

A PRESSED MAN YIELDING TO CHRIST

NO. 2667

A SERMON
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*“Jesus heard that they had cast him out;
and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?
He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?
And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.
And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”*
John 9:35-38

LAST Sabbath morning [Sermon #1683, The Great Cross-Bearer, and His Followers], I spoke to you concerning one who was forced into the King's service. That was Simon, the Cyrenian, who was compelled to bear Christ's cross. He was not a volunteer, but a pressed man, yet I think that, after he had been forced to bear the cross, he willingly carried it, and I hope that he afterwards became a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, strange to say, here is another pressed man, for I do not think that this man, whose eyes had been opened by Christ, had thought of becoming a believer in the Son of God until the Lord Jesus found him out. Before he had reached that point, indeed before he knew that the prophet who had opened his eyes was the Son of God, the Pharisees had cast him out of the synagogue, so that he was compelled to bear the cross for Christ although he did not then fully know Christ, and certainly had not believed upon the Son of God. Yet, in his case also, it appears that he cheerfully took up the cross which had been at the first forcibly laid upon him.

It may happen that there are some persons here who are in a similar position, some who have been ridiculed for being Christians even before they are Christians, who have been mocked at merely because they go to a place of worship, though as yet they have not yielded themselves to Christ, well, if that is the case with any, seeing that the cross is laid upon their shoulders, I do trust that they will not throw it off, but that they will bravely bear it for Christ, and freely suffer what, up till now, has seemed to them to be a piece of injustice, for they have been treated as if they were believers in Christ, when really they are not yet on the Lord's side.

This man then, bearing Christ's cross in a certain way, was cast out of the synagogue, and then Christ found him, and blessed him. Observe, dear friends, where Christ began with him, for it will show us where and how the blessing usually enters. The door by which the richest of heaven's favors must come to us is indicated by our Lord going to that door and opening it. He said to the man, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” So that faith in the Son of God is the gate of benediction.

Faith is that window of agate and gate of carbuncle by which the divine light of Jesus' love comes streaming into the soul. This is the way by which God's mercy enters the heart of man, and therefore the Lord Jesus Christ Himself begins there, and in all our dealings with the unconverted, it will be wise for us also to begin there. That is the place where the decisive battle will have to be fought, for upon the believing or the non-believing on the Son of God, the eternal destiny of each individual will turn. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.” That wrath abides even now upon him if the life of God is not in him. Let us hammer away at that all-important point of faith in Christ.

This is the Thermopylae of Christian experience. If this pass can be stormed and carried, we can capture the citadel of men's hearts, but if unbelief continues to guard that narrow passage to eternal life,

and to hold it against the Gospel and its invitations, and exhortations, and promises, and threatenings, then nothing whatever can be done. So, in this inquiry of our Lord, we have most instructive teaching. His objective, no doubt, was to bless this man by working in him saving faith, and therefore He said to him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

I think our text will help us, first, to speak of *true faith—how it is known*; secondly, *true faith—how it progresses*; and thirdly, *true faith—how we can promote it*.

I. First, I want to speak concerning TRUE FAITH—the faith that saves—HOW IT IS KNOWN.

First, it is *absolutely essential that it should be faith in the Son of God*. Our blessed Lord knew that this man believed in Him as a prophet, so might He not have been content with that? No, because to believe in Christ merely as a prophet is not saving faith. It may be a step towards salvation, and it may lead up to it, but the faith that is absolutely necessary is that belief in Him as the Son of God, and he who does not believe in the deity of Christ has not a Savior who can save him.

The work of saving a soul is a divine operation, and no one but a divine being can accomplish it. It is He who sits upon the throne who saith, “Behold, I make all things new.” There cannot be anyone except the Creator who can create, and the Creator must in every case, be God. To save a soul, there must be a work performed which is analogous to the resurrection, but in order to raise the dead, there must be the presence and power of God. It is one of those operations which it is not conceivable can be performed by an angel or by any created being. The Highest alone can accomplish it, has He not said of Himself, “I kill, and I make alive”?

