A GOSPEL WORTH DYING FOR

NO. 1734

A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT EXETER HALL

"To testify the gospel of the grace of God."
Acts 20:24

PAUL says that in comparison with his great object of preaching the Gospel, he did not count even his life to be dear to himself—yet we are sure Paul highly valued life. He had the same love of life as other men, and he knew besides that his own life was of great consequence to the churches, and to the cause of Christ.

In another place he said, "To abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He was not weary of life, nor was he a vain person who could treat life as though it were a thing to fling away in sport. He valued life, for he prized time, which is the stuff that life is made of, and he turned to practical account each day and hour, "redeeming the time because the days are evil."

Yet he soberly said to the elders of the church at Ephesus that he did not regard his life as a dear thing in comparison with bearing testimony to the Gospel of the grace of God. According to the verse before us, the apostle regarded life as a race which he had to run. Now, the more quickly a race is run, the better—certainly, length is not the object of desire. The one thought of a runner is how he can most speedily reach the winning post.

He spurns the ground beneath him. He cares not for the course he traverses except so far as it is the way over which he must run to reach his desired end. Such was life to Paul—all the energies of his spirit were consecrated to the pursuit of one object—namely, that he might everywhere bear testimony to the Gospel of the grace of God—and the life which he lived here below was only valued by him as a means to that end.

He also regarded the Gospel, and His ministry in witnessing to it, as a sacred deposit which had been committed to him by the Lord Himself. He looked upon himself "as put in trust with the gospel," and he resolved to be faithful though it should cost him his life. He says he "desired to fulfill the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Before his mind's eye, he saw the Savior taking into His pierced hands the priceless casket which contains the celestial jewel of the grace of God, and saying to him—"I have redeemed you with My blood, and I have called you by My name—and now I commit this precious thing into your hands, that you may take care of it, and guard it even with your heart's blood. I commission you to go everywhere in My place and stead, and to make known to every people under heaven the Gospel of the grace of God."

All believers occupy a somewhat similar place. We are none of us called to the apostleship—and we may not all have been called to the public preaching of the Word of God—but we are all charged to be valiant for the truth upon the earth, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Oh, to do this in the spirit of the apostle of the Gentiles!

As believers, we are all called to some form of ministry, and this ought to make our life a race, and cause us to regard ourselves as the guardians of the Gospel, even as he that bears the colors of a regiment regards himself as bound to sacrifice everything for their preservation.

Paul was a true hero—a hero of even a nobler stamp than those brave Greeks whose stories still stir the blood and fire the soul. Their heroism to a large extent depended upon public note, the present approval of their fellow citizens, or upon the animal excitement of the battlefield.

But Paul's heroism, so far as man was concerned, was self-contained, deliberate, and as sure to display itself in the solitude of a dungeon as in the assembly of the faithful. He was parting with his weeping friends, and going forward to trials of unknown intensity, but he was altogether unmoved by fear, and advanced on his way without a question.

His leave-taking of the elders irresistibly reminds me of the old historian's record of Epaminondas the Theban general who, when he was mortally wounded by a Spartan spear, the head of which remained in his flesh, bade his friends leave it alone a little, "for" said he, "I have lived long enough if I die unconquered." And when they told him that the battle was won, and that his comrades were victorious, he bade them draw out the head of the spear, that his life might end.

One observed to him that he had fallen, but that he had not lost his shield, and that the victory was won—to which he replied with his last breath, "Your Epaminondas thus dying doth not die." So Paul has lived long enough if the Gospel is prospering in its course. And though he lays down his life, he does not die if his ministry is fulfilled.

Let me read you his words, and you shall judge if they have not this heroic ring—"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

We shall this morning first of all inquire, *what was this Gospel which Paul judged to be worth dying for*?—"The gospel of the grace of God." When we have made that inquiry, I think we shall be prepared for another. If we cannot die for it, *how can we live for it*? And then, thirdly, I shall press this consecration upon you by answering the question—*Why should we*?

Oh, that the Holy Spirit may work in us the holy devotion and self-sacrifice of Paul!

