

A PRINCE AND A SAVIOR NO. 1301

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 25, 1876,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior,
for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”
Acts 5:31.*

THE same fact appears very differently to different people. Our Lord Jesus, having risen from the dead, was exalted with the right hand of God. To the Jewish priests and rulers this was a *dreadful* announcement. They could not endure to hear that Jesus, whom they slew and hanged on a tree, was yet alive. As the murderer is startled at the apparition of the ghost of the man he has slain, so were these rulers altogether dismayed at the idea that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had nailed to the cross, was risen from the grave. And they were astounded at the very thought that He, whom they had put to death with all the shame that they could devise, was with the full might and majesty of God exalted to the highest heavens. They were cut to the heart by the announcement as though a sword had cut them in two, dividing their very bones. Full of indignation, they consulted how they could compass the death of those who had brought such evil tidings to their ears.

The fact had a very different effect upon the apostles. They were the friends of Jesus, and witnesses to His majesty. And when they were certain that, though they had seen Him laid in the grave, He had risen and had ascended, and was now sitting at the right hand of God, even the Father, it filled them with the greatest boldness and consolation! They might well speak in such a name, for it was assuredly divine! He who had conquered death, and opened the gates of heaven must be able to take care of His own followers, and therefore, with delight and courage, they bearded His enemies in their dens! There was no need for trembling—who could harm them? They blushed not—there was nothing to blush at, for it was a triumphant cause! They feared not—there was nothing to fear, for the name high over all in heaven, earth, and hell would surely protect them from all peril! What was to the rulers a source of dismay was to the apostles a cause of courage!

Let me now inquire of you all how this fact of the exaltation of Christ impresses you? What do you think of Christ? As time would fail me to press this enquiry upon all classes in this assembly, I shall confine myself to those who have not yet found peace with God—and shall set the Ascended One before them that in *Him* they may find salvation! That is to be my subject—I want, this morning, to discover seekers! And by the help of God's Holy Spirit I want to encourage them, to direct them, and if possible, may this be the last morning in which they shall be called *seekers*, and the first day in which they shall be *finders*! And may they, this day, know how sweet Christ is to those who find Him, and how inestimably precious His salvation is to those who receive it by faith in Him!

I should be very glad, this morning, if we could get down to business, for a great deal of hearing is not earnest hearing, but mere playing at hearing. Too many of you have ears to hear, and yet do not truly hear. The word of God reaches the outward ear and goes no further because you do not listen heartily and with earnestness. Thousands of hearers are like spectators at a banquet who come into the gallery, and look down upon the guests who are feasting below—but they never taste a morsel themselves. For them there are no dainties for actual tasting! They look at the oxen and the fatlings. They see the enjoyment of the feasters. Sometimes they even feel their own mouths watering for the good things, and they almost envy those who are banqueting. But they do not seek a place at the loaded tables for themselves—they remain lookers-on. I pray this morning, and may God hear the desire of my soul, that you may *all* become partakers of the exceeding grace of God in Christ Jesus at this moment! May you who have fed, feed again as you see the feast prepared in Christ! And may you who have never ventured to “taste and see that the Lord is good,” approach the provisions of love this morning and be fed with bread to the fullest! I want to see an end of mere wishes and desires! I want to rejoice over the commencement

of actual faith and realized salvation! Let's get down to business, and let us have no more talk or delay! I long to see you saved, and saved at once, or perhaps you may never be saved at all!

Seeker, you know right well that if you are ever to be saved your salvation lies in Jesus Christ. "There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." And you know that it is so! The point is to obtain the salvation which is in that name, and so to lay hold of Christ, that what is stored in Him may become your own! May the Spirit of God bless you, now, so that while we speak to our text you may be led by it to actual salvation in Christ Jesus!

I. First, then, let me invite you to NOTE HIS TITLES, and learn their meaning. He is called, "*a Prince and a Savior.*" You must know the Savior or you cannot be saved. It is important to you to understand the nature and character of Him whom the Lord has set forth to be the only salvation of guilty men. The Lord Jesus is here described to you under two instructive names which comprehend within themselves the moat of His offices and relationships. Consider him now with deep attention.

