

J. C. Ryle Quotations Pt. 4

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, January 22, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a short space of time. Before we dismiss the children and ministry volunteers...

The 2022 ABM will be held TODAY following Service. A brief meal will be provided for any who plan on attending. All are welcome to attend! Parents with children are invited to observe and participate from the Comm. Room. Those who have not yet received their copy of the Annual Report should do so after Service.

SETTING THE STAGE

NOTE 1 – Today we conclude our multi-part series founded upon the insights of author J. C. Ryle (1816–1900). Please feel free to review previous installments at www.NewLifeBarre.org, with previous segments highlighting his musings on faith, repentance, the power and penalty of sin, Scripture and prayer, affliction, the nature and/or work of the Church, and beyond. May God bless those who consider the wisdom of this giant of the faith!

NOTE 2 – This morning I would like to consider excerpts from his writings that touch upon the following topics: **a)** the peril of compromise within the Church; **b)** the promise of persecution for the faithful; **c)** the place of spiritual priority and hopefulness; and **d)** the fate of the wicked. Let us delve in...

THE PERIL OF COMPROMISE

J. C. Ryle challenged the Church of his day concerning both moral and doctrinal compromise. Consider...

QUOTE – “There is a common, worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and think they have enough—a cheap Christianity which offends nobody, and requires no sacrifice—which costs nothing, and is worth nothing.”

QUOTE – “There is a widely-spread desire to make things pleasant in religion—to saw off the corners and edges of the cross, and to avoid, as far as possible, self-denial. On every side we hear professing Christians declaring loudly that we must not be ‘narrow and exclusive,’ and that there is no harm in many things which the holiest saints of old thought bad for their souls. That we may go anywhere, and do anything, and spend our time in anything, and read anything, and keep any company, and plunge into anything, and all the while may be very good Christians—this, this is the maxim of thousands. In a day like this I think it good to raise a warning voice, and invite attention to the teaching of God’s Word. It is written in that Word, ‘Come out, and be separate.’”

NOTE 1 – Have things changed since the era of Ryle? No! There remains an impulse to water-down the gospel message and compromise the scriptural call to repentance, faith and holiness. Powerful forces, both within and without the Church, are still at work seeking to “soften” Christian teaching (i.e., that it might be more palatable).

Q. Don’t believe me?

A. Drive by any number of churches and you will see the emblems of theological and moral compromise...

NOTE 2 – Many, in the name of unity, are calling the Church to soil her garments by permitting and celebrating sinful behaviors. Many, in the name of tolerance, peace and unity, are calling upon us to sacrifice biblical truth! To this, I would put forth the wisdom of Ryle and of Scripture...

QUOTE – “Unity is a mighty blessing; but it is worthless if it is purchased at the cost of truth.”

QUOTE – “Never let us be guilty of sacrificing any portion of truth on the altar of peace.”

QUOTE – “Unity without the gospel is a worthless unity; it is the very unity of hell.”

NOTE 3 – Such forces have always been at work within the Body of Christ...

Jude 1–4, 17b–22 (NIV)

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. 3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

17 . . . dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” 19 These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. 20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. 22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

KEY – We’re not to yield to such forces! Rather, let us contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us (v. 3).

NOTE 4 – I believe that we are heading toward “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego” moments in our culture. We are entering into an age wherein men and women, and even youths and children are going to have to take unpopular stands—but stand we must. We have no permission to amend the Word, as it is forever settled in heaven. We are not the authors of Scripture; but we are to be faithful heralds of it and ambassadors for Christ...

- 1) The Gospel will Never be Popular as it is Founded Upon Repentance and Faith
- 2) Christian Living will Never be Popular as We are Called to be Separate and Peculiar
- 3) Truth Will Never be Popular as this World has Already Crucified the One Who Is TRUTH

NOTE 5 – Yet to those who believe and are willing to receive it, the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation!”

Romans 1:16a

16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

Q. Will you both contend for and promote the “actual” gospel of Christ? REMEMBER...

QUOTE – “Since Satan can’t destroy the gospel, he has too often neutralized its usefulness by addition, subtraction or substitution.”

THE PROMISE OF PERSECUTION

Those who are faithful to the Lord and to His Word will have enemies in this world. Consider again...

- 1) The Gospel will Never be Popular as it is Founded Upon Repentance and Faith
- 2) Christian Living will Never be Popular as We are Called to be Separate and Peculiar
- 3) Truth Will Never be Popular as this World has Already Crucified the One Who Is TRUTH

KEY – Therefore, opposition, adversity, affliction and persecution is often the lot of the righteous...

1) This was Posited by Ryle...

QUOTE – “Let it never surprise true Christians if they are slandered and misrepresented in this world. They must not expect to fare better than their Lord.”

2) This was Posited by Christ...

John 15:18–20a

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”

3) This was Posited by Apostolic Leaders

2 Timothy 3:12b (Emphasis Mine)

12 . . . **everyone** who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**.

Q. What wisdom does Ryle and the Word have for those who must face and/or endure opposition?

QUOTE – “Whatever others around you think, don’t you ever be ashamed of being a Christian. Let them laugh, mock, jest, and scoff, if they will. They will not scoff in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. Hoist your flag; show your colors; nail them to the mast. You may certainly be ashamed of drinking, gambling, lying, swearing, idleness, pride, and failing to go to on the Lord’s Day. But of reading the Bible, praying, and belonging to Christ, you have no cause to be ashamed at all. Let those laugh that will. A good soldier is never ashamed of the colors of his nation’s flag, and his uniform. Be careful that you are never ashamed of your Master.”

