

The Lord's Accent

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy (Leviticus 19:2, *KJV*).

Scripture: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18

Song: “Holy Is Your Name”

During a summer break from college, where I was studying Russian, I visited the Soviet Union to hone my language skills. Outside the customs area, English-speaking guides directed different tour groups to the various buses awaiting our arrival. In some cases, it was clear who had taught these Russians English, for they spoke with regional English accents. One Russian fellow spoke English with a heavy British accent; clearly his teacher had been from Great Britain.

We Christians should have an “accent” in our lives that identifies *who* our heavenly teacher is. Not just a way of speaking, but a lifestyle that emphasizes who we are. That accent, He tells us in our passage, is holiness—holiness of words, of thought, of life, and of action.

Like the Russian fellow with the British accent who immediately caught my attention, so our holiness will catch the attention of others. When we walk in holiness, we represent our teacher well. Let others know that our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20) by how we talk and how we live.

Father, may my life be one of holiness—so I will represent You in such a way that others know I am Your child and will turn to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Heralds of Righteousness

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance (Psalm 89:14-15, *KJV*).

Scripture: Psalm 89:14-21

Song: “Tell the Good News”

In the year 490 BC, an Athenian army defeated a Persian army at a place called Marathon. According to legend, a messenger ran back to Athens to announce the good news: Victory! And then . . . he collapsed. But this story likely never happened, because an ancient historian tells us that this same messenger actually ran to the city of Sparta to get help before the battle ended. And after the battle, the army of Athens returned home. Nevertheless, it illustrates what ancient heralds did.

In our key verses, mercy and truth are depicted as heralds. They go before God’s throne, His seat of government that is rooted in justice and judgment. They announce to the world that God is righteous, that His judgments are just, and that He offers mercy and truth to everyone!

Today the Lord sends us as His heralds to deliver the good news of salvation to the world. Through His death, Christ won the victory for us. He offers mercy to all who believe. Be His herald. Proclaim His truth and mercy to a hurting world.

Father, help me be a herald of Your righteousness. Make me a proclaimer of Your truth and the mercy You offer through Your holy Son, Jesus. Use me for Your kingdom. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Investing in Souls

The love of money is the root of all evil. . . . But thou, O man of God, . . . follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (1 Timothy 6:10-11, *KJV*).

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:6-12

Song: “Bringing in the Sheaves”

Murmurs rippled through Selina Hastings’s mansion while the evangelist preached. Afterward, many of England’s eighteenth-century nobility who’d attended the meeting stormed out. “Me, a sinner?” they said, feeling insulted. “How dare that preacher call me that. I’m no beggar on the street!” These and similar things often happened during Methodist meetings in this pious lady’s home.

When she was just 21 years old, Selina Hastings, known to history as the Countess of Huntingdon, became one of Methodism’s earliest female followers. Her deep piety and faith led her to use her money to further God’s kingdom. She hosted meetings to win her wealthy peers to Christ, and she financially supported Methodist missions. She invested her money in eternal things.

We can learn from her example. Having lots of money isn’t wrong, nor is it wrong to be in a lower income bracket. What counts is who or what we love, since that is the root of who we are and what we consider important. For Selina, God’s kingdom was important. Likewise, His kingdom should be at the top of our lists. Invest in the kingdom to win souls to Christ.

Father, I set my heart on You. Give me such a hunger and desire for You and all things eternal that I’ll pursue You above all else. In Jesus’ name, amen.

True Humility

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:8, *KJV*).

Scripture: Micah 6:1-8

Song: “He Is My Everything”

The great South African pastor Andrew Murray was a prolific writer. Until I read his book *Humility: The Beauty of Holiness*, I thought I was pretty humble. The Holy Spirit, however, used that book to teach me otherwise. Humility doesn't come easily. After all, our human nature caters to pride.

Murray says that when we walk with God humbly, we have the revelation that we are nothing and He is everything. The humble person relies on God totally. Why does God require this of us? Because it's the only way we can walk in holiness. It's only through His Holy Spirit that we can fulfill His requirements: behaving justly, loving mercy, and walking in humility.