The power of life and death must rest with God alone. Hence, then, the work of salvation needs a power nothing less than divine. He who believes in Christ as a mere man has not believed in a person who can give him salvation, and Christ cannot accomplish the stupendous task if He be only man, for the Savior must be God.

There is no true and logical standpoint, in reference to the deity of Christ, except one of two things. Either our Lord was the Son of God, equal with the Father, or else He was an impostor, for He most distinctly claimed that He was the Son of God. In the chapter preceding our text, at the fifty-fourth verse, we read that Jesus said to the Jews, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God.” Then they took up stones to cast at Him because He said that He was the Son of God, and in this case of the blind man whom He had healed, He took pains to find him out that He might communicate to him in private the fact that He was Himself the Son of God.

He never withdrew His claim to the deity, if He had only said to the Jews, “No, I am not the Son of God, you are mistaken in supposing that I said I was. The expressions I used are not intended to convey that idea,” then they would not have crucified Him. This was the chief point of their quarrel with Him, and I must again say that either He was God, or He willfully misled the people by using words which made them think that He was God. His words have led millions of Christians, from those days until now, to worship Him as God, and they were perfectly justified, by His utterances, in doing so, and if He meant anything less than that, then He was a deceiver.

But He did mean that He was God, and it is our joy and glory to rest in Him as being alike the Son of Mary and the Son of JEHOVAH Himself, “Light of Light, very God of very God,” co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, and here we feel that we can rest for our soul’s salvation, we can lean with our whole weight on One who is indeed “mighty to save.” Seeing that all power is His, and that He is equal with God, He can and He will save all those who put their trust in Him. Do not any of you, I beseech you, be content with any faith less than that.

If you have any sort of faith which does not recognize Christ as God, do with it as the man did with the bank note, when he found that it was bad—he laid it down, and ran away from it, for fear anybody should suspect him of being its owner. Put away every kind of confidence that is short of faith in the Son of God, and abhor it, for it is a damnable delusion, and may the Lord bring you fully into this blessed state of salvation through believing on the Son of God!

A second point about saving faith is that *it rests upon a knowledge of Him*. This man said to Jesus, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" He was not one whose notion of faith was that he need not know what he believed. The Church of Rome seems to inculcate some kind of implicit faith (or credulity) which can exist apart from knowledge, but how can I believe that which I do not know? Paul puts it thus, "Faith cometh by hearing."

You must first hear and know what it is you are to believe before you can believe it, otherwise, your faith is vain, like that of the man of whom I have sometimes spoken, who said, "I believe what the church believes." "But what does the Church believe?" "It believes what I believe." "Then what do you, and the church believe?" "Why, we both believe the same thing."

That is not the kind of believing that can save the soul. It is through the knowledge of Christ that we are saved. To know Christ is sometimes said to be analogous to believing in Christ. You must know what it is that you have to believe, a faith that does not know is no faith at all. Read through the epistles of John, and mark with your pencil every time the word "know" is used. The apostle makes that word "know" come in again and again, for a man must know that which he is to believe, and hence this man says to Christ, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

For my part, I could never be content without unquestioning certainty as to my soul's salvation. Do you think that is more than a man ought to wish for? Are any of you at ease while you are afraid that you have a mortal disease working within you? Oh, no! You want to know, from a qualified physician, the truth about your case. And if it were whispered in your ear at this moment, that your house was being broken into or was on fire, would you sit still here, and not trouble yourself as to whether the report were true or not? Would you not want to go at once, and see for yourself?

If you knew that you bought an estate some time ago, but you have since heard that the title to it is a very uncertain one, in fact, that in all probability, you will lose all you have paid for it, would you not say, "I ought to have taken care to be certain about the title, and I would not have bought the estate if I had not felt that the deeds relating to it were all right."

Well then, if you desire certainty about your bodily health, and about the safety of your house, and about the validity of your title deeds, can you afford to go without certainty as to your soul's affairs? No, you cannot, therefore, rest not till you have it. If you have various questions about your spiritual condition, boldly face those questions, and answer them, never let any questions about your eternal welfare be such that you dare not face them, and do not wish to search out the answers to them.