He is called a *Prince* first. This tells you that He is receiving *honor* at this time as the reward of His sufferings on earth. While He was here below, He was treated by His rebellious subjects as if He had been a felon. What a mass of presents the Prince of Wales has brought home from his foreign travels! But when the Prince of glory visited His dominions here below what did He take home with Him except His wounds? "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The shame and the rejection are now ended, and in glory, yonder, our Lord Jesus is manifestly a Prince—reverenced, obeyed, and honored! Every angel in heaven delights to sing, "You are the King of glory, O Christ!" The highest powers and potentates of the spiritual kingdom bow before Him, and hail Him—joyfully hail Him—as Lord over all, blessed forever! His dominion extends over all creation. All things are put under His feet. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, yes, He is Lord of all! Think of Him, then, O seeking sinner, in this honorable estate! Let your mind conceive of Christ as worthy of all the homage and reverence that you can ever pay to Him! Do not approach Him without serious thought and careful reverence, for though He is condescending and gentle, yet is He a Prince to whom honor and obeisance must be paid!

The title of "Prince" in our Lord's case signifies not only honor, but actual *power*. His is no nominal principedom—He has both glory and strength! Unto Him is given the mediatorial kingdom which includes all power in heaven, and in earth, so that He is well styled, "the blessed and only Potentate."—

*"His hands the wheels of nature guide
With an unerring skill,
And countless worlds, extended wide,
Obey His sovereign will."*

Was it not said of old, "The government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"? He is the Prince of the house of David! He opens, and no man shuts. He shuts, and no man opens. There is no boundary to the power of Christ! If you seek His salvation, think of Him as Almighty, and remember that His power is now employed for the salvation of those who trust in Him. He is exalted on high to be a Prince that He may give repentance and forgiveness of sins—so that the power which you see in Him is available for your salvation! Is not this encouraging? Does not this remove those fears which are suggested by your own feebleness? I desire that you may be led by the power of the Holy Spirit to conceive of our glorified Lord with the reverence which His honor deserves, and with the confidence which His power should command.

Remember, too, that a Prince signifies one who has dominion. And if Christ is to be yours, today, you must let Him have dominion over you. "He must reign." He claims to be Master and Lord to those who ask salvation at His hands—and is not the claim a just one? Whom should we serve but the Lord who became a servant for our sakes? It must be so, or salvation is impossible! Those who serve sin are not saved, nor can they be unless by being brought to serve the Christ of God—

*"This know, nor of the terms complain.
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign.
To reign, and with no partial stray.
Lusts must be slain that disobey."*

You must accept Jesus to be leader and commander to you or you cannot win the battle of life! You must yield Him loving obedience, or He will not be married to your souls. His dominion is sweetly tempered by love, so that, as the prophet writes, "You shall call Me no more Baali," that is, "My Lord," with a hardness of rulership, but *Ishi*, "My Lord," because you are My man, My husband. Even so Jesus is

our head and Lord, but His rule is that of supreme affection. There must be obedience to Jesus if there is faith in Him, for true faith works by love. Will you render it?

Thus, Christ Jesus our Prince is crowned with honor, and clothed with power—and He rightly claims and exercises dominion. I pray, dear hearer, that you may pay homage before Him at once as your Prince.

The other title of the text is “A Savior,” and this name, it seems to me, should be very delightful to every seeking soul. Struggling into light and prizing every ray of hope, it must be sweet to you to know that the Son of God is still a Savior, though manifestly a Prince! Observe here *the perseverance of the Lord’s love*. He was a Savior here below. He is a Savior now that He has reached His throne. We read of Him while on earth, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” And now that He has gone, we still hear concerning Him, “He is able; therefore, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” He has not paused in His blessed work of love! “He is the Savior of the body.” Savior He was when He wore the garment without seam, and traversed the weary leagues of Palestine. Savior He is *now* that He is girt about with a golden belt, and sits upon the throne! And Savior He shall be in His second advent, for which we look, even the glorious appearing of our God and Savior! Savior He was when He wept over Jerusalem. Savior He is, still, though His eyes are like a flame of fire. And Savior shall He be to His own redeemed when, before His glance, this earth shall flee away. Look up to Him under that aspect.

