HOW IS SALVATION RECEIVED?

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A SERMON
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"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace;
to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;
not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham;
who is the father of us all."
Romans 4:16

WE shall turn during yet another Sabbath morning to one of the great vital truths of the Gospel. I feel it to be important more and more to bring forward the fundamental doctrines, since they are in certain quarters placed so much in the background.

I met with a remark the other day that even the evangelical pulpit needs to be evangelized. I am afraid it is too true, and therefore we will give such prominence to the Gospel, and to its central doctrine of justification by faith, that no such remark shall be applicable to us.

We have heard it said that if an instrument could be invented which would serve the same purpose towards sermons as the lactometer does towards milk, you would with great difficulty be able to discover any trace of the unadulterated milk of the Word in large numbers of modern discourses.

I shall not subscribe to any sweeping censure, but I am afraid there is too much ground for the accusation. In abundance of sermons, the polish of the rhetoric is greatly in excess of the weight of the doctrine, and "the wisdom of words" is far more conspicuous than the cross of Christ.

Besides, the Gospel is always wanted. There are always some persons who urgently need it, and will perish unless they receive it. It is a matter of hourly necessity. There may be finer and more artistic things to speak about than the simplicities of Christ, but there are certainly no more useful and requisite things.

The signposts at the crossroads bear very simple words, generally consisting of the names of the towns and villages to which the roads lead. But if these were painted out and their places supplied with stanzas from Byron, or stately lines from Milton, or deep thoughts from Cowper or Young, I am afraid there would be grievous complaints from persons losing their way.

They would declare that however excellent the poetry might be, they thought it an impertinence to mock them with a verse when they needed plain directions as to the king's highway. So let those who will indulge in poetical thoughts and express them in high-flown language, it shall be ours to set up the signposts marking out the way of salvation, and to keep them painted in letters large and plain, so that he who runs may read.

There is another reason for giving the Gospel over and over, again and again. It is the reason which makes the mother tell her child twenty times, namely, because nineteen times are not enough. Men are so forgetful about the things of Christ, and their minds are so apt to step aside from the truth, that when they have learned the Gospel they are very easily bewitched by falsehood, and are readily deceived by that "other gospel" which is not another.

Therefore, we need to give them "line upon line and precept upon precept." I scarcely remember the old rustic rhyme, but I recollect hearing it sung in my boyish days when the country people were dibbling beans, and according to the old plan were putting three into each hole—I think it ran thus—

"One for the worm and one for the crow,
And let us hope the other will grow."

We must be content to plant many seeds in the hope that one will take root and bear fruit. The worm and crow are always at work, and will be sure to get their full share of our sowing, and therefore let us sow the more.

Come we, then, to our text and to the Gospel of faith. Last Sabbath, the theme was, For whom is the Gospel meant? and the reply was, for sinners. The question today is, *How is the Gospel received*? The answer is, *by faith.*

Our first head shall be *the fact,* "it is of faith." Secondly, *the first reason for this,* "that it might be by grace." And thirdly, *the further reason*, "to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed."

I. First, then, here is THE FACT—*it is of faith.*

What does the "it" refer to? *It* is of faith. If you will read the context, I think you will consider that it refers to the promise, although some have said that the antecedent word or thought is "the inheritance." This matters very little, if at all—it may mean the inheritance, the covenant, or the promise, for these are one. To give a wide word which will take in all—the blessedness which comes to a man in Christ, the blessedness promised by the covenant of grace is of faith—in one word, salvation is of faith.

And what is faith? It is believing the promise of God, taking God at His Word, and acting upon that belief by trusting in Him. Some of the Puritans used to divide faith, improperly but still instructively, into three parts. The first was self-renunciation, which is, perhaps, rather a preparation for faith than faith itself. In which a man confesses that he cannot trust in himself, and so goes out of self and all confidence in his own good works.

The second part of faith they said was reliance in which a man believing the promise of God trusts Him, depends upon Him, and leaves his soul in the Savior's hands. And then the third part of faith they said was appropriation by which a man takes to himself that which God presents in the promise to the believer, appropriates it as his own, feeds upon it, and enjoys it.