Pry to the very bottom of them, and better still, ask the Lord to search you, and know your heart, to try you, and know your thoughts, and to lead you in the way everlasting, and be not content till you can truthfully say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

This man, of whom I am speaking, knew that Christ had opened his eyes, therefore He must be at least a prophet. He also knew, further, that whatever that prophet told him must be true, for the man who had opened his eyes must have been sent by God, and God does not work miracles by liars. He said to himself, "This man is undoubtedly a faithful person, or God would not employ Him in such a wonderful work as that of opening the eyes of a man who was born blind," and then he stood perfectly prepared to receive whatever might be spoken by this prophet of whom he knew something, though he did not know enough to understand what was meant by the Savior when He asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He, therefore, sat as an inquirer at the Savior's feet, waiting for something to be told him which should enable him to believe.

You, dear friend, may not be in exactly the same condition that this man was in, but still, your case may be in many respects, a parallel one. You say, perhaps, "I wish, above all things in the world, that I could believe in Christ." Do you intend to sit down, and try to make yourself believe in Him? That would be a very unwise thing, because faith is not wrought in the soul in that fashion.

Suppose it was rumored, at the present moment, that there had been another massacre in Alexandria, and that our troops had been driven out of the city, how would you decide whether the report was to be

believed or not? Would you sit down in your pew, and say, "I will try to make myself believe it"? Well, you might come, by a process of reasoning, to some sort of conclusion as to whether it was or was not a likely thing, but the mere sensible plan would be to inquire what foundation there was for the report, and if on going to the War Office, you were informed by someone in authority, "Yes, there has been a very great disaster," well then, knowing the facts of the case, you could believe. The inquiry at headquarters would be the way to ascertain the truth of the report, and just so is it in connection with believing in Christ. If I am to believe in Him, I ask, with this man, "Who is he?" and until I know who He is, it is idle for me to talk about forcing myself to believe in Him.

Now listen. He in whom you are asked to believe for salvation is, first of all, Himself God. Then, in infinite mercy, He came and took upon Himself our nature, and dwelt among men. He voluntarily came—being God—but He was also sent of God, appointed and authorized to be God's Ambassador to man. He was, in addition to being sent of God, anointed of God, for the Spirit of God rested upon Him without measure, qualifying Him for His work.

The life He led here on earth was unique, there was never another like it, and the imagination of man cannot write the history of another man that shall be at all comparable to the life of Christ. It stands apart in a lone, simple majesty, utterly inimitable, absolutely perfect. Then He died, and by that death He forever put away the sin of His people.

He took upon Himself the sin which He had never committed, He was numbered with the transgressors, and He suffered as if men's transgressions had been His own, He died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." And God has accepted those sufferings as a propitiation for all who believe in Him, and now, this is the witness of God concerning Him, that He has raised Him from the dead, and taken Him up to His throne, and made Him to sit there, at His Father's right hand, where, at this moment, He is making intercession for all who come to God by Him.

And now, our prayers are accepted through Him, and the infinite blessings which are His, He distributes among us, and He is shortly coming again, with sound of trumpet, and attended by myriads of saints and angels. As He ascended from Olivet, in like manner also will He descend to earth again. King of kings and Lord of lords shall He be in that day, "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

He is God, He still lives, it is the living, reigning Christ whom we preach unto you. He lives in glory, and He also lives here by the presence of His Holy Spirit, who is with us, and who is to abide with us evermore, and it is upon Him as God incarnate, as Savior, crucified, risen, and gone into the glory, that you are asked to place your soul's confidence.

If you would learn this truth more fully, read the four Gospels, and the Epistles, and ask the Spirit, who inspired the writers of them, to explain and apply them to you. That is the way to obtain faith. Many a man has been reading in the Bible the story of the cross, and so he has believed in Jesus. Many another has heard about the Savior, and so has been led to believe in Him. It is the simplest thing in the world to believe upon trustworthy evidence, and when we get the evidence of Christ's life and death manifesting the glory of His person, the graciousness of His character, and the efficacy of His atoning blood, then are we led to believe in Him. True faith is based upon knowledge of Christ, as it was in this man's case. Take care, dear friends, that you always remember that simple but important truth.