O you who seek Him! Remember that our exalted Lord is a Savior in virtue of *the prevalence of the work which He achieved while here below*. When He dwelt here among men, He was able to save, but His salvation was not complete, for He had not yet said, “It is finished.” Now His redeeming work is done, and saving is a simple matter to Him. Never did He so well deserve the name of Savior as when He climbed to His throne. The ransom price has all been paid and now, O Jesus, You are Savior, indeed! The head of the serpent has been broken beneath Your heel—You are Savior, indeed! The gates of the grave have been burst, the sepulcher is bereaved of its prey, and the resurrection is brought to light—You are, from now on, a Savior to the uttermost, O Jesus! “By Your agony and bloody sweat, by Your cross and passion, by Your precious death and burial,” you have finished salvation, and now our spirits stall rejoice in God our Savior! I pray that you who seek Him may have grace, this morning, to see Him in the light of a Savior, as still pursuing the work of saving souls, but yet pursuing it only to apply the atonement which His death completed. Look at him, O you ends of the earth, as the Savior, for such He is, and there is none else!

If He is a Savior too, remember, this shows to trembling hearts *how approachable He is*. You might be abashed at coming to a Prince, but you may be encouraged in coming to a Savior! O you that would be rid of your sin, do you fear the Prince? Well may you, for He can punish you! But fear not, for the Savior will forgive you! Diseased with sin, do you think yourself unworthy of His princely presence? Yet He is Physician as well as Prince—therefore come where the glance of His eye or the touch of His hand will make you perfectly whole! I wish I knew how to put my Lord before you in the best of words, and describe Him so sweetly that you would all fall in love with Him, but, indeed, I believe Him to be so beautiful that if I can only convey to you the *faintest* idea of Him, you must be enamored of Him, if you love that which is good and fair! While I am describing Him, I feel I do but put a mist about Him. But, He is the sun, and He can break through my cloudy language, and cause your hearts to see Him in all His glory.

“A Prince and a Savior.” Suppose I put the words together and say, a Prince-Savior—one who is lordly and kingly in the salvation which He brings? He deals out no stinted grace, but makes us to receive of His fullness, grace for grace. Turn the titles the other way, and reverse the order, and truly He is a Savior-Prince whose glory it is to save, whose kingdom and power and dominion are all turned in full force to achieve the work of rescuing His people from destruction. “A Prince and a Savior.” This is the Christ to whom you must come, O you who would be delivered from your sins. Look to Him and live!

II. APPROACH HIM, THEN, UNDER THESE TWO CHARACTERS. I would come to very close quarters with you who are seeking the Lord, while I urge you to approach Jesus Christ as a *Prince*. “And how shall we do that?” you ask. I answer, come to Him at once with the *sorrowful confession* of your past rebellion. You have lived, I do not know how many years, you unconverted ones, without paying due homage to Jesus! You have known about Him, but you have not obeyed Him. Up to this moment you have resisted His love and said, “Let us break His bands asunder, and cast His cords from us.” Con-

fess this and be ashamed, for it is a great disgrace not to be swayed by such love as that of Christ! It is a great sin not to be in love with such an one as that which shines in the person of the Son of God! It shows moral hardness of heart, and bluntness of perception. It shows prejudice of soul and ignorance of mind not to be, at once, the willing subject of Christ. These many years you have said, "I will not have this man to reign over me." Oh, may the gentle Spirit cause you, now, to see the folly and the sin of this conduct! And may you confess it with tearful eyes while you obey the bidding of the old Psalm, and "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry."

When you have confessed the past before this Prince, then I charge you *accept His great purpose and submit to His rule*. He is a Prince, therefore yield yourself to be His subject. Do you know what the objective of His rule is? It is to make you love God and to be like God! You are created, and therefore, launched upon the sea of existence! You cannot help this fact or alter it—your existence has been *given* you, and you cannot lose it! How can this creation of yours be an eternal blessing, and the danger be removed of its becoming a never-ending curse? The answer is simple—if you are right with your Creator, you are right with everything! If you are reconciled to Him, you will be happy in time and in eternity! But you cannot be right with your Creator until past guilt is forgiven, and sin is given up—and the love of wrongdoing, the love of everything that is contrary to His pure and Holy mind—is destroyed in you. Now, Jesus comes in order that He may kill in you everything that is contrary to the mind of God. He comes to make you holy, yes, to make you perfect! Will you yield yourself to His gentle purpose? Are you ready to obey His precepts by means of which His Spirit will sanctify you wholly—spirit, soul, and body? He is able to save from sin! His name is Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Do you really wish to be saved from sin? Jesus once asked a sick man, "Will you be made whole?" It is the question which He asks of you today, dear friend. You would be glad to be saved from going to hell. Yes, but that is not it. Do you desire to be saved from that which created hell, from that which is the fuel of the unquenchable fire and the tooth of the undying worm—namely, the love of iniquity, the love of sin? Christ can save from sin, as a Savior, and lead you into the kingdom of righteousness of which He is the Prince. Are you willing that He should do so?