I. First, then, our inquiry this morning is, WHAT WAS THIS GOSPEL FOR WHICH PAUL WOULD DIE?

It is not everything called "gospel" which would produce such enthusiasm, or deserve it. For, my brethren, we have gospels nowadays which I would not die for, nor recommend anyone of you to live for, inasmuch as they are gospels that will be snuffed out within a few years. It is never worth while to die for a doctrine which will itself die out. I have lived long enough to see half-a-dozen new gospels rise, flourish, and decay. They told me long ago that my old Calvinistic doctrine was far behind the age, and was an exploded thing.

And, next, I heard that evangelical teaching in any form was a thing of the past, to be supplanted by "advanced thought." I have heard of one improvement upon the old faith, and then of another—and the philosophical divines are still improving their theology. They have gone on advancing and advancing, till heaven knows and perhaps hell knows what next they will advance to—but I am sure I do not.

I would not die for any one of all the modern systems. I would like to ask broad church divines whether there is any positive doctrine in the Bible at all—and whether any form of teaching could for a moment be judged worth dying for—and whether the martyrs were not great fools to die for truths which might be valuable to them, but which the advance of thought has cast into disuse.

Those men and women who went to Smithfield, and were burnt to death for Christ—were they not fools every one of them to die for a set of ideas which "modern thought" has quite exploded? I do verily think that to our modern divines there is no such thing as fixed truth, or that, if there be, they are not sure of having yet reached it.

They have digged, and digged, and digged—look at the dark pits of unbelief which they have opened—but they have not come to the rock yet. Wait a little longer—they may one of these days find out something solid, but as yet they have only bored through layers of sand.

Yet there used to be a Gospel in the world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned. There was once in the church a Gospel which believers hugged to their hearts as if it were

their soul's life. There used to be a Gospel in the world which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice.

Tens of thousands have met together to hear this Gospel at peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed it, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it—singing Psalms all the while.

Is there not such a Gospel remaining? Or are we arrived at cloudland, where souls starve on suppositions, and become incapable of confidence or ardor? Are the disciples of Jesus now to be fed upon the froth of "thought," and the wind of imagination, on which men become heady and high-minded? Nay, rather, will we not return to the substantial meat of infallible revelation, and cry to the Holy Ghost to feed us upon His own inspired Word?

What is this Gospel which Paul valued before his own life? It was called by him, "the gospel of the grace of God." That which most forcibly struck the apostle in the Gospel was that it was a message of *grace*, and of grace alone.

Amid the music of the glad tidings, one note rang out above all others, and charmed the apostle's ear—that note was grace—the grace of God. He regarded that note as characteristic of the whole strain. The Gospel was "the gospel of the grace of God."

In these days that word "grace" is not often heard—we hear of moral duties, scientific adjustments, and human progress—but who tells us of "the grace of God" except a few old-fashioned people who will soon be gone?

As one of those antiquated folk, I am here this morning, and I shall try to sound out that word, "GRACE" so that those who know its joyful sound shall be glad, and those who despise it shall be cut to the heart. *Grace* is the essence of the Gospel. *Grace* is the one hope for this fallen world! *Grace* is the sole comfort of saints looking forward for glory!

Perhaps Paul had a clearer view of grace than even Peter, or James, or John, and hence he has so much larger space in the New Testament. The other apostolic writers excelled Paul in certain respects, but Paul, as to his depth and clearness in the doctrines of grace, stood first and foremost.

We need Paul again, or at least the Pauline evangelism and definiteness. He would make short work of the new gospels, and say of those who follow them, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Let me try to explain in a brief manner how the Gospel is the good news of grace.

The Gospel is an announcement that God is prepared to deal with guilty man on the ground of free favor and pure mercy. There would be no good news in saying that God is just. For in the first place, that is not news—we know that God is just. The natural conscience teaches man that. That God will punish sin and reward righteousness is not news at all, and if it were news, yet it would not be good news, for we have all sinned—and upon the ground of justice we must perish.

But it is news, and news of the best kind, that the Judge of all is prepared to pardon transgression, and to justify the ungodly. It is good news to the sinful that the Lord will blot out sin, cover the sinner with righteousness, and receive him into His favor—and that not on account of anything he has done, or will ever do—but out of sovereign grace.