And further, *true faith always expresses itself to the Lord*. This man, when he had believed in Jesus, said, "Lord, I believe." True faith ought also to express itself to men, as Paul puts it, in writing to the Romans, "For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," or as the Master Himself puts it, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Therefore, the confession before men ought not to be neglected in any case, yet I fear, and hope, that there are some pilgrims who steal into heaven, scarcely known by men to be Christians—at least, not avowed as such by open profession.

I do not recommend that dodging behind the hedges, and getting to heaven along back roads, that is a bad plan, but still, I trust some have managed it, though with much trouble and loss to themselves, but

in every case, every one who has believed has made the confession of that faith to the Master Himself. He has said to Jesus, as this man did, “Lord, I believe,” even though he has added, with another man, “Help thou mine unbelief.” He has said to Jesus, with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” There has been a personal acknowledgment, as we sometimes sing it—

*“My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.”*

It is a very vital point about true faith that it thus recognizes its obligation to speak to Him, and to avow itself to Him. How sweetly does faith, sometimes come up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved, and owning to Him that she is His, and He is hers! She cannot help making this confession, she would be untrue to herself and to her Lord if she did not do so.

In one respect, we are better off than this man was, for we have many divine promises to help us to believe in Christ. Have you ever noticed, dear friends, how much we live upon the promises of our fellow men? In buying a small article at a shop, you pay your twopence for it across the counter, but the larger the business transaction gets to be, the less there is of metallic currency in connection with it, and then you often pay each other in promises.

The commonest form of a promise is a bank note, and it is worthwhile to observe how much a bank note is made after the model of God’s promises. How does the wording of this bank note run? It is headed, “Bank of England,” and it begins, “I promise.” You take this note readily enough instead of five golden sovereigns, because you read on it, “I promise to pay the bearer,” and God’s promise is payable to “the bearer.” Whoever has the promise in his possession, whoever has faith enough to lay hold of God’s promise, may read it in this way, “I promise to pay the bearer.”

I remember when I first snatched at one of God’s precious promises, I could hardly hope that I had any right to it, for I felt myself so utterly unworthy, but I snatched it up, and ran with it to the Bank of Faith, and as soon as I presented it, I received its full value. God always honors His own promises, here is one, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Go to Him with that gracious message, and it shall be fulfilled to you whoever you are. The note says, “I promise to pay the bearer.” If a sweep takes that note to the Bank of England, he will get the money for it—I mean a sweep in character as well as by trade, for the declaration on it is, “I promise to pay the bearer.”

What does it next say on the bank note? “I promise to pay the bearer on demand.” That is how all God’s promises run, “on demand.” It is worthy of note that in the olden time, when the Lord had made many promises to His people, He added, “I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them,” as though the fulfillment of the promise was delayed until it was asked for. No doubt many of God’s great and precious promises are not realized by you and me because they are not presented to the Lord as we should take a note to the bank to get it cashed.

We do not inquire of God as much as we ought. You hear of inquirers going to see the minister, that may be a good thing, but the best sort of inquirers are those I heard before I came up here to preach tonight, when some good earnest souls met downstairs in the lecture hall to inquire of God for a blessing, and to ask Him to help His servant to speak the Word with power.

Now, coming back to this bank note, I daresay you would not mind having a pile of paper of this kind, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and then you would say to yourself, “Now I am a rich man.” But you have not a single farthing there, you have only a promise “to pay the bearer on demand the sum of five pounds.” “Ah!” you say, “but that promise is good all the world over.” Whose promise is it? Well, it is signed by the chief cashier, but he only signs it, “for the Governor and Company of the Bank of England.” That is where the value of the promise lies, and it is our comfort to know that we have a noble name written below all God’s promises, for the Lord Jesus Christ has signed them all in God’s

behalf, for the great Governor of heaven and earth, who has no need of any “company” to be joined with Him, for His sole resources are fully equal to the fulfillment of every promise that He has ever issued.