If it is taken for granted that you have approached the Lord Jesus in this way, I would next say, as He is a Prince, surrender everything to Him. Christ claims of you that if you are saved, since it is through His redemption, you should, from now on, be His. If He has redeemed you, then you belong to Him—from now on you are not your own—you are bought with a price. It is an inevitable consequence of being redeemed from death and hell by Jesus' blood that you should be Christ's forever. Oh, can you lift your eyes to heaven, and say, "If He will have me, I will cheerfully be His"? Can you make over now, this morning, by the help of God's Spirit, your body and your soul as a living sacrifice? Can you give to Him, now, all that you owe and all that you have? Could you stand at the foot of the cross and say—

*"And if I might make some reverse,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I would give Him all!"*

He asks it of you. Will you do it, O seeking soul, will you do it? For if that is done, surely, then, Christ *is* to you a Prince and a Savior!

And if this is accomplished, and He is Lord, then *pay your loving, loyal homage to your Prince*. Behold Him in His glory, where all the angels cast their crowns before Him while the elders adore Him with vials full of sweet odors! If Christ is to be your Savior, He must be your Prince, and you must have a loyal attachment to Him, deep and true. Is this a hard thing to ask of you? I think it is the joy of my life to be the subject and the servant of King Jesus! The name of the Queen stirs the British soldier's heart, and oftentimes, in the hour of battle, he has thought of his sovereign, and his country, and has been willing to lay down his life. But the love of Jesus is a more intense passion, by far, and the loyalty of a good soldier to Jesus Christ is a stronger force than any loyalty to earthly princes! You must have this! Do you see how right it is that you should have it? Towards such a one as Jesus we are proud to cherish a love which many waters cannot quench! A love stronger than death! Approach Him, then, with loving hearts, or at least bring your hearts, and ask to have them *made* loving.

You must also approach the Lord Jesus as Savior. Do not proudly murmur at this. I have known some who have been willing to take Christ for their *example* and as their *teacher*—and so far they have

acknowledged Him as a Prince—but they cannot stand it that they should confess their need of a Savior! But you must have Jesus as a Savior, as well as a Prince, or you will be lost forever! I do now affectionately urge the sinner who is seeking mercy to come to Christ Jesus, confessing that he needs a Savior. Look at your sin, and consider your past life with all its transgressions. Are you not ashamed of it? Are you not afraid to stand before that judgment seat where you must give an account for every idle word that you have spoken? Does not conscience fill you with trembling? Well, come and tell the Savior! Tell Him all! Pour out your heart before Him! Acknowledge that you are undone and condemned unless He can, in His pity, obtain a pardon for you. Are you actually doing so, now? Let us get down to business, as I have said before! Make the confession, now, from your heart while we are yet speaking.

