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## **BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT**

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## **01 -- PREFACE**

The closing night of our campaign in the city of Charlotte Amelia, St. Thomas, we had preached this sermon and five hundred or six hundred were at the altar praying God to help them "uncover now."

That is why it is sent out in this broader field of duty. If you are interested, write the author and we will work together in giving it a wide circulation.

March 7, 1912 -- At Home -- James M. Taylor

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## 02 -- INTRODUCTION

As I sat at my window in the city of Basseterre, on the Isle of St. Kitts, just after four o'clock in the afternoon, I saw a sloop go down with more than twenty people on board. I put my field-glass to my eyes and saw them as they struggled and fought the waves, and just as the top of the mast went under water, a schooner bound for the island of Trinidad, which had just weighed anchor, threw her sails to the breeze and struck out for the sinking vessel. I watched them as they pulled one after another on board, then she threw up a distress signal and started for the harbor without waiting for the harbor master. I watched them as they brought the people ashore. Among others there was a woman who had gone down three times to the bottom of the sea. A little boy was by her side trembling with cold and fright. She told me how she went down, but her little boy went after her and brought her to the top three times and kept her up until she could catch her breath. There was an old man who had been to Basseterre from Nevis to collect a bill. He went down -- there was his arm around the bowsprit of the vessel, the other hand holding the money -- but there was no one to go down after him. I watched them as they worked with him until dark, but he was dead and doomed because he had no boy to pull him out; because he hung to his money and clung to the sinking vessel.

I want to beg you tonight, sinner, to leave the vessel you are on as it is going down; the thing you are holding to will damn you. I want to plead with you, Christian men and women, while hundreds have been brought in because there was some one interested in them, yet there is a mother's boy back there, a daughter back there, who has no one particularly interested in them. I want you to dive for them tonight -- go overboard in their interest, and by the grace of God "rescue the perishing, care for the dying, snatch them in pity from sin and the grave." Be in earnest, brother. Will you?

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## 03 -- SCRIPTURE TEXT

"But if ye will not do so, behold ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23)

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## 04 -- THE MESSAGE

This is the language of Moses as he addressed the children of Gad, the children of Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh. They were herdsmen and saw that the country on the other side of the river was good for cattle; they preferred not to cross into the Promised Land, and so expressed themselves, but they said, "We are willing to go over with our brethren and help them fight the enemy and possess the land, at which time we will return to our wives and children and flocks and be content on this side." Moses said, "It is good you have spoken; it is well if you do so; but, if ye do not as ye have spoken, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

We might read this, "BE SURE your sin will find you out," or "Be sure YOUR sin will find you out," or "Be sure your SIN will find you out," or "Be sure your sin will FIND YOU out." You cannot get away from it. There are a few things about this text that we might notice for a little while.

The first that comes to the mind is man's plan for dealing with sin.

Ever since Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, it has been man's plan to cover sin. Adam had no sooner broken God's command than he went to the bushes, sewed fig leaves together and hid himself. Cain had no sooner slain his brother Abel than he dug a hole to hide what he had done. Jacob had no sooner planned the robbing of his brother than he killed a goat and took its skin and covered the sin of his life. Jacob's sons had no sooner sold their brother than they killed a kid and took the blood of the kid to cover their sin. Jacob deceived his father with the skin of a kid and his sons deceived him with the blood of a kid. David had no sooner wrecked a life and blasted a character than he went to work by murder and marriage to cover the sin of his life. Judas had no sooner sold his Lord than he undertook to cover his sin with the kiss of a traitor.

I am talking to people here tonight who have taken advantage of others to get a piece of property, who have lied to wife or husband, and in a hundred different ways have covered the sin of their life.

Another thing I notice is that God's plan of dealing with sin has always been to uncover it.

Adam had no sooner fled to the bushes than God appeared on the scene and cried, "Adam, where art thou?" Cain had no sooner gotten from the church racket where he had killed his brother over religious matters than God appeared on the scene and cried, "Cain, where is your brother Abel?" Listen to the language of a guilty conscience as he answers, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Jacob had no sooner covered the sin of his life than God appeared on the scene and began working things around to uncover the sin. His sons had no sooner traded Joseph into Egypt than God began to work, and, rather than allow sin to be covered and souls damned, he sent a famine to a nation; the land was out of corn, and these people had to go to Egypt to get food, that the sin in their lives might be uncovered.