Now, if we treat men’s promises with respect, and pass them from hand to hand as if they were genuine gold, and we constantly do so, shall we not treat God’s promises with something more than respect, and trust them with implicit confidence? Will any man have the impudence to say, “I have faith in a note signed by the chief cashier of the Bank of England, but cannot trust a promise that is certified by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself”? Shall I consider that bank note to be as good as the money it represents, and yet, when I hold in my hand God’s Word, signed, and sealed, and ratified by the sprinkling of the very blood of His dear Son, shall I dare to say, “I find it hard to believe in that Word”? If I talk so, I shall grieve the people of God, and what is far worse; I shall grieve the Lord Himself.

II. Now I turn to the second part of our subject, which is, TRUE FAITH,—HOW IT PROGRESSES.

Very often it has a very small beginning. Saving faith does not always come on a sudden. Some men are saved, as Saul of Tarsus was, they are struck down in the midst of their sins, and converted in a remarkable and unusual manner, but with many others there is, first, a faint twilight, then by and by, a little more, and at last, the sun has fully risen upon them. Perhaps you cannot tell when it did actually rise, but you know that it has risen, for there is the light and the brightness of its shining.

In the case of the man of whom I am speaking, *faith began with a preparedness to believe*. His eyes had been opened, and he was thereby made ready to believe anything that Jesus might tell him. And there is many a man who, looking back upon God’s goodness to himself, and God’s goodness to his father and mother, and God’s goodness to gracious people in general, and thinking of the holy and lovely character of Christ, has in that way been prepared to believe when the truth was clearly set before him.

This man went a step further on the right road, for *he desired to believe*. He said, “Who is he, Lord,”—not, “that I might know about him, and talk about him”—but “that I might believe on him?” He had a desire to possess true faith, and there are many like him, who desire to believe, but who have not exercised faith in Christ.

This is very full of wonder, but it is true. Of all things in the world, to believe in Christ is one of the most simple, yet that is the reason why many find it so difficult. If it were difficult, it would seem easy to them, but being easy, it appears difficult. Some of you, dear friends, when I try to describe how we come to trust in Christ, will twist and turn what I say, even if I make it “as plain as a pikestaff.” You think, “Oh, he must mean something very different from what he says!” You really cannot get this idea into your heads—that you have just to depend on Christ, to trust Him, and then you are saved, for “he that believeth on the Son has everlasting life.”

Whenever we use a metaphor, or figure, or illustration to try to explain the simplicity of faith, straightway somebody finds a difficulty even in that. When I have been trying to catch a sinner, I find that he has as many hiding places as there are days in the year. I have stopped up one after another, and I have said to him, “No, salvation only comes through believing.” “Yes, sir, I know, but—” and down he runs into another hole. When I have dug him out of that, and fancied I should surely catch him, he says, “Oh, yes! we are to trust the Savior, but—” and again he is off.

Somehow, men seem very ingenious in trying to find out reasons why they should not be saved, and all their foolish ingenuity seems to be employed in attempting to escape from this blessed divine simplicity, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” May God the Holy Spirit lead them to believe in Him! He must lead them, for no man can see Christ until his eyes are divinely opened. We may put the truth as plainly as ever we can, and preach it so that we think we cannot be misunderstood, but men will misunderstand us still, even those who desire to believe in Christ, until the Holy Spirit shall work effectually in them.

This man went still further on the right road, for he not only desired to believe, but *he made inquiry in order that he might believe*. I put it to you very simply just now, with regard to making inquiries concerning a certain piece of news. Well, this man did the same. He said to the Master, “Who is he,

Lord, that I might believe on him?” If sinners would only make inquiries about the Savior, they would soon trust in Him. You will find, as a rule, that the people who rail at the New Testament, have never read it. If they would but read it, their cavils might soon come to an end, and be followed by a blessed faith in Christ, but instead of doing so, they read what some objection-manufacturer has said about the Bible, instead of going to the Book itself, and seeing what it really teaches.