Certainly there is no true faith without self-renunciation, reliance, and at least a measure of appropriation—where these three are found, there is faith in the soul. We shall, however, better understand what faith is as we proceed with our subject, if God the Holy Ghost will be pleased to enlighten us. Dear friends, you can easily see that the blessing was of faith in Abraham's case, and it is precisely the same with all those who by faith are the children of believing Abraham.

First, *it was so in the case of Abraham.* Abraham obtained the promise by faith, and not by works, nor by the energy of the flesh. He relied alone upon the divine promise. We read in the seventeenth verse, "(As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations), before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which are not as though they were."

Abraham's faith consisted in *believing the promise* of God, and this he did firmly and practically. He was far away in Chaldea when the Lord called him out, and promised to give him a land and a seed, and straightway he went forth, not knowing where he went. When he came into Canaan, he had no settled resting place, but wandered about in tents, still believing most fully that the land wherein he sojourned as a stranger was his own.

God promised to give him a seed, and yet he had no children. Year followed year, and in the course of nature, he grew old and his wife was long past the age of child-bearing, and yet there was no son born to them. When at last Ishmael was born, his hope in that direction was dashed to the ground, for he was informed that the covenant was not with Ishmael.

Believing Abraham had stepped aside to carnal expediency, and had hoped in that way to realize the lingering promise, but he had fourteen more years to wait, till he was a hundred years old, and till Sarah had reached her ninetieth year. Yet he believed the word of the Lord, and fell upon his face and laughed with holy joy and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old?"

So, too, when Isaac was born and grown up, he believed that in Isaac should the covenant be established, nor did he doubt this when the Lord bade him take Isaac and offer him up as a sacrifice. He obeyed without questioning, believing that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, or in some other way to keep His word of promise.

Now consider that we have multiplied promises, and those are written down in black and white in the inspired Word, which we may consult at any time we please, while Abraham had only now and then a verbal promise, and yet he clung to it and relied upon it.

Though there was nothing else to rely upon, and neither sign nor evidence of any offspring to fulfill the promise that he should be heir of the world and father of many nations, yet he needed no other ground of confidence but that God had said it and that He would make His word good.

There was in Abraham, also, *an eye to the central point of the promise*—the Messiah, Jesus, our Lord. I do not know that Abraham understood all the spiritual meaning of the covenant made with him, probably he did not. But he did understand that the Christ was to be born of him, in whom all nations should be blessed.

When the Lord said that He would make him a blessing, and in him should all nations of the earth be blessed, I do not suppose Abraham saw all the fullness of that marvelous word, but he did see that he was to be the progenitor of the Messiah.

Our Lord Himself is my authority for this assertion, "Abraham saw my day, he saw it and was glad" (Joh 8:56). Though there appeared to this man, old and withered, with a wife ninety years of age, no likelihood that he should ever become a father, yet did he fully believe that he would be the father of many nations, and that upon no ground whatever but that the living God had so promised him, and therefore so it must be.

This faith of Abraham we find *considered no difficulties whatever*. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall your seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief."

Brethren, these were in themselves terrible difficulties, enough to make a man fear that the promise did but mock him, but Abraham did not consider anything beyond the promise and the God who gave it. The difficulties were for God to consider, and not for him. He knew that God had made the world out of nothing, and that He supported all things by the word of His power, and therefore he felt that nothing was too hard for Him.

His own advanced years and the age of his wife were of no consequence. he did not take them into the reckoning, but saw only a faithful Almighty God and felt content. O noble faith! Faith such as God deserves! Faith such as none render to Him but those whom He calls by effectual grace! This it was which justified Abraham, and made him the father of believers.

Abraham's faith also *gave glory to God*. I stopped in the middle of the twentieth verse just now, but we must now complete the reading of it. "But was strong in faith, giving glory to God." God had promised, and he treated the Lord's promise with becoming reverence. He did not impiously suspect the Lord of falsehood, or of mocking His servant, or of uttering today what He might take back tomorrow.