Matthew 5:11–12

11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Luke 9:26

26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

QUOTE – “A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing. A cheap Christianity, without a cross, will prove in the end a useless Christianity, without a crown.”

FOCUS & FAITHFULNESS

Christians who are to both withstand and overcome oppositional forces must remain focused and hope-filled...

NOTE 1 – Ryle challenged the believers of his era with the following remarks. They continue to resonate...

QUOTE – “Blessed are they who feel like pilgrims and strangers in this life, and whose best things are all to come!”

QUOTE – “We must beware of thinking too much about our meals, our furniture, our houses, and all those many things which concern the life of the body. We must strive to live like people whose first thoughts are about the immortal soul. We must endeavor to pass through the world like people who are not yet at home, and are not so troubled about the fare they meet with on the road and at the inn. Blessed are they who feel like pilgrims and strangers in this life, and whose best things are all to come!”

NOTE 2 – Ryle is not alone in this call. Rather, the call to a “pilgrim” lifestyle pervades the pages of Scripture...

Philippians 3:17–21 (Emphasis Mine)

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. 20 **But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,** 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Peter 2:9–11 (Emphasis Mine)

9 . . . you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as **foreigners and exiles**, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

Hebrews 13:14 (NLT, Emphasis Mine)

14 For this world is **not** our permanent home; we are **looking** forward to a home **yet to come**.

Q1. Is this a hard call? Is it difficult to live as strangers, foreigners and pilgrims in this life?

Q2. Is it hard to maintain focus on Christ and the promise of reward in the midst of living?

A. Yes, in that it runs counter to every human inclination and proclivity. Yet it has its rewards...

QUOTE – “No man was ever sorry that he served the Lord. No man ever said at the end of his days, ‘I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too concerned about my soul.’ Oh, no! The people of God would always say, ‘Had I my life over again, I would walk far more closely with God than ever I have done. I am sorry that I have not served God better—but I am not sorry that I have served Him.’ The way of Christ may have its cross. But it is a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace.”

NOTE 3 – Consider that our spiritual forebears lost everything and/or went to their executions with singing, knowing that this world was not their home. If you feel more at home in this world than in the presence of God, and if you feel more tethered to the here and now versus the there-and-then, it is time to heed the wisdom of Ryle: “Blessed are they who feel like pilgrims and strangers in this life, and whose best things are all to come!”

JUDGMENT

Ultimately, a dreadful fate is in store for those who reject Christ and His offer of mercy. Whereas the righteous have the hope of life to come, the unbelieving shall ultimately fall in the hands of the living God (cf. Heb. 10:31). Ryle, like all great expositors of Scripture, addressed the everlasting judgment of the sinful...

QUOTE – “According to the men of the world, few are going to hell; According to the Bible, few are going to heaven.”

Matthew 7:13–14 (NIV)

13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

NOTE 1 – I understand the impulse to downplay the doctrine of hell (i.e., particularly in this era and generation). I empathize with C. S. Lewis who penned the following: “There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than the doctrine of hell, if it lay in my power. But it has the support of Scripture and, especially, of our Lord's own words; it has always been held by the Christian Church, and it has the support of reason.” However...

KEY – Yet we must not reject uncomfortable, biblical truth! To do so is dangerous and villainous, as Ryle noted...

QUOTE – “If I never spoke of hell, I should think I had kept back something that was profitable, and should look on myself as an accomplice of the devil.”

NOTE 2 – Once again, the one who loves you most is the one who shares the most truth! If we love this world, let us warn them in a scripturally-informed manner! Let us resist any impulse to soften scriptural teaching or fashion a God of our own image, making and design...

QUOTE – “Beware of manufacturing a God of your own: a God who is all mercy, but not just; a God who is all love, but not holy; a God who as a heaven for everybody, but a hell for none; a God who can allow good and bad to be side by side in time, but will make no distinction between good and broad in eternity. Such a God is an idol of your own, as truly an idol as any snake or crocodile in an Egyptian temple. The hands of your own fancy and sentimentality have made him. He is not the God of the Bible, and beside the God of the Bible there is no God at all.”

NOTE 3 – Ultimately, consider that...

QUOTE – “The saddest road to hell is the one that runs under the pulpit, past the Bible, and through the middle of warnings and invitations.”

INVITATION & WELCOME

Q1. What are we to do in light of such a teaching?

Q2. How do I bypass hell and secure a place in heaven?

A1. Trust in the Provision that a Loving God has Made...

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

A2. Confess Him as Lord and Savior...

Romans 10:9–11

9 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”

KEY 1 – Remember...

Acts 4:12

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

KEY 2 – Also...

QUOTE – “God knew what we were before conversion – wicked, guilty, and defiled; yet He loved us. He knows what we will be after conversion – weak, erring, and frail; yet He loves us.”

Q. Would you stand with me as we close our service?

We are going to close with worship. This is your opportunity to commit or recommit to Christ.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org

NOTE 2 – Feel free to participate in our “beyond-Sunday” ministries (MM, WM, CYC, Study)

NOTE 3 – We will convene for our ABM after a brief lunch prepared downstairs. We’ll see you shortly...

Romans 15:13

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.