David covered the sin of his life, but the old prophet who feared and knew God, appeared at his door, pointed his index finger in the king's face, and said, "Thou art the man!"

Another thing I notice about it is that the world counts you a fool if you don't cover your sin.

I remember the time I got right with God; it was a big job on my hands. I spent three days and nights fasting and praying; wrote letters until the postage nearly broke me up making confessions and restitutions. I wrote one man that I had stolen a watermelon from him.

I wrote another letter to a livery firm in the state I am now living in and told them that as I was leaving one evening my friend said, "Get a whip before you go." I said that I had none. "But,"

he says, "the night man is on now, tell him you want your whip." I raised a racket and said, "Give me my whip." "I don't know where it is, you take this one."

I took the whip and wore it out. But I didn't want to see a buggy whip on the Judgment Day. So I wrote asking if the firm was still in business, that I might confess and restore what I had done. A reporter was called, my letter turned over to him; I got my name in the paper, and they shipped a package of them sixteen miles to the town where I was living.

The folks threw their hands up and said, "Poor boy, we expected it when he got in with those Holiness folks. He has ruined himself now; poor fellow; I wonder what he will do next." Some of the crowd that called me a fool because I uncovered my own sin, waited for the laws of the state to uncover theirs, and they are wearing striped clothes today as a result of it. The world counts you a fool if you do uncover your sin and if you don't cover it.

Conviction is fought because of covered sin. You cannot tell what is the spiritual need of a man by the coat he wears, nor how morally upright he appears, nor can you tell the spiritual need of a woman by how modest she may seem. Conviction has been fought during this meeting, not so much because of prejudice against holiness, but because of sin covered in the hearts of men and women.

A mourner's-bench to many people is a valley of ghosts. Some folks do not like an altar because they see such sights, they see "men as trees walking." I have seen men at an altar with their eyes shut and seeing sights that would make a person's hair stand fairly straight.

I don't blame some of you people for hating an altar of prayer. Did you ever go opossum hunting, or sparking in the country and pass an old graveyard with the old country tombstones shining in the moonlight while the leaves were falling and the owls hooting? I have been there, and I never was a coward; I was always a brave sort of fellow; told everybody that I wasn't afraid of a graveyard, but I never passed one without my hair standing straight. I would whistle as loud as I could to keep my courage up.

I do not blame you for not coming to the altar; for saying you don't believe in the mourner's-bench; you are whistling to keep your courage up; you don't want to get down there, because you are liable to see sights if you do.

During a meeting in a town in a Southern state, everybody in the town kept describing a certain young man to me. It was, "Mr. Johnnie, is better than any of the church members in the town. He is a model young man, an upright fellow. He is the best young man in all this country. All he needs is just joining the church." It was "Mr. Johnnie," "Mr. Johnnie," until I was sick and tired of it; in fact, I am always suspicious of these goody-goody Mr. Johnnies.

Finally. I saw Mr. Johnnie's wife down at the altar one day. She seemed to be very much in earnest, so I went to her and said, "Madam, wouldn't you like for Mr. Johnnie to come?" "If you please, Mr. Taylor." I hunted up a boy and told him to get Mr. Johnnie as quick as he could. "Tell him his wife wants him and wants him quick."

Pretty soon I saw Mr. Johnnie coming up the street with his hat in his hand. He reached his wife down at the altar just about the time she touched the Lord. She sprang to her feet saying, "Bless God, He saved me and He can save you too."

Johnnie went to the mourner's-bench, but didn't get through. That night he prayed and wrestled until about ten o'clock. I said to myself, Why is it that it takes him so long; as good as he is? I never fool time away with folks of that kind. I like to get down by the side of a bunch of rags and point them to Jesus.

Finally I went to him, "Mr. Johnnie, why is it that you don't get through?" He looked up, put his arm around me, drew my head down to his and said, "Mr. Taylor, there is something awful in my way."