He knew that JEHOVAH is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Abraham glorified the truth of God, and at the same time he glorified His power. He was quite certain that the Lord had not spoken beyond His line, but that what He had promised He was able to perform.

It belongs to puny man to speak more than he can do—full often his tongue is longer than his arm—but with the Lord it is never so. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Abraham adoringly believed in the immutability, truth, and power of the living God, and looked for the fulfillment of His word.

All this strong, unstaggering faith which glorified God *rested upon the Lord alone*. You will see that it was so by reading the twenty-first verse. "Being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was

able also to perform." There was nothing whatever in his house, his wife, himself, or anywhere else, which could guarantee the fulfillment of the promise. He had only God to look to—only, did I say—what could a man have more? Yet so it was, there were no signs, marks, tokens, or indications to substantiate the confidence of Abraham. He rested solely upon the unlimited power of God.

And this, dear brethren, is the kind of faith which God loves and honors, which wants no signs, marks, evidences, helps, or other buttresses to support the plain and sure Word of the Lord, but simply knows that JEHOVAH has said it, and that He will make it good. Though all things should give the promise the lie, we believe in it because we believe in God.

True faith ridicules impossibility, and pours contempt upon improbability, knowing that omnipotence and immutability cannot be thwarted or hindered. Has God said it? Then so it is. Dictum! Factum! Spoken! Done! These two are one with the Most High.

Well, now, *the faith of every man who is saved must be of this character.* Every man who receives salvation receives it by a faith like that of Abraham, for, my brethren, when we are saved *we too take the promise of God and depend upon it*. To one believer, one Word of God is applied, to another another, but some sweet word, most sure and steadfast, is discovered upon which we fix our hope, and find anchorage for our spirit.

Yea, and as we search the Word by faith, we take each promise as we find it, and we say, "This is true," and "This is true," and so we rest upon all of them. Is it not so with all of you who have peace with God? Did you not gain it by resting upon the promise of God as you found it in the Word, and as it was opened up to you by the Holy Spirit? Have you any other ground of confidence but God's promise? I know you have not, my brethren, nor do you desire any.

And *we also believe in God over the head of great difficulties*. If it was hard for Abraham to believe that a son should be born unto him, methinks it is harder for a poor burdened sinner, conscious of his great guilt, conscious that God must punish him also for that guilt, to believe nevertheless in the hopeful things which the Gospel prophesies unto him.

Can I believe that the righteous God is looking upon me, a sinner, with eyes of love? Can I believe that though I have offended Him and broken all His laws, He nevertheless waits to be gracious to me? While my heart is heavy and the prospect is black around me, and I see nothing but a terrible hell to be my eternal portion, can I at such a time believe that God has planned my redemption, and given His Son to die for me, and that now He invites me to come and receive a full, perfect, and immediate pardon at His hands?

Can the Gospel message be true to such a worthless rebel as I am? It seems as if the law and justice of God set themselves against the truth of such wonderful deeds of mercy as the Gospel announces, and it is hard for a stricken heart to believe the report. But the faith which saves the soul believes the Gospel promise in the teeth of all its alarms, and notwithstanding all the thunders of the law.

Despite the trepidation of the awakened spirit, the Holy Spirit enables it to accept the great Father's Word, to rest upon the propitiation which He has set forth, and to quiet itself with the firm persuasion that God for Christ's sake does put away its sin.

At the same time another grand miracle is also believed in, namely, regeneration. This seems to me to be quite as great an act of faith as for Abraham to believe in the birth of a child by two parents who were both advanced in years. The case stands thus—here am I, dead by nature, dead in trespasses and sins. The deadness of Abraham and Sarah according to nature was not greater than the deadness of my soul to every good thing.

Is it possible, then, that I should live unto God? That within this stony heart there should yet throb eternal life and divine love, and that I should come to delight in God? Can it be that with such a depraved and deceitful heart as mine, I should yet rise to fellowship with the holy God, and should call Him my Father, and feel the spirit of adoption within my heart?