That done, since Christ is a Savior, *believe that He is able to save you*. Seeing He died the bitter death of the cross, suffering from divine justice in a most terrible manner upon Calvary, there must be, in those five wounds, power enough to be the death of every sin! O crimson blood, you must have merit enough in you to wash out crimson sin! It must be so! He who died upon the cross is God as well as perfect man, and a sacrifice offered by Him must have infinite power and efficacy to remove sin. Believe this, also, and when you have believed it, then understand that you must *submit yourself entirely to His processes of salvation*. He is able to save you, but He has a way of His own, and He will *not* save you in *your* way, but only in His way! And His way of saving you is to make you feel the smart and bitterness of sin, to make you hate that sin, loathe it, and to turn you from it forever! Thus He saves you—are you willing to have it so? Can you say, “Farewell,” this morning, to the sins you have loved so long? Is there any attraction to you, yet, in the harlots and the riotous with whom you have spent your Father’s substance? Have you still a lingering love to the far country, or can you bid its citizens a long farewell? Do the swine attract you? Have you a hankering after the husks which they eat, so that you can refuse to go to Christ when He would take you away from these filthy pleasures and degrading delights? Can you say, “I cannot linger longer here. It is Sodom, and the fire will soon descend from heaven! I must flee for my life and look not behind me. I must and will do so, for Jesus takes me by the hand and leads me on”? If you have sincerely done this, and you are willing to have a divorce from your sins—all and thoroughly—from table, bed, hearth, and in all ways so that sin and you shall no more be on loving terms, then, I say, if you are willing for this, all you have now to do is to *trust your Savior*! Lean all your weight on Him! Repose your whole self on Him! You see your need of Him. You see His power to save you, and you know what is meant by being saved, namely, delivered from the power of sin—will you now trust Him to make you pure? If you do, you have come to Him as a Prince and a Savior, and He has said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out,” and He will not, *cannot* cast you out! This approach to the Lord Jesus should be made at this moment, where you now are! There is no need to go elsewhere, or tarry for an hour. While yet you are here, God’s Holy Spirit can enable you to come to Christ as your Prince and your Savior.

I am putting the truth of God very plainly. I have scarcely used one figure of speech or a single ornament of language. I have tried to tell you the way of salvation very plainly. And having told you, I can do no more but earnestly ask you—will you have this Prince and Savior, or not? May the Spirit of God persuade you to give the right reply!

III. In the third place, NOTE THE GIFTS OF THE LORD JESUS. He is “exalted with God’s right hand to give repentance and forgiveness of sins.” Now if, dear hearer, you are distressed, this morning, beneath the burden of sin, I pray you to catch at this blessed sentence, for there is honey here which shall take away the bitterness of your soul! I think I heard you say, “Gladly would I have Christ as Prince and Savior! I am willing enough, but this hard heart, this rebellious will—what can I do with them?” Listen—“He is exalted to give *repentance*.” This does not mean, as some have said, to give *space* for repentance. We must not add words to Scripture! Nor does it mean to make repentance acceptable. Look at the text, and no trace of such a meaning is there. But, “to give repentance,” and repentance, itself, is intended, which is as much the *gift* of the ascended Savior as the forgiveness which follows upon it! What is repentance? If we keep to its *literal* meaning it is a *change of mind*, but then it is a very wonderful change of mind! He can give you to change your mind about all the past so that the things which pleased you shall grieve you! That which charmed you shall disgust you! That which you do love you shall hate, and that which you do desire you shall abhor. This is His gift to His *chosen*—“I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh; a new heart, also, will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them.” What a marvelous thing this change of mind as to the

past is! He can also change your mind as to the *present* and the *future*, so that, instead of looking for present pleasure, you will find your delight in future glory realized by faith! Do you understand me? It shall be pleasure enough to you to think of the pleasures at God's right hand forevermore! Jesus can save you from living like the beast which looks not an hour ahead, but is content with the pasture around it—and will even walk into the slaughterhouse to be slain—so little does it know what is reserved for it! Jesus can save you from being so brutish, and make you look into the eternal future with the eyes of a wise man! He can give you a good hope, and inspire you with a good objective worthy of the eternity which lies before you. Christ can give such a change of mind as shall make the whole world seem new—and yourself most changed of all!

Repentance includes a most necessary sense of sin, and the Savior can give you this by His Spirit. He can fill your soul with the barbed arrows of conviction till your heart bleeds with inward grief on account of sin, or He can work more gently, and make you repent by melting you beneath the smiles of His love. He can make you sing—

*“Your mercy is more than a match for my heart,
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart.
Dissolved by Your goodness, I fall to the ground
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found.”*

He can work in you desires after holiness, and hatred of every false way. He can take the guile out of your soul as well as the guilt out of your life. He can give you to be true and upright before Him, and cleansed in the inward parts.