Though we are all guilty without exception, and all most justly condemned for our sins, yet God is ready to take us from under the curse of His law, and give us all the blessedness of righteous men, as an act of pure mercy. Remember how David saw this, and spoke of it in the thirty-second Psalm—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

This is a message worth dying for, that through the covenant of grace, God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. That He can be the righteous Judge of men, and yet believing men can be justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. That God is merciful

and gracious—and is ready to bless the most unworthy—is a wonderful piece of news, worth a man's spending a hundred lives to tell.

My heart leaps within me as I repeat it in this Hall, and tell the penitent, the desponding, and the despairing that, though their sins deserve hell, yet grace can give them heaven, and make them fit for it—and *that* as a sovereign act of love—altogether independent of their character or deservings. Because the Lord has said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," there is hope for the most hopeless. Since "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," (Rom. 9:16), there is an open door of hope for those who otherwise might despair.

It is as though there had been held a great assize, and the judge had passed from county to county, and a number of prisoners had been condemned, and there remained nothing further in the course of justice but that their sentences should be carried into execution.

Lo, suddenly, by the silver trumpets of messengers clothed in silken apparel, it is proclaimed that the king has discovered a method by which, without violating justice, he can deal with the condemned in pure mercy, and so grant them free pardon, immediate jail-delivery, and a place in his majesty's favor and service.

This would be glad tidings in the condemned cells, would it not? Would you not be glad to carry such news to the poor prisoners? Ah, Paul, I can understand your getting into a holy excitement over such a revelation as that of free grace. I can understand your being willing to throw your life away that you might tell to your fellow sinners that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

But the Gospel tells us much more than this, namely, that in order to His dealing with men upon the ground of free favor, God the Father has Himself removed the grand obstacle which stood in the way of mercy. God is just—that is a truth most sure—man's conscience knows it to be so, and man's conscience will never rest content unless it can see that the justice of God is vindicated.

Therefore, in order that God might justly deal in a way of pure mercy with men, He gave His only begotten Son, that by His death the law might receive its due, and the eternal principles of His government might be maintained. Jesus was appointed to stand in man's stead, to bear man's sin, and endure the chastisement of man's guilt.

How clearly does Isaiah state this in his fifty-third chapter! Man is now saved securely, because the commandment is not set aside, nor the penalty revoked—all is done and suffered which could be exacted by the sternest justice, and yet grace has her hands untied to distribute pardons as she pleases. The debtor is loosed, for the debt is paid.

See a dying Savior, and hear the prophet say, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Here, too, everything is of grace. Brethren, it was grace on God's part to resolve upon devising and accepting an atonement, and especially in His actually providing that atonement at His own cost.

There is the wonder of it—He that was offended Himself provides the reconciliation. He had but one Son, and sooner than there should be any obstacle in His way as to dealing with men on the footing of pure grace, He took that Son from His bosom, allowed Him to assume our frail nature, and in that nature permitted Him to die—the just for the unjust—to bring us to God.

You admire Abraham's giving up his son to God—much more admire JEHOVAH'S giving up His Son for sinners. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This, then, is the Gospel of the grace of God—that God is able, without injustice, to deal with men in a way of pure mercy, altogether apart from their sins or their merits, because their sins were laid upon His dear Son Jesus Christ, who has offered to divine Justice a complete satisfaction, so that God is glorious in holiness and yet rich in mercy. Ah, beloved Paul, there is something worth preaching here.

In the Gospel there is also revealed a motive for mercy which is in agreement with the grace of God. There is always needed, in the action of every wise man, a competent motive. Men do not act without

reason if they are reasonable men. The same is true with God, the highest of all intelligences—He acts upon the highest reasons. His motive for dealing with men on the footing of free grace is the revealing of His own glorious character. He says, "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the LORD God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel."

He works the wonders of His grace "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." He finds a motive in His own nature and mercy since He could not find it anywhere else.

He will deal with guilty men according to the sovereignty of His will, "to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." He saves men that His own beloved Son Jesus Christ may be magnified and extolled, and be very high, and that His Holy Spirit may be honored in the new-creating of rebellious natures.

Listen to this, you that feel your guilt—God is able without infringement of His justice to deal with you on the footing of pure grace, and He has found a reason for so doing, a reason which will apply as much to the worst of men as to the best. If it is for His own glory's sake that He saves guilty sinners. Then a window is opened by which light can come to those who sit in the thickest gloom of despair.

In order to the accomplishment of the designs of grace, it was necessary further that a Gospel message should be issued full of promise, encouragement, and blessing. And truly that message has been delivered to us. For that Gospel which we preach today is full of grace to the very brim. It speaks on this wise—Sinner, just as you are, return to the Lord, and He will receive you graciously and love you freely. God has said, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

For Christ's sake, and not because of any agonies, or tears, or sorrows on *your* part, He will remove your sins as far from you as the east is from the west. He says, "Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

You may come to Jesus just as you are, and He will give you full remission upon your believing in Him. The Lord says today, "Look not within, as though you would search for any merit there, but look unto Me, and be ye saved. I will bless you apart from merit, according to the atonement of Christ Jesus." He says, "Look not within as though you looked for any strength for future life—I am both your strength and your salvation, for when you were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

The Gospel invitation is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Come and welcome, you lame, you halt, you blind, you wandering, you foul, you miserable. You are invited, not because you are good, but because you are evil—not because you are hopeful, but because you are hopeless.

The Gospel message is of grace, because it is directed to those whose only claim is their need. The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Come, therefore, you morally sick—you whose brows are white with the leprosy of sin—come and welcome, for to you is this free Gospel proclaimed by divine authority. Assuredly such a message as this is worth any exertion for its spreading, and it is so blessed, so divine, that we may gladly pour out our blood to proclaim it.

Further, brethren, that this Gospel blessing might come within the reach of men, God's grace has adopted a method suitable to their condition. "How can I be forgiven?" says one, "tell me truly and quickly!" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." God asks of you no good works, nor good feelings either, but that you be willing to accept what He most freely gives.

He saves upon believing. This is faith—that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that you trust yourself with Him. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons

of God, even to them that believe on his name." If you believe, you are saved. Salvation "is of faith that it might be of grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

Do you say, "But faith itself seems beyond my reach"? Then, in the Gospel of the grace of God, we are told that even faith is God's gift—and that He works it in men by His Holy Spirit—for apart from that Spirit they lie dead in trespasses and sins. Oh, what grace is this, that the *faith* which is commanded is also conferred!

"But," says one, "if I were to believe in Christ and have my past sins forgiven, yet I fear I should go back to sin, for I have no strength by which to keep myself for the future." Hearken! the Gospel of the grace of God is this, that He will keep you to the end—that He will preserve alive within you the fire which He kindles, for He says, "I give unto my sheep eternal life." And again He says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."

The sheep of Christ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of Christ's hand. Do you hear this, you guilty ones—you who have no claim upon God's grace whatever? His free grace comes to you, even to you. And if you are made willing to receive it, you are this day a saved man, and saved forever beyond all question.

I do say it again, this is a Gospel so well worth the preaching that I can understand Paul saying, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

I read in an old book a dream of one who was under concern of soul. He fell asleep and dreamed that he was out in the wilds in a terrible storm. The lightnings flamed around him, and the voice of the thunder made the earth rock beneath him. He looked eagerly around for a shelter. He ran to the first house before him, but he was denied admittance. He that dwelt there was named *Justice*, and he said in angry tones, "Get thee gone—I cannot shelter a criminal, a traitor to his King and God!"

He fled to the next house, and it turned out to be the mansion of *Truth*. Truth came to the door with calm but stern countenance, and said, "You are full of falsehood, you can not sojourn here." He fled to the home of *Peace*, which stood near, and hoped that there perhaps he might be housed from the storm. But Peace said, "Begone! There is no peace, says my God, unto the wicked."