Can I, who now dread the Lord, yet come to rejoice in Him? "Oh," says the poor troubled sinner, "can I, that have fought against the throne of God, I that even tried to doubt His existence, ever come to

be at perfect peace with Him, so that He shall call me His friend and reveal His secrets to me and listen to my voice in prayer? Is it possible?"

The faith which saves the soul believes in the possibility of regeneration and sanctification—nay, more—it believes in Jesus, and obtains for us power to become children of God, and strength to conquer sin. This is believing God indeed.

Look this way yet again, for here is another difficulty. We know that we must persevere to the end, for only he that endures to the end shall be saved. Does it not seem incredible that such feeble, fickle, foolish creatures as we are should continue in faith and the fear of God all our lives? Yet this we must do.

And the faith which saves, enables us to believe that we shall persevere. For it is persuaded that the Redeemer is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him, that He will perfect that which concerns us, that He will suffer none to pluck us out of His hand, and that having begun the good work in us He will carry it on. This is faith worthy of the father of the faithful.

Once again, let us behold another difficulty for faith. We believe according to God's promise that we shall one day be "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." I do believe that this head shall wear a crown of glory, and that this hand shall wave a palm branch. I am fully assured that He will one day sweetly say to me—

"Close thine eyes that thou mays't see
What I have in store for thee.
Lay thine arms of warfare down,
Fall that thou mays't win a crown."

We, all, who are believers in Jesus, shall one day be without fault before the throne of God—but how is this to be? Surely our confidence is that He who has promised it is able to perform it. This is the faith which finds its way to glory—the faith which expects to enter into the Redeemer's joy, because of the Redeemer's love and life.

Brethren, in this matter we see the difficulties, but we do not consider them. We count them as less than nothing since omnipotence has come into the field. "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We know that our Redeemer lives, and that because He lives, we shall also live, and be with Him where He is.

At the end of the chapter, we are told that *this saving faith rests in the power of God as manifested in Jesus*—"If we believe in him who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

Beloved, we believe that Jesus died, as certainly died as ever any man died, and yet on the morning of the third day He rose again from the dead by divine power. It is not to us a thing incredible that God should raise the dead. We, therefore, believe that because God has raised the dead, He has raised us also from our death in sin, and that He will raise our bodies from the tomb after they shall have slept awhile in the earth.

We believe also that our Lord Jesus died for our offenses, and put them away. Our faith builds upon the substitution of the Lord Jesus on our behalf, and it rests there with firm confidence. We believe also that He rose again because His substitution was accepted, and because our offenses were forever put away—rose again to prove that we are justified in Him.

This is where we stand then. I expect to be saved, not at all because of what I am, nor of what I can do, nor because of anything I ever shall be able to be or to do, but only because God has promised to save those who believe in Jesus Christ through what the Lord Jesus has suffered in their stead. Because Jesus has risen to prove that His suffering was accepted on the behalf of believers, there do we rest and trust, and that is the way in which every believer is saved—that way and no way else. Even as Abraham believed, so do we. Here is the fact—it is of faith.

II. Now we come to the second point. And here we are to consider THE FIRST REASON why God has chosen to make salvation by faith, "*that it might be of grace*."

Now, dear friends, the Lord might have willed to make the condition of salvation a mitigated form of works. If He had done so, it would not have been of grace, for it is a principle which I need not explain now, but a fixed principle, that if the blessing is of grace it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.

And if it be of works, it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work. As water and oil will not mix, and as fire and water will not lie down side by side in quiet, so neither will the principle of merit and the principle of free favor. You cannot make a legal work to be a condition of a gracious blessing without at once introducing an alien element, and really bringing the soul under the covenant of works, and so spoiling the whole plan of mercy.

Grace and faith are congruous, and will draw together in the same chariot, but grace and merit are contrary, the one to the other, and pull opposite ways, and therefore God has not chosen to yoke them together. He will not build with incongruous materials, or daub with untempered mortar. He will not make an image partly of gold and partly of clay, nor weave a linsey-woolsey garment—His work is all of one piece and all of grace.