To make a long story short, he told me that he had stolen a thousand dollars in cash from the firm where he was working, and begged me to go with him to the president's home. He there threw himself in the hands of the law and the generosity of the president, confessing what he had done in order that he might get right with God.

It is not the altar that you are so opposed to, as the sights that you will see when you get to the altar. I am talking to men and women tonight who fear this altar; they know they might put their hands over their faces and be able to look through the altar rail and see another man's wife or another man's husband, or property that didn't belong to them; see a blasted character, a wrecked home, a ruined life. They are trying to whistle to keep their courage up by saying, "I don't believe in an altar anyhow. It is all nonsense.

My old father was a preacher, a preacher-evangelist. He was never sent anywhere but what he had a revival from the time he got there until he left the charge.

At one time he was holding a revival in east Tennessee and a certain man was at the altar nearly every night. He would get very much in earnest, pray, struggle and cry, "O God! O God! O God!" and then he would drop down and pray no more. He kept this up through the revival without praying through.

My father and that man left the place together. Father said to him, "You seemed to be very much in earnest." "I was," he replied. "You seemed to get very nearly through." "Yes; I was," the man answered. "What seemed to be in your way!" asked my father.

"Parson, I will tell you part of it. Three years ago three men were lynched at Cumberland Gap, Ky. I would get down there and pray right up just about ready to take hold by faith, and just as I would reach up to grasp the promise of God, the head of one of the victims, wrapped in a black coat, would get between me and God. I could not get any further. That is all I can tell you, but that is what kept me from getting salvation at your meeting."

An altar of prayer is a valley of ghosts to a great many people, and because of that, conviction is fought; because of covered sin in the hearts of men and women.

You may be sure your sin will find you out. You cannot cover sin, for several reasons.

The very nature of sin is to give itself away, and, detectives make a close study of that fact. They look a man squarely in the eye, and he can scarcely conceal guilt in his eye. It is the nature of sin to expose the sinner.!

It is the nature of the devil to get a man into sin: in order that he may expose him.

God hates sin because it has hung crepe on the door-knob of Heaven, and He will uncover sin.

God loves the sinner, and, rather than see his soul damned, He will uncover the sin, that the sinner may: have a better chance of getting right with Him.

I talked on this text one evening in a camp-meeting, and a friend of mine was present who had been in the Pinkerton Detective Service for thirty-five or forty years. He had spent his life at it, getting \$100 a week for every week he spent in the service.

The next morning he said to me, "You do not believe your text yourself. I could tell you things that would astound you right along the line of your sermon. You may be sure your sin will find you out. Do you remember reading of or hearing about the murder of a sheriff, murdered in Kentucky in the early sixties?"

"I remember hearing about it," I replied.

"I appeared on the scene the next morning with orders of my profession," he said, "and was given the job. I studied the lay of the land, and, in looking things over, I pulled a drawer out and found that the lower end of a tie had hung there when the drawer out of which the money was taken was pushed in. That murderer's tie had been caught and about one and one-half inches torn from the end of it. 'This will help me identify my man,' I said to the others on the scene.

"I dogged him from there to the state of Indiana. Worked there with the coal company with him. I dogged him from Oklahoma to Kansas; worked with him in Texas on a plantation. Studied him month in and month out. I studied his very step, and it seemed peculiar; he never entered the dining-room squarely, but would always start in, turn his face, then walk to the table, and would never sit with his back to the door; he would make an excuse to leave the room unless his face was toward the door."

I told him that this reminded me of what I had been told of Jesse James by his cousins; "he entered a room as you have said, sat at the table as you have indicated with his gun across his knees," Oh, it is hell to try and cover sin.

He said, "The thing went on until finally I had the lay of the land; I had everything ready. I gave up my position, collected my wages, left the farm, went to town, got everything ready and came back in a few hours dressed like a certain tax assessor and went to the barn where the man

was to harness the horses. He always went in, pulled the mule's head up, then came out, got the bridle and went in to put the bridle on.