He could not then tell what to do, for the storm waxed yet more furious. When lo! he saw a portal over which was written "*Mercy*." "Ay," said he, "this is the place for me, for I am guilty." The door was open and he was welcomed there. To that house I invite you. Come in and be at rest. You who cannot as yet be harbored by justice, or peace, or truth, may come to mercy, and receive abundant grace.

Do you seem inclined to accept the way and method of grace? Let me test you. Some men think they love a thing and yet they do not, for they have made a mistake concerning it. Do you understand that you are to have no claim upon God? He says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

When it comes to pure mercy, then no one can possibly make a claim. In fact, no claim can exist. If it is of grace it is not of debt, and if of debt it is not of grace. If God wills to save one man, and another be left to perish in his own willful sin, that other cannot dare to dispute with God. Or if he does, the answer is—"Can I not do as I will with my own?"

Oh, but you seem now as if you started back from it! See, your pride revolts against the sovereignty of grace. Let me beckon you back again. Though you have no claim, there is another truth which smiles upon you. For, on the other hand there is no bar to your obtaining mercy. If no goodness is needed to recommend you to God—since all must be pure favor which He gives—then also no evil can shut you out from that favor.

However guilty you may be, it may be God may show favor to you. He has in other cases called out the chief of sinners—why not in your case also? At any rate, no aggravation of sin, no continuance in sin, no height of sin can be a reason why God should not look with grace upon you. For if pure grace and nothing else but grace is to have sway, then the jet black transgressor may be saved. In his case there is room for grace to manifest its greatness.

I have heard men make excuses out of the doctrine of election, and they have said, "What if I should not be elected?" It seems to me far wiser to say, "What if I should be elected?" Yea, I am elected if I believe in Jesus, for there never was a soul yet that cast itself upon the atonement of Christ but what that soul was chosen of God from before the foundation of the world.

This is the Gospel of the grace of God, and I know that it touches the heart of many of you. It often stirs my soul like the sound of martial music, to think of my Lord's grace from old eternity, a grace that is constant to its choice, and will be constant to it when all these visible things shall disappear as sparks that fly from the chimney.

My heart is glad within me to preach free grace and dying love—I can understand why crowds met at the dead of night to hear of the grace of God. I can understand the Covenanters on the bleak hills listening, with sparkling eyes, as Cameron preached of the grace of the great King! There is something in a free-grace Gospel worth preaching, worth listening to, worth living for, and worth dying for!

II. This brings me to the second head. You and I are not called to die for it just yet—let us make sure that today we live for it. HOW CAN WE LIVE FOR THIS GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD?

I answer, first, if anybody here is to live for this Gospel, he must have received it from God, and he must have received a call to minister or serve for it. He must feel himself under bonds to hold and keep this Gospel—not so much because he has chosen it, but because it has chosen him.

I forget who it was, but a quaint old minister was once told that he could not preach in a certain pulpit if he held to the doctrines of grace. "Well," said he, "I think I might be allowed to preach there, for I can truly say that I do not hold to the doctrines of grace—the doctrines of grace hold me."

That might be rather a quibble, but there is a grand truth in it. When a man picks and selects his creed, the probabilities are that by and by he will pick again, and will select another next time. There is about the love which constitutes our domestic bliss a something of necessity—our beloved one was chosen by us, but yet we could not help it—we were carried away and overborne, and so our marriage came to pass. It was not altogether choice—there was a mystic power that enchained our hearts. And I am sure it is so with the doctrines of grace if we believe them—we chose them with a willing soul, but yet we were under constraint, and could do no other.

To me there is but one form of doctrine, I know no other. Brethren, I cannot be of any other faith than that which I preached nearly twenty-nine years ago on this platform. I think I have read as much as most men, and I know most of the maunderings of advanced thinkers. But I have never come into their secret, and I never can.

I abhor the very idea of an advance upon the Gospel which Paul preached. I am today what I was when, as a youth, I preached to crowds in this Hall. I have progressed in my theology not so much as a tithe of an inch. I hope I preach better and with more experiential knowledge of the truth, but that which I preached thirty-three years ago, I preach today.