Again, *in Abraham's case*, inasmuch as he received by faith the blessing which God promised him, *it is very evident that it was of grace*. You never heard anyone ascribe Abraham's salvation to his merits, and yet Abraham was an eminently holy man. There are specks in his life—and in whose life will there not be found infirmities?—but he was one of the grandest characters of history.

Still, no man thinks of Abraham as a self-justifying person, or as at all related to the Pharisee who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." I never heard anybody hint that the great patriarch had whereof to glory before God. His name is not "the father of the innocent," but "the father of the faithful."

When we read of Abraham's life, we see that God called him by an act of sovereign grace, that God made a covenant with him as an act of grace, and that the promised child was born, not of the power of the flesh, but entirely according to promise. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in the life of the patriarch, and it is illustrated in a thousand ways whenever we see his faith receiving the promises. The holiness of Abraham, since it arose out of his faith, never leads us to ascribe his blessedness to anything but the grace of God.

Now, inasmuch as we are saved by faith, *every believer is made to see in himself that, in his own instance, it is by grace.* Believing is such a self-renounciating act that no man who looks for eternal life thereby ever talked about his own merits, except to count them but dross and dung. No, brethren, the child of the promise cannot live in the same house with the son of the bondwoman. When Isaac grows up, Ishmael must depart.

The principle of believing unto everlasting life will not endure a hint about human deservings. Those who believe in justification by faith are the only persons who can believe in salvation by grace. The believer may grow in grace till he becomes fully assured of his own salvation.

Yes, and he may become holiness unto the Lord in a very remarkable manner, being wholly consecrated to God in body, soul, and spirit, but you will never hear the believing man speak of his experience, or attainments, or achievements as a reason for glorying in himself, or as an argument for becoming more confident as to his safety.

He dares not trust his works or states of feeling, for he feels that by faith he stands. He cannot get away from simple faith, for the moment he attempts to do so, he feels the ground going from under him, and he begins to sink into horrible confusion of spirit. Therefore, he returns to his rest, and resolves to abide in faith in his risen Savior, for there he abides in the grace of God.

Through the prominence given to faith, the truth of salvation by grace is so conspicuously revealed that *even the outside world is compelled to see it*, though the only result may be to make them cavil thereat. They charge us with preaching too much concerning grace, because they hear us magnifying and

extolling the plan of salvation by faith, and they readily perceive that a gift promised to faith must be a boon of grace, and not a reward for services done. Only begin to preach salvation by works or ceremonies, and nobody will accuse you of saying too much of grace, but keep to faith and you are sure to keep to the preaching of grace.

Moreover, *faith never did clash with grace yet*. When the sinner comes and trusts to Christ, and Christ says to him, "I forgive you freely by My grace," faith says, "O Lord, that is what I want, and what I believe in. I ask You to deal with me even so." "But if I give you everlasting life, it will not be because you deserve it, but for Mine own name's sake." Faith replies, "O Lord, that also is precisely as I desire. It is the sum and substance of my prayer."

When faith grows strong and takes to pleading in prayer (and oh how mighty she is with God in supplication, moving His omnipotence to her mind), yet all her pleadings are based on grace, and none of them upon the merit of the creature. Never yet did faith borrow weapons from Mount Sinai. Never once did she ask as though the favor were a debt, but she always holds to the promise of the gracious God, and expects all things from the faithfulness of her God.

Ay, and when faith grows strongest and attains to her highest stature, and is fullest of delight, so that she dances for very joy, yet she never in all her exultation boasts or exalts herself. Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By the law of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.

Faith and carnal boasting never yet walked together. If a man should boast of the strength of his faith, it would be clear evidence that he had none at all, or at least that he had for the time fallen into vainglorious presumption. Boasting? No, faith loves to lie low, and behave herself as a little child, and when she lifts herself up, it is to exalt her Lord and her Lord alone.