Everything that is included in “repentance” Jesus Christ is exalted to *give*. Now, if no one obtains repentance, then Christ is exalted in vain—but somebody must have it, for Christ is not exalted in vain! Why, then, should YOU not have it? You need it! Your heart seems hard as granite and cold as a block of ice. Well, if you need it, why should you not have it? To whom does a man give his alms but to the needy? Do not the wise distribute their gifts to those who need them? If you need them, come and freely take them! Repentance will not spring out of your unrenewed heart, but the Prince and Savior can create it in you! Come to Him for it—

*“True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings You nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”*

Here I preach Christ not merely to penitent sinners, but to impenitent sinners! O rock, be smashed with this rod! The cross can fetch the waters of repentance out of stony hearts! O hard heart, be melted with this sacred fire! The fire of Jesus' love can dissolve the northern iron and steel of obdurate impenitence! He is exalted on high to *give* repentance! Therefore, O sinners, look to Him for repentance!

It is added as His second gift, “to give *forgiveness*.” And the forgiveness which Jesus gives is very blessed. I pray you, seeking soul, pay attention to each word I now say on this point. He can pass an act of amnesty and oblivion for all your sins. If He forgives you, all your transgressions shall be as though they had never been! He will make clean work of it, blotting out every record of your sin so that in God's book there shall be no grieving memory of your having been a sinner at all! So powerful is the atoning blood that all manner of sin and transgression shall be forgiven unto men for its sake. Sins against a holy God, sins against Christ's love and blood, sins against conscience, sins against the law, sins against the gospel, sins which have lain in your bones from your youth up, sins of your middle age, sins of your old age, aggravated sins, black sins, damnable sins—all are gone when He says, “I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and as a thick cloud your transgressions.” Jesus has gone to heaven on purpose to give this complete forgiveness!

Now mark, when full forgiveness comes it brings with it the eternal removal of the penalty! The forgiven man cannot be punished! For him there is no hell, no worm that dies not, nor fire that never can be quenched. God cannot forgive and then punish! If He removes your transgressions from you as far as the east is from the west, then who is he that shall lay anything to your charge? Who is he that can condemn? And who is he that can punish you?

With the pardon of sin there shall come also a restoration of every privilege. All that Adam had in the garden you shall have to be yours—not all of it to enjoy just now—but all and *more* than all shall be restored to you, for the man who wears the righteousness of Christ, and is accepted in the Beloved may

not have a paradise on earth, but he has a paradise above! For him there may be no golden apples of Eden, but there shall be the fruit of the tree of life, of which he shall eat forever and ever—

*“What Adam had, and forfeited for us all,
Christ has who cannot fail nor fall.”*

He that believes on Christ Jesus shall dwell in bliss, and be satisfied with the goodness of the Lord!

And mark you once again you shall, when forgiven, *have quiet in your soul*, for when you are pardoned, all the hurly-burly of your spirit shall turn into a deep calm. You shall have the “peace of God which passes all understanding” to “keep your heart and mind by Christ Jesus.” “Oh,” says one, “I would give my eyes for it!” You shall have it without giving your eyes! Give your *heart*—no, and not even give your heart as a price for it—take the blessing *freely*, for freely it is given! Jesus is exalted on high that He may grant free pardons to great offenders! I come back to that statement—if Jesus is exalted on purpose to give pardon, then if He does *not* give forgiveness to someone, He is exalted in vain! He **MUST**, therefore, give it to some—why should He not bestow it upon *you*?

The text says, “to give repentance to Israel.” Who and what was Israel? The people of Israel, in our Lord’s time, were surely the very worst of sinners, for it was by them that the Lord was nailed to the cross! It was the Jews who cried, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” It means, then, that Jesus is exalted to give repentance and pardon to the chief of sinners, and if I am one, if, instead of blaming Jews or the Romans, I blame myself! If I take the death of Christ on my own shoulders, and say—

*“’Twas you my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were!
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear,”*

then He is exalted to give me repentance and remission for my great sins!

Do I need to ask you, will you have these two gifts? Ah, friends, it shows how deep is the depravity of the human heart that we should have need to press our Master’s mercies on you. If sin were not a madness, it would only need the preacher to come and tell about this blessed gospel, and you would begin to sing, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes salvation, that said unto Zion, Your God reigns as a Prince and a Savior in heaven.” Instead, however, of offering my Lord a joyful reception, some of you will count it a weariness to be entreated and pleaded with. I feel in my own soul that though my Master enables me to put these things before you, you will not receive them unless His love forces you. We can bring the horse to the water, but we cannot make it drink. And we can bring Christ before you, but we cannot make you accept Him. I pray that there may be some soft relenting, some gentle melting of your spirit this very morning, for, “unto you is the word of this salvation sent.”

