's the work of thine own hands, how do we know that it's not just strict

Baptist upbringing, coming to the chapel, how do we know it's not something that we've grown to get used to, we knew the language, and so on and so forth, I'm sure of this, you know, whatever upbringing you had, it never taught you the painful pathway of a sinner, you can't learn that in hymns, or going to chapel, you can't learn that at your father and mother's table, or at the reading of the word of God or the daily worship, it's something that's worked within, not worked without, religion, real religion's law and notion, something must be known and felt, and real religion is God's work, and it is his work that's found in the soul, it's his beginning, sin, when he will bring you to see, to feel, and to acknowledge before him, your standing as a sinner, forsake not the work of thine own hands, perhaps it might be right just to remind you what goes before, thy mercy, oh Lord, endureth forever, and it's only his mercy, and his goodness, his kindness, his compassion, and his love, that ever began to teach a sinner or anything of themselves, let alone those things of Jesus

Christ. I said it was a word for all who fear the Lord, whatever your state or case may be, let's just go on a step or two, to those dear souls who can look back, seasons of blessing, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, you get in the company of godly people, you know, and without any boast, or any evidence of pride upon the spirit, it may be that something prompts your thoughts and meditations, and it takes you back to those seasons and times when it was good for your soul.

When you have in this pulpit this year, Gary Tenbrook from Sheboygan, the first time I met him was in the study of Mr.

Ramsbottom's house, house, and I didn't know him from anybody. We went to that study to talk. It wasn't long, you know, before the Lord united our hearts in the things of God, and I'm not ashamed to say we both sat there and wept over the goodness of the Lord and those things which were done and which he is the author of as well as the finisher.

[21 : 58] I'm not ashamed to say that. We wept together over the things of God. But do you always live in those times? Do you always live in those comfortable times of refreshing, those times of the Lord's nearness and his sweetness to you and his love that flowed into your hearts?

Do you always live in those times when you could as a moment bring back to your thoughts and to your affections, the blessings of his grace, or is it sometimes hidden?

Hidden. Sometimes you hear these dear old people say, I can remember this word but the sweetness of it's gone. The sweetness of it's gone.

The Lord spoke to me on such an occasion as that and oh it did me good but the sweetness of it is gone. You can't bring that back. Though your memory might be good enough to remember the word of the Lord.

And to those dear souls who can look back on those seasons of blessing and perhaps now have gone on a journey as it were with hard hearts, consciences that seem to be lulled to sleep.

[23 : 19] And as to those blessings that they knew, well, oh the Lord stir up your memory. Thou shalt remember all the way. And you'll say, oh I do remember that word, that's from a bell that has.

Oh it took me back so many years when that word was preached from or something like that. And surely that's the time when you say, forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Restore unto me. Do you remember that word? in the 51st psalm, David had sinned. And he was brought back to repentance.

Confession, lovely psalm. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. He couldn't say to the Lord, restore unto me that salvation because it was never took away.

And it could never be taken away. Once in him. In him forever. But it was the joy of that salvation that you wanted. It was as if you could say, Lord, warm my heart again.

[24 : 25] Speak again into my soul. Show me thyself once more. Let me see and let me feel like I used to feel.

Lord, a fall a spring to me. The poet says in that hymn 400, isn't it? Let me feel like what I see.

Ah, my winter has been long. Chilled my hopes and stopped my song. Winter threatens to destroy faith and love and every joy. If thy life was in the root, still I could not yield the fruit.

Speak and by thy gracious voice make that my drooping soul rejoice. Oh, beloved saviour, haste, tell me all the storms have passed.

On thy garden deign to smile. Raise the plants, enrich the soil. soon thy presence will restore life to what seemed dead before.

[25 : 24] So sake not the works of thine own hands. Touch again this cold heart. Renew again those visits from the old.

Show me a token for good. The day which hate me made me ashamed. Satan can't do much to a child of God.

He can trouble him, distress him, bring him into darkness, he can cause him to question anything and everything that the Lord's done. Do you know there's something that Satan can't do and he never was able to do and he never will be able to do?

He'll never comfort your heart. He can't do it. He's not with him to comfort the heart of a child of God. So sake not the works of thine own hands.

You may not recognize sometimes his devious ways but remember this he can never bring you into joy. Only all God can. And when he turns and speaks a word in season, when he removes the darkness by his word, no I've often thought and said been with me many many years, that dear woman at the empty tomb, Mary, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away.

[26 : 52] Jesus said unto her, Mary, and all that darkness and all those tears of sorrow flew away for sake not the works of thine own hands.

The time of revelation, a word from the Lord, the comfort of that word and the comfort of that felt presence of the Lord with you in the pathway.

Do we sing though our cup seems filled with gall, that something secret sweetens all? Well, we must close. Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Well, the Lord fulfill it. how often do we say at the end of all these discourses, the Lord do what he says. The Lord prove the point and the pathway and the blessing.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. And that's the ground, you know.

[28 : 02] That's the ground. wasn't the text tonight, this last line was the text. But that's the ground upon these, about these truths are unchangeable.

Beside not the works of thine own hands. We close now and sing a hymn 330.

30. Your harps, ye trembling saints, down from the willows take, loud to the praise of Christ our Lord, with every string away.

Though in a foreign land we are not far from home, nearer to our house above, we every moment come. Hymn 330. the willows take, loud to the raise of Praise the Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

[30 : 17] The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

The Lord, I shall not live with strength away. The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

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The Lord, I shall not live with strength away. The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

[32 : 05] The Lord, I shall not live with strength away. The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

The Lord, I shall not live with strength away. The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

The Lord, I shall not live with strength away. The Lord, I shall not live with strength away.

and now O Lord we pray that thou would bless thy word and I'll perform the truth of those things in our souls bring again those sweet blessings once more touch our hard and cold hearts Lord once more assure us thou art ours and Lord forgive and pardon all that's been spoken amidst take us now to our homes in peace and abide with us may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father the sweet fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit the Comforter remain with us both now and forever Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen.

[34 : 23] Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen
Amen. Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen