



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

THE RHYME OF THE MODERN PARISHIONER

by Dr. Michael L. Brown

It happened in the vestibule
At ten one Sunday morn;
A haggard-looking church-goer
Sat plaintive and forlorn.

Then suddenly he rose and found
A hungry-looking Christian;
He took his hand, took him aside,
And asked him a straight question:

“You’ve read the Word; you know the Book;
The promises are clear.
But have you seen the living God?
Have you found Him here?”

Have you experienced holy fire
The Spirit in His power,
A mighty wave, a rushing wind,
A flame that does devour?

Is there something more you’re seeking,
So high, so wide, so deep?
Do you find yourself frustrated?
Is church putting you to sleep?

Then listen well, your heart is ripe;
My tale I will tell.
This story is your story too,
And it’s your tale as well.

For thirty years I’ve been in church,
It seemed like a good show.
But now I’ve got to meet with God --
Do you know where to go?

I’m trapped in mundane worship times,

The praises have grown cold;
The preaching's dry and dusty,
The teaching stale like mold!

Each service feels like a rerun,
The songs all sound the same;
The prophecies are so hollow --
Not worthy of the name!

Words, more words -- they're everywhere,
But oh there is a stink!
Words, more words -- they're everywhere,
But none to make us think!

We lack the heavenly Presence,
It's clear we're in a rut;
I'm desperate for revival --
It burns within my gut!

I'm love-sick for my Jesus,
So hungry for my Lord;
Just longing for my Savior;
God knows that I'm so bored!

Is there someone who can help me,
Who's touched the real thing?
A man who's heard from heaven --
With a word from God to bring?

Are there prophets burning with fire,
Servants who are ablaze?
Anointed and overflowing,
Appointed for these days?

Do they carry the Spirit's burden,
And breathe the Lord God's breath?
Are they set apart and holy,
Obedient to death?

I hear the words of the Master,
'Come follow Me,' He said.
If some Christians go their own way;
I'll go with Him instead!

Oh please, don't do as I have done,
And waste so many years.
Don't wait and wait for endless months;
Move on! Outgrow your fears!

Forget the twelve step programs;
A seminar won't do.
You need a touch from heaven,
To fill you through and through.

There must be change in your life --
A work of God that's real.
Don't fool yourself with worn clichés --
Don't let the devil steal!

Don't miss out on God's presence
Or let these hours pass;
Don't stop your soul from hungering;
Get out of the morass!

Dear friend, you are not crazy;
Dear saint, you are not mad;
There really is a problem,
It's true, you have been had!

There's more! There's more! Believe it!
There is that place in God.
There are holy visitations,
New paths that must be trod.

Will you get up like old Pilgrim,
And seek that better way?
Will you go forth on that journey
No matter what men say?

Will you go out now and meet Him,
And leave the crowd behind,
Forsaking dead traditions,
If Jesus you will find?

It's not in another meeting,
A nicely packaged hour;
Another harmless service,
Devoid of heaven's power.

It's not in another teaching,
Three points to fill your head.
The Word is always vibrant;
But this stuff is so dead!

We need God to send His Spirit,
To fully take control,
To transform every member,
To come and make them whole!

Enough with man's religion;
Enough with earthly plans;
Enough with our new programs;
Produced by fleshly hands."

Just then in strode the pastor
His calling to fulfill;
Just doing his weekly duty --
Then he became frozen still.

For astir was that parishioner
He grasped the preacher's clothes,
And grasped the preacher's soul as well --
And in that grasp he froze.

"Oh pastor, enter the prayer room
And shut yourself inside.
Be emptied of competition,
And crucify your pride!

Pray for holy visitations,
Caught up alone with Him,
Consumed with heavenly vision --
That's where you must begin!

You won't find Him in a textbook,
Buried on page twenty-two.
He is the living God who acts --
He wants to move in you!

It's not only the 'apostles'
He'll bless and send and use;
He will saturate your own soul,
If you will not refuse.

So arise, get up, pursue Him,
Jesus your true best Friend!
He is worthy of devotion,
He's faithful to the end!

Why should you starve on crusty bread,
And crawl along the ground?
Your Savior is your source of life,
Seek Him, let joy abound!

Renew your life, refresh your heart,
Press in, take hold, pray through.
Put first things first, make God your goal;

What else have you to do?

Your Bible schooling stole your zeal,
Church life has drained you dry;
You used to have such childlike faith,
Now budgets have your eye!

You used to be so passionate,
So innocent and free
Now you've become professional;
You'll preach for a good fee!

Oh, set your sights on higher goals
And not on dollar bills.
Live in the light of Judgment Day;
Ambition always kills!

Let Jesus be your daily Guide,
Put Him where He belongs;
And soon His presence will arrive;
His praise will fill your songs!

Simplicity will be your style,
Devotion your new goal;
Communion will become your aim,
God's life will flood your soul!

Oh, take your eyes off numbers,
Church growth can be a trap!
Go out and make disciples.
Go out and bridge the gap!

Pour your life out for broken lives --
Let God your heart break too.
Take up the cross, deny yourself;
Just live His will to do!

Wake up, be brave, be honest;
Today -- oh hear His voice!
Be ruthless with your schedule;
Seek GOD. Make that your choice.

You won't find Him in your planner,
No committee has the key.
You'll find Him when your soul cries out,
'There must be more for me!'

'There must be more than building funds,
And sessions past midnight,

And endless talks with leadership,
Disputing who is right.

Somehow I know I've been misled;
The model doesn't work.
I'm not called as an executive,
Nor should I be a clerk.

I'm called to be a man of God,
A man who's Spirit led,
A healer of the sick and lame
Someday to raise the dead!

And with that cry new life will rise,
Your heart will be revived;
Heaven's light will flood your soul --
You will not be denied!"

The parishioner then turned his gaze
Away from flesh and blood:
He looked to Him who sends the showers,
To Him who sends the flood.

"Today, O Lord, do hear our voice,
And pour Your Spirit out.
Saturate the thirsty ground.
End this spiritual drought!

Revive us with Your Presence,
Renew us from above;
Touch the flock called by Your name;
Come fill us with Your love!

Do greater works in our day,
Than that which You have done.
Bring the fullness of Your rains,
And glorify Your Son!"

That old church-goer spoke no more.
Another voice was heard.
Yet not the voice of flesh and blood:
It was our Father's word.

And if you listen closely,
Beyond this little rhyme,
You'll hear Him speaking clearly:
"My children, it is time."

To find the way to your own Pilgrim journey, go to the "Entry Directions" or the "Testimonies" page.

Earnest Seeker