



Failing to do good sins of omission

— by Peter Hammond

“I’M A GOOD PERSON. I DON’T smoke. I don’t drink, I don’t do drugs. I don’t steal or swear. I’m not a homosexual – I’m a good person!”

Often, when one engages in street evangelism, door-to-door, or other forms of personal evangelism, one comes across these kinds of reactions. Most people are quite convinced that they are good people. Yet, the Bible does not teach the innate goodness of man. *“As it is written: there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”* Rom 3:10-18

The Lord Jesus Christ describes the Day of Judgment not so much in terms of the bad things we have done, but the good things that we failed to do: *“Depart from Me, you cursed,*

into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.” Matt 25:41-43

What is sin?

Sin is not only the bad things we do, but the good things we fail to do. *“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”* James 4:17. If I were to ask you what the greatest sin is for man to commit, what would you answer? Would you say: Murder? Idolatry? Adultery? Perversion? Hatred? Or blasphemy?

When the Lord Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment,



He replied: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength...you shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* Mark 12:30-3. It follows then that the greatest sin would be to fail to love God with all our heart. Failure to love God is the root sin that leads to all others. You cannot love your neighbour unless you first love God. God deserves our wholehearted love – not with some of, or most of, our heart, but with all of our heart. Nothing less than everything we have, and the best that we have, is worthy enough for our Sovereign Lord, our Creator, Redeemer and Eternal Judge. *“Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!”* Rev 5:12

Teachings of Scripture

The Scripture teaches us that our love should not be just words and talk, it must be true love, which shows itself in action 1 John 3:18. Jesus showed us by His great example that true love is measured by sacrifice. Some of the most revealing indicators of our love for God are the sacrifices which we make for Him. Love gives and does not count the cost. Love rejoices in giving and wants to give – not out of duty, but out of a glad and willing heart.

Love entails intense enthusiasm, a longing to be near and a desire to serve. Does that describe your love for the Lord?

Do you know your Bible? Are you applying it to every area of life? Do you know what God wants you to do? Are you doing it wholeheartedly?

A blacksmith keeps his iron in the fire long enough for the fire to be in the iron. Are you so immersed in God’s Word and His presence that His fire burns in your heart? Love is like a fire, it spreads easily, but it constantly needs more fuel to keep it raging. Our love for God feeds by faith in His Word, in worship, in prayer, in praise and adoration. Love is like life - it grows if fed and dies if starved. “Let me seek You in longing and long for You in seeking, let me find You in love and love You in finding.”

The Ten Commandments

They are not just a list of prohibitions. Each of the Ten Commandments includes an implicit call to action: To worship God alone. To resist idolatry. To speak respectfully of God and His Word. To work six days and to rest on the Lord’s Sabbath. To honour our father and our mother. To respect life. To protect the sanctity of marriage. To respect private ownership of property. To be people of integrity. To maintain a clear conscience before God and man.

The Ten Commandments teach us respect for God, respect for people and respect for property.

Praying the Lord’s Prayer demands action: *“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”* Matt 6:10. Jesus taught that: *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven.”* Matt 7:21

“Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it!” Luke 11:28. We

are commanded to *“be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”* James 1:22. The Church today suffers from an abundance of Christians who know volumes more than they practise. We deceive ourselves if we believe that true Christianity involves merely going to church and avoiding cigarettes, drunkenness, drugs, swearing and other visible and audible examples of sin. We are saved to serve. At creation the Lord issued The Cultural Mandate to be fruitful, to multiply and to fill the earth, caring for His creation, Gen 1:28. We are commanded to raise our children in the love and the fear of the Lord, Deut 6:2-9. According to The Golden Rule of Christ: *“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...”* Matt 7:12

The Scripture teaches us far more than merely to avoid doing evil. *“Let him who stole, steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”* Eph 4:28. As Christians we are commanded to learn to devote ourselves *“to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”* Titus 3:14. The Lord rebukes the idle: *“Why have you been standing here idle all day?”* Matt 20:6

The Lord wants eager volunteers: *“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* Isa 6:8

The last command of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be our first concern. His Great Commission must be our supreme ambition – to make disciples, to teach obedience to all things that the Lord »





We stand back when we should step out in faith. We remain at home when we should be going out into the highways and byways.

We are Christians, we are people with a message of life and death. Let us wake up to the urgency of a lost world in rebellion to God rushing on its way to an eternity in hell. Lives are at stake. The truth is under attack. God's Name is being blasphemed and He is not being given the honour He deserves.

One of the very best sermon illustrations is the daily testimony of a Christian doing his work with integrity and diligence. The quality of our daily work should witness to our faith in Christ. *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed.”* 2 Tim 2:15. *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”* 1 Thess 5:16-18

This is God's will, that we be joyful, prayerful and thankful, that we care for His creation, that we be thoughtful and considerate, that we do to others as we would have them do to us, that we love God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves. That we be applying the Lordship of Christ to all areas of life, making disciples, teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded. True Christianity is seen, not just in what we say, but in what we do.

It is spiritually refreshing to step out in faith and obey God. Let us put feet to our faith. Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it. ■

has commanded us, Matt 28:18-20. As Christians we have to recognise that passivity, neutrality and inactivity are sinful disobedience. When God speaks and we don't listen.

What the Bible teaches, we don't apply. What Jesus commands, we don't obey. Where the Lord sends, we don't go. We stay seated when we should stand up. We keep silent when we should speak out.