My dear hearer, I may never have addressed you before. Happy shall I be if at the very first assault I win your soul for my Master! Or perhaps I have spoken with you many, many times, and my voice is getting rather stale and flat to you. Well, I am sorry if I mar the message, but still it is so good that, though I stammered it, you ought, still, to catch at it and say, “Yes, if He is exalted to give repentance and pardon, here is my bosom, Lord! Pour them both into my soul at this good hour.”

IV. As I said to you about the titles, approach the Lord Jesus as such, so now I say about His gifts—**ASK HIM FOR THEM.** Ask now, at this moment! Again, I say I want you to get down to business, and be *doing* as well as listening. While I am speaking, may the Holy Spirit incline your hearts to practical obedience! At this moment ask the Lord Jesus *humbly* for repentance and pardon. You do not deserve these gifts—if He leaves you to perish He will be just. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. You have no claim to His love and must not set up any! Your heart is hard, and He can leave you in your unbelief. You are guilty, and He can justly leave you to bear your punishment. Ask *humbly*, therefore, not daring to claim anything, but appealing to His sovereign grace. Say—

*“O save a guilty sinner, Lord,
Whose hope still hovering round Your word
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair.”*

Ask *importunately*. Do not come to mercy’s gate, this morning, with a cold heart, and unwilling spirit. Come with this resolve, “I will not leave the cross till my sins have left me. I will plead for the grace of God until I obtain it. With importunity will I wrestle saying—

*‘Lord, I cannot let You go
Till a blessing You bestow.’”*

The angel is near this morning! Seize Him! Grasp Him! And if He seems to fling you off, hold to Him, still, and say, “I will not let You go except you bless me, and bless me now!” You will get the blessing if you can pray like that! Pray with deep humility, because you are unworthy, but with violent importunity because you are in such fearful peril and you cannot endure to be lost!

But I ask you to pray *believingly*, and this is indeed the heart of the matter. Ask for remission and repentance, this morning, believing that Christ can give it, and believing that He is as willing as He is able. If you can look up and see those dear eyes which wept over sinners. If you can see those wounds, still open for sinners like so many gates of heaven, you will perceive that Jesus still calls to you and bids you trust Him! Do not think Him unwilling to forgive. That would be too cruel a suspicion after He has died! Trust Him wholly, only, sincerely, solely! Have done with those works and prayers, and tears which you have been known to rely upon! All that you ever did to save yourself must be undone! Nature’s spinning must all be unraveled—her fig leaves will wither—sin’s nakedness requires a better covering. Your only hope lies in Him who is Prince and Savior. Cry at once to Him—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Your kind arms I fall;
You are my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.”*

And—and this is the last word—*ask now!* Do not put me off this morning! I am in earnest, even if you are not! But oh, it is *your* soul, not mine, that is now at stake! I pray you be in earnest, O man, and be so now! Perhaps you will never hear another plea! It may be this is the last Sabbath you will spend on earth! Where will you be if you reject the Savior? Where the Sabbath bell shall never ring out its happy summons! Where the silver voice of mercy shall never again salute you! There *is* another world—you will not die like a dog! There is a *judgment* to come and you will have to stand before your Maker to give an account of all your life! There is an everlasting punishment as surely as there is an eternal reward. Now I ask you, and I charge you, to go no further till you have answered this question—is it worthwhile to lose your soul for whatever you can gain by it? The Romans, when they meant to bring things to an issue with an Oriental tyrant, sent their ambassador. And the ambassador was to bring his answer back—yes or no, war or peace. What do you think the ambassador did? When he saw the king, he stooped down, and with his wand he drew a ring upon the ground round the monarch. And then he said, “Step outside that ring, and it means war with Rome. Before you leave that circle you must accept our terms of peace, or know that Rome will use her utmost force to fight with you.” I draw a ring round you while you are sitting in that pew, or standing in that aisle, and I demand an answer! Sinner, will you now be saved or not? Today is the accepted time! Today is the day of salvation! O Holy Spirit, lead the sinner to now ask, and he shall receive! To believe, and he shall be saved. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ACTS 5:17-42.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—304, 569, 332.

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