Faith, too, is well-calculated to show forth the grace of God, because *faith is the child of grace*. "Ah," says faith, "I have grasped the covenant. I have laid hold on the promises, I have seen Christ, I have gazed into heaven, I have enjoyed foretastes of eternal joys. But (says she) I am of the operation of God—I should never have existed if the Spirit of God had not created me."

The believer knows that his faith is not a weed indigenous to the soil of his heart, but a rare plant—an exotic which has been planted there by divine wisdom, and he knows too that if the Lord does not nourish it, his faith will die like a withered flower. He knows that his faith is a perpetual miracle, for it is begotten, sustained, and preserved by a power not less mighty than that which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

If I met with an angel in a hovel I should know that he was not born there, but that he came from above. And so is it with faith—its heavenly descent is manifest to all. Faith, then, tracing her very existence to grace, never can be anything but the friend, the vindicator, the advocate, and the glorifier of the grace of God—therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace.

III. Now, thirdly, there is A FURTHER REASON for faith and grace being the Lord's chosen method of salvation, "*To the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.*"

Look at this, dear friends, very carefully. Salvation was made to be of faith, and not of works, that the promise might be sure to all the seed, for first, *it could not have been sure to us Gentiles by the law*, because in a certain sense, we were not under the law of Moses at all.

Turn to the text and you find that it runs thus, "Sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." That is to say, the Jew receiving the seal of circumcision and coming under the ceremonial law, eating its Passover, and presenting its sacrifices, might possibly have been reached by a legal method, but we who are Gentiles would have been altogether shut out.

As to the covenant according to the flesh, we are aliens and have never come under its bonds, or participated in its privileges, and therefore grace chooses to bless us by faith in order that the Gentile may partake of the blessing of the covenant as well as the Jew.

But there is a still wider reason—it is of faith, because *the other method has failed already in every case.* We have all broken the law already, and so have put ourselves beyond the power of ever receiving

blessing as a reward of merit. Failure at the outset has ruined our future prospects, and henceforth by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. What remains, then, if we are to be saved at all, but that it should be of faith? This door alone is open. Let us bless God that no man can shut it.

Again, it is of faith that it *might be sure*. Now, under the system of works nothing is sure. Suppose, my dear brethren, you were under a covenant of salvation by works, and you had fulfilled those works up till now, yet you would not be sure. Are you seventy years of age, and have you kept your standing till now? Well, you have done a great deal more than father Adam did, for though he was a perfect man without any natural corruption, I do not suppose that he kept his first estate for a day.

But after all you have done for these long years, you may lose everything before you have finished your next meal. If your standing depends upon your own works, you are not safe, and can never be safe till you are out of this present life, for you might sin and that one offense against the conditions would destroy the covenant. "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby."

But see the excellence of salvation by grace, for when you reach the ground of faith in the promises, you are upon *terra firma*, and your soul is no longer in jeopardy. Here is a sure foundation, for the divine promise cannot fail. If my salvation depends upon the Lord, and is received by me on the ground that the Lord has decreed it, promised it in covenant, and ensured it to me by the blood of Jesus Christ, then it is so mine that neither life nor death nor Satan nor the world shall ever rob me of it.

If I live to the age of Methuselah, my faith will have the same promises to rest upon, and clinging there, she will defy the lapse of years to change her immutable security. The promise would not be sure to one of the seed by any other means than that of grace through faith, but now it is sure to all.

Moreover, if the promise had been made to works, there are some of the seed to whom most evidently it never could come. One of the seed of Abraham hung dying upon a cross, and within an hour or two his bones were broken that he might the more quickly die and be buried. Now, if salvation to that poor dying thief must come by works, how can he be saved? His hands and feet are fastened up and he is in the very grip of death, what can he do?

The promise would not have been sure to *him*, my brethren, if there had been any active condition. But he believed, cast a saving eye upon the Lord Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me," and the promise was most sure to him, for the answer was, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise". Many a chosen one of God is brought into such a condition that nothing is possible to him except faith, but grace has made the act of believing divinely possible.