If I were very thirsty, I do not think that I would abstain from going to a well because somebody told me that it contained bad water, but I should go, and see, and taste for myself, and when a soul gets very thirsty, if it is wise, it goes to the Word for itself. I advise you to do that, dear friends. “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

When this man had made his inquiry, and received Christ’s answer, *he soon became decided*. He said, “Lord, I believe.” I like that simple, clear avowal of faith. So often, when we are conversing with an inquirer, he says, “Yes, sir, I hope I believe.” Oh, dear! is that all you can say? “Well, I trust I believe,” and so faith is surrounded by fog. “I hope I believe, I trust I believe.”

Man, don’t you know whether you believe or not? You may know it, one thing I know, you have no business to go to sleep till you do know this once for all, for, if you are not a believer, you are an unbeliever. There is no middle state between the two, and if you are an unbeliever, you are “condemned already,” because you have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This matter of believing ought never to be left in doubt at all, but it should be definitely settled, so that you can say with this man, “Lord, I believe.”

Then, further, *he acted as a believer*, for, “he worshipped him.” This proves how his faith had grown. I should like to ask you who are the people of God when you are happiest. I think you will agree with what I am going to say, and if you do not, it will still be just as true to me. My happiest moments are when I am worshipping God, really adoring the Lord Jesus Christ, and having fellowship with the ever-blessed Spirit.

In that worship, I forget the cares of the church, and everything else, and to me, it is the nearest approach to what it will be in heaven, where, day without night, they offer perpetual adoration unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Hence, what a memorable moment it was for this man when he worshipped Christ! Now, if Christ was not God, that man was an idolater, a man-worshipper, and you and I, instead of being regarded as very excellent people, by those who call themselves “Unitarian Brethren,” should be condemned as idolaters. If Christ was not God, we are not Christians, we are deceived dupes, we are idolaters, as bad as the heathen whom we now pity. It is making a man into a god if Christ be not God.

But blessed be His holy name, He is God, and we feel that it is the supreme delight of our being to worship Him. We cannot veil our face with our wings, for we have none, but we do veil them with His own robe of righteousness whenever we approach Him. We cannot cover our feet with our wings, as the angels do, but we do take His blood and His righteousness both as a covering for our feet, and as wings with which we fly up to Him, and though as yet we have no crowns to cast at His dear feet, yet, if we have any honor, any good repute, any grace, anything that is comely, anything that is honest, we lay it all at His feet, and cry, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.”

III. Now I come to the third point, which is this, TRUE FAITH,—HOW TO PROMOTE IT.

Brothers and sisters beloved, there are many of you who are constantly looking out for souls, and trying to bring them to Christ, you have here an example of what you may do in endeavoring to lead them to exercise faith in Jesus.

First, if you have any choice as to those to whom you go, *seek out the oppressed*. You are to go, as far as you can, “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” but if you may specially look for some more than others, seek out the sick, the sad, the weary, the poor, the broken down ones, and especially such as have been put out of the synagogue.

When our missionaries have gone among the Brahmins in India, they have had a few converts, but the most blessing has been given among the poor people who have no high caste of which they are proud. When the Gospel was taken to them, they gladly received it. The Gospel worker will be wise if, instead of shunning those whom even nominally religious people put away, he looks after them first. They are likely soil for the good seed of the kingdom to grow in, and bring forth fruit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, at Sychar, did not go to some goodly matron, who was an ornament to her sex, but you know where He found the woman who became His disciple and missionary, and you know what kind of woman she was, and to this day, He delights to go about, as Whitefield used to say, “sweeping up the devil’s castaways.” Those whom nobody else wants, and nobody else will have, our blessed Lord and Master delights to receive.

Do you therefore, look after those out-of-the-way sinners. I like that expression, those out-of-the-way sinners, because our Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” Out-of-the-way sinners are the sort He came to save, therefore, look out for them, you who would follow the example of the great Soul Winner.

Then, next, when you come to close quarters with them, *ask them questions*, as Christ did. He said to this man, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” Put the inquiry pointedly and personally. Here am I, up in the pulpit, firing the Gospel gun, and the shot flies where God directs it, but you, downstairs, who love the Lord, can, as it were, hold a pistol close to the sinner’s head. Take them separately, one by one, and make them “stand and deliver.”