"I watched him pull the mule's head up, watched him come out, pick up the bridle, and, as he started in, I kicked my horse, and, when he reached the door of the stall, I ran a revolver against the back of his neck, and told him to keep his hands up or I would blow his brains out. 'Back out,' 'go forward,' then I said, "to that horse. Now mark time, and if you quit marking time I will blow your brains out.'

"With my left hand I handcuffed him, tied his ankles and took him to the office. 'How long have you been after me?' 'For three years.' 'What are you taking me for?' 'You know' what I am taking you for.' That man's trunk had never been checked as baggage, always went by express': I found the \$1,500 in the trunk he stole from the sheriff's office the night he was murdered; I pulled out the bloody shirt he wore the night of the murder; I pulled out the four-in-hand tie like the piece I found in the office of the sheriff, called him by name, and asked him what that was.

"The fellow's blanched face told the story. Brother, I told you 'that you didn't believe' your own text."

God Almighty will see to it that sin cannot be covered. Shrewd as you are, slick as the devil, fiendish as Hell and licentious as the pit, be sure your sin will find you out.

A friend of mine, an evangelist, held a meeting in a certain city. A gentleman boarding at the hotel was always up when he returned from service at night. After eight or ten days slipped by, this gentleman said to my friend one night, "How much would you give me to tell you who I am?" "Why, you are a painter, are you not? You are painting a house down here." "Yes, but that house will go half painted some of these nights. You see, I am in the secret service work."

"What is your line?" "I am on counterfeiting. Our men have shadowed a woman to this town who is a counterfeiter. I have been waiting here for weeks for her. I leave money on my table every night when I go to meet that train, to pay my board bill. She is going to get off the train some of these evenings, and I will never take my eyes off of her until she is located and have her in the clutches of the law."

Among other thrilling experiences, he told of being down in Texas, where it was known that counterfeit money was being spent. It had been going in all directions, but had been traced to a certain community, and suspicion rested on one man.

"I landed there as a Jew peddler," he said, "to locate my man. I reached his cabin near night and said, 'Let me sell sumpting.' 'I don't understand Dutch. How was business today?' I rattled a hand full of money in his face. 'Pizness goot, pizness goot, make all dat dis day.'

"I was watching his face. 'That money's no good.' 'Goot moony, moony all right, me take all dat moony you get.' 'I can give you ten to one of some of it in 'the morning.' 'Yes, I vill stay all night.'

"I went to bed early, up in the loft. I had soon climbed the ladder in the old cabin and went to snoring with my eyes wide open (I was wide awake, peering down in the room below).

"A young woman threw a Winchester over her shoulder, took a lantern in her hand and went out. In a little while she returned with three men. They threw the great stone hearth back and went down into a cellar. One of the men said, 'We forgot the molds.' The young woman threw the Winchester across her shoulder, and with lantern in hand she started.

"I knew it was my time. I said, 'Old man, I'm thirsty. I want a drink.' 'Never mind, you stay up there. I will bring you some water.' He climbed the ladder with a gourd of water. When he went to reach me the water, I threw a revolver in his face, and said, 'Don't you open your mouth or I will blow your brains out.'

"I shoved him down the ladder and threw the stone down; held it and tied him. Just as I finished tying his feet, the young woman entered the door. She saw the situation and was bringing down her Winchester; one crash of my revolver and she fell in the door yelling and dying, while the men in the basement were cursing, with the old man. I spent the night there waiting for other help the next morning."

As I listened, I said, Yes, the Government of the United States can trace things like that; if it takes ten years and ten thousand dollars to find a man, they will locate him. But what about the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose eyes are everywhere? Transgressor, you may be sure, be sure, your sin will find you out. You cannot cover sin.

It was on the Ohio River that a murder was committed and the body pitched over a bluff. Pinkerton men were employed, blood-hounds secured, and for three years everything was done to find the murderer.

When the three years had slipped by, a man entered an Eastern hotel one night, registered, and was sent to a certain room with the bed against the partition; the next room was occupied by a young man whose bed also sat against the same partition. In the dead hours of night the man began yelling, "Oh, yes, I murdered him and pitched him over the bluff, I did it. Oh, yes! Oh, yes!"