Well was it for those bitten by serpents that all that was asked of them was a look, for this was possible even when the hot venom made the blood boil and scalded all the frame with fever. Faith is possible to the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb. Faith is possible to the almost-idiot, the desponding, and the guilty. Faith can be possessed by babes and by the extremely aged, by the illiterate as well as by the instructed. It is well-chosen as the cup to convey the living water, for it is not too heavy for the weak, nor too huge for the little, nor too small for the full-grown.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, I have done when I have said just this. I will ask you who have believed in Christ, one question—you who are resting in the promise of God, you who are depending upon the finished work of Him who was delivered for your offenses—how do you feel? Are you rejoicing in your unquestionable safety?

As I have turned this matter over, and thought upon it, my soul has dwelt in perfect peace. I cannot conceive anything that God Himself could give to the believer which would make him more safe than the work of Christ has made him. God cannot lie, are you not sure of this? He must keep His promise, are you not certain of this? What more do you want?

As a little child believes its father's word without any question, even so should we rest on the bare, naked promise of JEHOVAH, and in so doing, we become conscious of a peace that passes all understanding, which keeps our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. I dare not say otherwise, nor be silent, for I am conscious of being able to say, "Therefore being justified by faith, I have peace with God."

In that place of the soul, much love springs up, and inward unity to God and conformity to Christ. Faith believes her God and trusts Him for time and eternity, for little things and great things, for body and for soul, and this leads on to still higher results.

O blessed God, what a union of desire, heart, and aim exists between You and the soul that trusts You! How are we brought into harmony with Your mind and purposes! How is our heart made to delight in You! How completely is our soul "bound up in the bundle of life with the soul of the Lord our God"! We grow up into Him in all things who is our Head, our life, our all.

I charge you, dear children of God, "as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in him." Live in His peace, and abound in it more and more. Do not be afraid of being too peaceful, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." When you have to condemn yourself for shortcomings, yet do not question the promise of the Lord.

When sin overcomes you, confess the fault, but do not doubt the pardon which Jesus still gives you. When sharp temptations and severe trials arise from different quarters, do not suffer them to carry you by storm—let not the stronghold and castle of your spirit be captured, "Let not your heart be troubled." Stagger not at the promise through unbelief, but hold to it whether you walk in the sunshine or in Egyptian darkness.

That which the Lord has promised He is able also to perform. Do not doubt it. Lean hard on the faithful promise, and when you feel sad at heart, lean harder and harder still, for "Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it."

Last of all, you sinners here this morning, who have heard all about this salvation by trusting—I charge you do not rest till you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, and rested in the great promises of God.

Here is one, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more for ever." Here is another which is very cheering, "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Call upon Him in prayer and then say, "Lord, I have called, and You have said I shall be saved."

Here is another gracious word, "He that believeth, and is baptised shall be saved." Attend you to these two commands and then say, "Lord, I have Your Word for it that I shall be saved, and I hold You to it."

Believe God, sinner. Oh that He would give you grace this morning by His Holy Spirit to say, "How can I do otherwise than believe Him? I dare not doubt Him." O poor tried soul, believe in Jesus so as to trust your guilty soul with Him. The more guilty you feel yourself to be, the more is it in your power to glorify God, by believing that He can forgive, and renew such a guilty one as you are.

If you lie buried like a fossil in the lowest stratum of sin, yet He can quarry for you and fetch you up out of the horrible pit—and make your dry, petrified heart live. Believe you this? "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

Trust the promise that He makes to every believer that He will save him, and hold you to it, for it is not a vain thing, it is your life. "But what if I obtain no joy or peace?" Believe the promise still, and joy and peace will come. "But what if I see no signs?" Ask for no signs. Be willing to trust God's Word without any other guarantee but His truthful character, and you will thus give Him glory. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Believe that JEHOVAH cannot lie, and as He has promised to forgive all who believe in Jesus, hang on to that word and you shall be saved. Sinners, I have set before you the way of salvation as simply as I can, will you have it or not? May the Spirit of God sweetly lead you to say, "Have it, ay, that I will." Then go in peace and rejoice henceforth and forever. God bless you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—COLOSSIANS 2

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—230, 242, 233

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.