You know the story of the boy who stood upon the burning deck because his father said, "Stand you there." And I desire to imitate his steadfastness. Other boys might be much wiser than he was, but his wisdom was obedience. I prefer obeying God to being wise with my own wisdom. The Gospel which the Bible has revealed, and the Holy Ghost has taught me, I must preach—and no other. I am incapable of believing the novelties of the hour. I must abide in my old faith.

I would say with Luther, "I cannot help it, so help me God!" I know no other Gospel today than that which I knew when I first believed in Jesus. 1 know that by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves—it is the gift of God. What more do I need to know? You may leave this Rock, if you like, my brother, for you may be able to swim. But I must stay right where I am, for I should drown.

When the crack of doom shall be heard, I shall be here, God helping me, believing the Gospel of the grace of God and none other creed. I hope there is something in adhesiveness and pertinacity which will help to preserve, if not to spread the Gospel. Steadfastness at this particular time has a special value, and I urge you to it—to the Gospel which you have received—to the Gospel of the grace of God, I implore you to stand fast so long as you live.

But the next thing Paul did was to make it known. Wherever he went, he published the Gospel. This is what we must do. "Oh," says one, "I cannot make it known." Why not? "I could not tell out the Gospel." Why not? "Why, I am a person of mean appearance, and I do not suppose people would pay me any respect."

Just what they said about Paul—"His personal presence is weak." "Oh, but I am no speaker." Just so, that also is what they said of Paul—"His speech is contemptible." "Oh, but if I were to say anything, I could not adorn it with a figure of speech, or illustrate it with a simile. I could not even quote a bit of poetry to make it fine." Paul also used homespun. He says, "We use great plainness of speech."

Many of the other teachers were great orators, but Paul always fought shy of oratory. He stood up and allowed the truth to flow out of his mouth freely, in its own way. And I do believe at the present moment we need a race of preachers who will not be fine, or scholarly, or rhetorical, or sensational. Men of whom you will say, when you have heard them—"I cannot make out why people flock to hear such a ministry. All that they can go for is *what* the man says, for he does not say it grandly. He does not seem as if he wanted to do so. He appears only concerned to get his message out of his own heart, and get it into the people's hearts."

That is just what Paul did. Do you not think that you could tell the Gospel out in his fashion? "Oh, but I have so many infirmities." Yes, Paul said he gloried in infirmities because the power of Christ the more clearly rested on him. When he had done preaching the people could not say, "Oh, we understand why we felt it so. You see, Paul practices all the graces of manner. We quite understand why his speech penetrated our hearts—he has such a melodious, bell-like voice. We can understand why we like to hear him—he has such expressive eyes, they look into our souls."

Now, Paul, in all probability, had weak eyes. According to his name, he was a short man, and it is likely that he spoke very plainly. Yet he never felt sorry that it was so. On the contrary, he believed that in his weakness he was strong, for the power of Christ rested upon him. He hoped, also, that for this very reason their faith would not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. Brothers and sisters, we are all qualified, if this be the case, to go and tell to others the Gospel of the grace of God.

Yet further, Paul desired to *testify* to the Gospel. Now, to testify is something more than to proclaim. It means to bear personal witness to the truth. Paul was specially qualified to testify, was he not? When he preached, he frequently told that story about the fierce persecutor who was on the way to Damascus, and was suddenly struck down—a persecutor who had never asked to be saved by grace, who had no free will towards Christ, but who had a very strong will against Him, and was haling men and women to prison, and compelling them to blaspheme, being exceeding mad against them.

Oh how sweetly Paul told out the Gospel of the grace of God when he said, "The Lord appeared to me by the way." "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Friend, cannot you tell of your conversion, and let men know how free grace came to you when you looked not for it?

Nor would Paul end there, for he would often tell his consolations, how the Gospel had comforted him when he had been stoned, and tried by false brethren, and yet had been upheld by the grace of God. Paul could tell, also of his heavenly joys—how he had been often exceedingly lifted up, and made to triumph in Christ by feeding upon the Gospel of the grace of God. His personal experience of its power over himself was that which he used as the great instrument and argument for spreading the Gospel—for this is the meaning of testifying.