As believers in Christ, let's put aside all pride and let our Heavenly Father be our all in all. Let Him be first in our hearts and lives, and let's put others before ourselves. We don't need to understand everything that happens to us. We only need to rely on Him in everything, serving Him and walking in humility. After all, humility brings honor to our King.

Father, I praise You today as my Lord. Take first place in my heart and life. Thank You for the opportunity to serve others as Your representative. In Jesus' name, amen.

No Time to Worry

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? (Matthew 6:26-27, *KJV*).

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Song: “Through It All”

Every day I'd give my indoor dog, Jebba, some playtime in the backyard. Since it was fenced in, she was safe. I cared for her every need—long walks, trips to the vet, food, and water. She had zero worries. Oftentimes, she'd stretch out beneath my fig tree, her golden-furred head resting on her big forepaws, her honey-colored eyes closed. One day as I observed her resting beneath this tree, the word *contentment* flashed through my mind. Jebba was content. Why? Because I took good care of her.

Similarly, God takes care of all His creation. Jesus tells us to notice the birds. He feeds them and cares for them. Then Jesus asks us: “Are ye not much better than they?” The obvious answer: Yes. And if the birds don't need to worry, neither do we. We can't make anything better by worrying.

As I've walked with the Lord, I've learned that the more I trust Him to take care of me, the less time I have to worry. No need to get stressed out with toss-and-turn nights and days of constant nail-biting and pacing over what might happen next. Let's put our cares in His hands and leave them there. He loves us even more than He cares for the birds of the air.

Father, thank You, for taking care of my every need. In Jesus' name, amen.

Shined Shoes

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse. . . . The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him . . . and he will delight in the fear of the LORD (Isaiah 11:1-3).

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-9

Song: “Speak, O Lord”

In high school I attended a military boarding school. Sometimes my cadet officers told me to do things I didn't want to do, such as shining my shoes, polishing my brass belt buckles, and marching. When Sunday mornings rolled around, we cadets and our rooms went through an inspection before we headed off to church. I can't say I delighted in following every order, but I did obey because I wanted to keep my demerits down to a minimum.

In our passage today, Isaiah prophesies about Jesus our Savior. Jesus, the prophet says, “will delight in the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:3). And He certainly did! He told His disciples that He thrived on the Father's will (John 4:34). He walked in perfect obedience—even going to the cross, where He suffered and died for us. He did not receive one demerit from His Heavenly Father.

Some people may be like me, not delighting in shining shoes and brass buckles or doing other necessary tasks. However, through obedience to the Lord's commands, we show the world that we revere Him. Sure, we'll slip up at times, just as I did in military school. Our spiritual shoes may not always shine. But having a heart that fears God and that seeks to please Him—let this be our goal and our delight.

Father, help me to shine by doing Your will. In Jesus' name, amen.

Our Excellent Counselor

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6, *KJV*).

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7

Song: “Counsel of the Holy”

John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, had a reputation for wild living in his hometown of Bedford, England. As God began dealing with him, he came to know Christ through reading *Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians*. Soon Bunyan was preaching on the streets. One day, as he recalled, he was arrested while conducting a religious meeting. The charges brought against him: unlawful assembly and not abiding by the Church of England. Open-air preaching and not conforming to the Church of England were crimes in seventeenth-century England.

Bunyan wrote about how the Lord comforted and counseled him during these difficult days. Jesus became more real to him as he delved deeper into the Scriptures. He recounted how the Lord counseled him to keep believing. As Bunyan pondered death, God encouraged him to pray for strength according to Colossians 1:11. The Lord, through His Word, was Bunyan's counselor.

Are you going through a trial? Delve into God's Word like John Bunyan did. Ask your Heavenly Father to show the way through your difficulties, to comfort and counsel you. Through the Word and through godly people, He'll help us. We only need to ask.

Father, thank You for Your comfort and wise counsel. Help me know what to do in every situation of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.