Put the question as our Lord did, “Dost *thou* believe?” “See, friend,” you can say, “the minister has been preaching about faith. ‘Dost *thou* believe?’” This is what nine people out of ten want—somebody to come and make a personal application of the truth to them. They are like soldiers out upon the battlefield, they lie there, wounded, bleeding, dying. Close by, there is all that is needed to bind up their wounds and plenty of it, then why do they lie there in agony? They need personal attention, and it is your business, as an army surgeon, to go and put on the bandage, and bind up the wounds.

Oh, that we had multitudes that would do this and that all God’s people were constantly looking out for opportunities of making a personal application of the truth to those who hear it! “Dost thou believe?” said the Lord Jesus to this man, and by that question He held him fast. That is the way to win souls, begin with a personal question.

Then, *be ready to answer inquiries*. This is what our Lord Himself did when He revealed Himself to this man. Tell them all you know, and if you cannot tell them all they want to know, try to bring them to somebody more advanced in spiritual things than you yourself are, so that, with prayer, and patience, and wise instruction, he may lead them to Christ.

Next, *pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal Himself to them*, for that is the way faith comes. We cannot speak of Christ as He should be spoken of, but when He reveals Himself, then the sinners see Him. All the portraits of a beauty never touch the heart like one glance from her eyes, and all the portraits of Christ, that were ever painted by His most admiring disciples, never make such an impression on the heart of man as when once He says, as He said to this man, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with you.” None but Christ Himself can preach Christ to the full. He must reveal Himself, or the Spirit must reveal Him, or else men do not see Him.

Finally, *glorify Christ by your own personal testimony*. Recollect that wondrous intercessory prayer of our Lord, in which He said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” It was so kind, yet just like Him, not to say, “through *my* word,” though it is His word that we are to proclaim, but we get it into our hearts, and so appropriate it that, when we utter it, we speak out of our own heart and soul, and then it becomes our word too, and so sinners believe on Christ through our word. Go on speaking your word—that is, Christ’s word spoken by you, for this is how to win souls for Him.

Now, in closing, I want to begin again, and give you another little sermon altogether, only I shall not be able to preach it to you, but just to give you the heads of it, and leave it with you.

The first head is, *when you are believing, mind that you believe in Jesus Himself*. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” or is it somebody else in whom you are believing? Is it merely what others say about Christ that you believe? Is it your own opinion of Christ? Or is it really the Son of God upon whom you are believing? When you are believing, believe in Jesus Himself.

Next, *when you are inquiring, inquire of Jesus Himself*. This is a beautiful thing, to my mind. Here is a man asking Christ about Christ—asking Jesus, “Who is he?” and all the while, speaking to the very person about whom he was inquiring. He did not know it was Jesus, yet he had gone to the very fountainhead. Now, perhaps some of you have made inquiries of Christian people, and you have read the Bible, and prayed, and yet you cannot find Jesus, then go direct to Him, by faith, and say, “Lord, show me Thyself.” That is the way to learn of Him.

Have I a book of which I cannot make head or tail as I read it? If I knew where the author lived, I would call on him, and say, “Dear sir, will you kindly tell me what you mean by this expression? I cannot understand it.” That is the way to find anything out, go to the fountainhead. So, go you to Christ always, and when you are inquiring, inquire of Christ Himself.

Next, *when you are seeking Christ, ask Christ to reveal Himself to you*, for there is nobody who can reveal Christ as Christ can reveal Himself by His blessed Spirit.

And next, *when you are confessing your faith, confess it to Christ Himself*. Say, as this man did, “Lord, I believe.” Say to your minister, or to your mother, or to your friends, “I believe,” but take care, above all the rest, that you say, “Lord, I believe.”

And lastly, *when you are worshipping, worship Christ Himself*, “He worshipped HIM,” and no one else. Take care that your reverence and adoration are not given, in any degree, to the church, or to any person in it, or to any priest, or minister, or anything created or made, but worship God, and God in Christ Jesus, and the Lord bless you, beloved, for His name’s sake! Amen.

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.