My friend, if the Gospel has done nothing for you, hold your tongue or speak against it. But if the Gospel has done for you what it has done for some of us—if it has changed the current of your life, if it has lifted you up from the dunghill and made you to sit as on a throne, if it is today your meat and your drink, if to your life it is the very center and sun—then bear constant witness to it.

If the Gospel has become to you what it is to me—the light of my innermost heart, the core of my being—then tell it, tell it wherever you go, and make men know that even if *they* reject it, it is to you the power of God unto salvation, and will be the same to every man that believes.

III. My time is gone, but yet I must detain you a minute while I remind you of reasons WHY WE, MY BRETHREN, SHOULD LIVE TO MAKE KNOWN THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

First, because *it is the only Gospel in the world*, after all. These mushroom gospels of the hour, which come and go like a penny newspaper, which has its day and then is thrown aside, have no claim on any man's zeal. These changing moons of doctrine, what are they doing for England? They are doing much evil in this city—they are alienating the mass of the people from going to any place of worship at all. Why should they come to hear uncertainties? Why should they come merely to be taught their duty, and to be moralized, and so on?

Men are not led to assemble in multitudes by such poor attractions. I do not know that I should go across the street Sunday after Sunday merely to hear a moral essay. I might as well stay at home and read the paper. But to hear the Gospel of the grace of God is worth many a mile's walk. And if it were plainly set forth in all our churches and chapels, I warrant we should see very few empty pews—the people would come and hear it, for they always have done so.

It is your graceless Gospel which starves the flock till they forsake the pasture. It is your Socinian reasoning which leads men to treat ministry and public worship with contempt. The old Gospel is a sweet savor which attracts the masses. When Whitefield sounded it forth, what common was big enough to hold the thousands? Man wants something that will cheer his heart in the midst of his labor, and give him hope under a sense of sin. As the thirsty need water, so does man want the Gospel of the grace of God.

And there are no two gospels in the world any more than there are two suns in the heavens. There is but one atmosphere for us to breathe, and one Gospel for us to live by. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ the righteous." Therefore tell out the Gospel, lest men die for lack of the knowledge of it.

Do it, next, because *it is for God's glory*. Do you not see how it glorifies God? It lays the sinner low, it makes man nobody, but God is all in all. It sets God on a throne, and trails man in the dust. And then it sweetly leads men to worship and reverence the God of all grace, who passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin—therefore spread it.

Spread it because thus you will *glorify Christ*. Oh, if He should come on this platform this morning, how gladly would we all make way for Him! How devoutly would we adore Him! If we might but see that head, that dear majestic head, would we not all bow in worship?

And if He then spoke and said, "My beloved, I have committed to you My Gospel. Hold it fast as you have received it! Give not way to the notions and inventions of men, but hold fast the truth as you have received it, and go and tell My Word, for I have other sheep that are not yet of My fold, who must be brought in, and you have brothers that yet are prodigals, and they must come home."

I say, if He looked you each one in the face and addressed you so, your soul would answer, "Lord, I will live for You! I will make You known! I will die for You if needs be to publish the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Now, if you and I arouse ourselves this day, and God's Holy Spirit shall help us so to do, and we begin to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God—do you know what I think is sure to happen? I prophesy the best results. They tell us that all sorts of evils are growing strong—and brethren, darkly prophetic, tell us that awful times are coming—I cannot tell you how dreadful they are to be.

Popery is to come back, according to some, and once again the harlot of the Seven Hills is to dominate over all the earth. Is she? We shall see. If you boldly proclaim the Gospel, I tell you it will not be so. If the Gospel of the grace of God is fully and fairly preached, it cannot be so. Listen to what John saw—"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God and give glory to him."

Do you see that angel? Observe what follows! Close behind him flies another celestial herald. “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Fly, angel of the everlasting Gospel! Fly, for as surely as you do speed your flight, that other angel will follow who shall proclaim the downfall of Babylon, and of every other system that opposes itself to the grace of the Lord God Almighty!

The Lord stir you up for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
PSALM 32 AND ROMANS 3:9-31; 4:1-8

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—100, 980, 546

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.