The young man was aroused on the other side of the partition, touched an electric bell; a clerk came to his room. "Sir, you have a murderer in the next room." In a little while there was a rapping at the door, louder, louder. "Who is there?" The clerk said, "It is I. I must get into the room a few moments." The man, half awake, stepped to the door, when two revolvers were thrust into his face by officers with handcuffs. "What are you taking me for?" "For murder committed three years ago in such and such a city."

The man gasped, took, a good breath, and said, "I am your man. Thank God, you have me." My neck will have to pay the price, but for three years I have lived in hell. At the dead hours of the night I have wiped that hot, red 'blood off my hands, and heard the man slipping, struggling and crying, 'Help! Help! Help!' as he went down, down. I must die, and I am glad you have, got me." Be sure your sin will find you out.



On the island of Montserrat, about forty years ago, a man died and was mysteriously buried. Thirty-five or forty years slipped by, when, during some excavations, a grave was dug up; different citizens were viewing the corpse when a widow appeared on the scene. She looked at the corpse, then lifted up the skull and looked just back of the man's head and found an iron spike still in there. She threw up her hands, turned pale and fainted.

When she recovered she confessed that thirty-five or forty years before she drove a spike into the base of her husband's brain and sent him into eternity. God Almighty saw to the unearthing of that corpse in order that her sin might not be covered. I tell you, you may be sure your sin will find you out.

He was a respectable citizen. I knew his family, they were among the first of the country for years. He filled a public office and retired a well-to-do man, living in comparative luxury on his farm in a palatial home.

An expert accountant was sent to go over all the books in every office of that courthouse. He went from one office to another until finally he came to the office once occupied by this man. He worked hour after hour until finally one night a telegram was sent to Nashville, Tenn., saying "Volume \_\_\_\_ in the register's office cannot be found."

A telegram came back, "Have that volume by twelve o'clock tomorrow or put G \_\_\_\_ under arrest."

Mr. G \_\_\_\_ brought the volume back before twelve o'clock; his farm and home were put under mortgage; he went into rented property. That volume dated years before; he thought it was all forgotten and covered over, but God had declared you may "be sure your sin will find you out." You cannot cover sin. I beg, in Jesus' name, don't try to do it.

This meeting is closing, the last altar call will soon have been made. I beg you, in Jesus' name, let the Holy Ghost land your benighted spirit this night safe in the arms of Jesus.

Some time ago I was on the Barima River up in the interior of South America. We had trans-shipped from a steamer to a steam launch, then to a row boat. I had fourteen noble-hearted native men, who pulled like work horses from before day until after dark. We could not make the rapids; we pulled hard, but the waves beat us back.

Finally my bowman, a heavy-built fellow, said, "Never mind, missionary, just keep your seat, be quiet and I will take you over."

With the end of a long rope in his teeth, he stepped off the bow of the boat and beat the waves as they threw him under; he pulled and beat and fought until he came to a rock, pulled himself up on it, leaped from that to another; nine other men followed and held to the rope, fought and swam until finally they reached the bank and pulled us over safe and sound.

About ten days slipped by, there was a cloudburst up the river; we had nearly reached the Kaituer Falls; had traveled all night in a pouring rain, wet to the skin. I had an old Indian chief

engaged as the captain of my boat; the crew were ready and the boat was ready, but the river was rising six inches every hour.

I begged the old Indian to pull us over. He waited two hours, three hours. The river was going up rapidly. Finally I offered him more money. Without raising his head, he said, "River rising, rapids heavy, white man no swimie, me no goie."

My neighbor, for ten days the Boatman has been here with scarred hands; godly men and women are ready, by prayer and fasting and holding on to God, to pilot you over. There has been a waterspout, the deluge is rising, the rapids are heavy, passions, appetites, habits.

Men and women, come over the rapids and get to God tonight, for before another campmeeting like this the tide may be too strong, the appetite too awful, the habit too strong, and you in eternity, lost.

I beg you, in Jesus' name, as one who loves your soul, throw up your hands, uncover your sin, for be sure your sin will find you out; uncover it yourself and God will have mercy.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE END