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*“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”
John 20:15*

IN the garden of Eden, immediately after the fall, the sentence of sorrow, and of sorrow multiplied, fell upon the woman. In the garden where Christ had been buried, after His resurrection, the news of comfort—comfort rich and divine—came to a woman through the woman's promised Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. If the sentence must fall heavily upon the woman, so must the comfort come most sweetly to her.

I will not say that the resurrection reversed the curse of the fall, but at any rate, it took the sting out of it, lifted it up, and sanctified it. There was reason enough for the woman to weep after the sentence had been pronounced upon her, but there is no reason for her to weep now that Jesus Christ has fulfilled the promise which followed upon man's disobedience—namely, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

Observe the wise method followed by the Divine Consoler. In order to comfort Mary Magdalene, our Lord put a question to her. It is often the wisest way to relieve minds that are swollen through grief to allow them to find the natural end of their sorrow by asking them why they are weeping. We have to do this with ourselves sometimes. We inquire, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?”

The soul begins to ask for the reason of its grief and often finds that it is insufficient to justify so bitter a sorrow. And perhaps it even discovers that the sources of its sorrow have been misunderstood and that, if they had been rightly comprehended, they would have been sources of joy instead. He who would be wise in dealing with the daughters of grief, must let them tell their own story, and almost without a single sentence from you, their own story will be blessed by God to the relieving of their grief.

Moreover, it is always wise, before we attempt to comfort anyone, to know what is the peculiar form and fashion which grief has taken. The physician who, without investigation, should at once proceed to apply a remedy to his patient, might be giving the wrong medicine for the disease. He has to make his diagnosis of the malady, to see whence it came, what are its symptoms, and how it works—and then the physician adapts his medicine to the case.

Sit you down with your sorrow, my friend, and let us hear what ails you. What causes you to fret? What causes your soul to travail? Possibly, the sorrowing ones will themselves direct you to the right remedy for their malady and so you shall be able to speak a word in season, and “a word spoken in due season, how good is it!”

You are at present like a man groping in the dark and you will be as one pouring vinegar upon niter if you sing songs to a heavy heart, and you will make matters worse which you had hoped to make better unless you find out the cause of the mourner's tears.

My one object, at this time, is to take this question of our Lord to Mary and apply it to all who are sorrowing here. And although I shall keep to the text and repeat the question, “Woman, why weepest thou?” I shall hope that other sorrowers besides the women here will find comfort from the words which the Holy Spirit will teach me to speak. I shall ask, first, *is it natural sorrow?* And secondly, *is it spiritual sorrow?*

I. We will, first, inquire about that which is common to us all without exception, IS IT NATURAL SORROW? Is it sorrow which springs from our human nature and is common to all who are born of woman, to whom sorrow comes as a portion of our heritage?

Well, my friend, what is the cause of your grief? What ails you? *Is it because you are bereaved?* Have you lost someone who was very dear to you? Then your grief is not unusual, and your weeping is not unpardonable, for Jesus wept as He stood at the grave of His friend Lazarus. But let not your weeping go beyond due bounds. Your tears are right enough so far, but they may be wrong if they go any further.

There is a weeping of regret and of a lacerated spirit, upon which God looks with pity, but there may come a weeping of rebelliousness upon which even our heavenly Father may feel that He must look with anger. “Why weepest thou?” Will you look into your heart, beloved, and see whether the cause of your grief is such as does fully justify it, or see whether you have already carried it too far?

You have lost a child—a lovely child, but my sister, you have not really lost your child. Call you that lost which is in Christ’s keeping? Call you count that babe lost which is up among the angels? If your child had been taken to be a prince in a palace, you would not have said that he was lost. Inasmuch as he has been caught away to be with Jesus, say not that he is lost. You are the mother of one who can see the face of God, and thus says the Lord unto you, “Refrain your eyes from weeping, for your children shall come again from the land of their captivity.”

Have you lost your husband? It is a heavy blow and well may you weep, but still, who took him from you? Was it not He who lent him to you? Bless the Lord that you have had all those years of comfort and joy, and say with Job, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

The loss of your husband has made a great void in your life, but the Lord will fill that void. Do you know Him? Then, He will be a Husband unto you and a Father to your fatherless children. He has said, “Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.” You are a widow. Then, trust you in the Lord. If you are a widow without faith in God, then yours is a sorrow, indeed, but if the widow’s sorrow shall drive her to trust in Christ as her Savior, if she shall look up, and in her deep sorrow trust herself with the great Helper of the helpless, she shall find her loss to be a gain.

“Woman, why weepest thou?” Whatever relative or friend you have lost, your God will be more to you than the loved one could ever be. The Well-Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, is better to us than all earthly friends. And when they are taken away from us, He more than fills the space which once they occupied. So that, if we have less of human love, we have more of the divine—and thus we are gainers rather than losers.

Look forward to the resurrection and be comforted. Remember that the worm has not consumed the beauty forever, neither has the precious temple of the body been given up to everlasting ruin. If they fell asleep in Christ, as surely as they were buried, they shall rise again in beauty, in the image of Jesus Christ. So let us not sorrow as those who are without hope. Brush away your tears, or if they must fall, smile through them in sweet resignation to the divine will and be still.

“Why weepest thou?” Is there another reason for your sorrow? *Do you weep because you are very poor?* There are some, who do not know the sorrow of poverty, who will, perhaps, blame you. But I know that there are some of you who have a hard task to find a livelihood—a task at which a slave might be pitied.

In this great city, how many toil till they wear themselves almost to skeletons, and even then scarcely find food enough to keep body and soul together! There are some of the choicest sons and daughters of the Lord who seem to be the lowest of all in the scale of this world’s possessions, and their lot, from morning to night, is one of incessant drudgery. Were it not for these sweet Sabbaths, to live on earth would be to them altogether a bondage.

But weep not, my poor sister. Weep not, my poor brother. There is One who was poorer than you are, who will bear your burdens for you. Jesus Christ was poorer than poverty, because He had once

been so exceedingly rich—and none are so poor as those who come down from wealth to poverty. You know that though He was rich, yet, for our sakes, He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might become rich.

Poor mourner, remember the promise to him that walks righteously and speaks uprightly—“Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” Recollect also how the Lord Jesus saith unto His disciples, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

“Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.” So, will He not feed you also? Wipe away your tears. Bend your back to the burden which God has laid upon you, “and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

“Woman, why weepest thou?” Suppose that neither of these causes account for your sorrow, *have you a beloved sick one at home?* Yes, and you may well weep if that sickness has been long—and if it wears away the beauty from the cheek, and the brightness from the eye, and if it costs innumerable pains and anguish only to be understood by those who suffer it, and those who watch, hour by hour, by the sufferer.

I can understand your weeping, and yet, beloved, your case is in Christ’s hands and you may safely leave your dear ones in His hands. He never sent a trial to any child of His unless it was so necessary that to have withheld it would have been unkind. Accept it as the Lord’s love-token. Besides, remember that He can recover our loved ones if He deems it wise, or He can sustain them in their sickness if He does not see fit to recover them. And he can give them a joyful exit from this world and an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom. So, do not weep too much, but say, “It is the LORD; let him do what seemeth him good.”

Possibly, however, the weeping may come to us because *we have sickness in our own bodies*. While we are sitting or standing here, some of us little know the amount of suffering that may be felt by the person who is sitting next to us. I have often wondered how some of my beloved hearers ever manage to get here at all—yet they are here, although full of pain. They find a sweet forgetfulness, at least for a little time, while the Word is being preached, and they cannot forego the pleasure of mingling with the people of God, even though it costs them many a sharp pang.

Yet I would urge even such sufferers to dry their tears. It may be that the dreaded disease of consumption is gradually wearing away the life, but my sister, it is no ill thing to just swoon away into heaven, and to gently pass from this life to another and a brighter day.

Perhaps you are suffering from some painful disease which is known to be fatal. Well, that is only another way of bringing a King’s messenger to take you swiftly home. If you have no Christ, you may well weep if you have received your death-wound, for after death comes judgment. This disease is a messenger sent to bid you prepare to meet your God. Suppose you were smitten down today, God has given you a timely warning.

Take it, I pray you, and instead of weeping over your sickness, may the Holy Spirit enable you to weep over your sin and to trust in Christ as your Savior, for then all shall be well. If we have believed in Jesus, we need not weep, even though the dread archer may have lodged the fatal shaft quite near our heart. What is there to weep about? When a Christian has received an intimation that he is soon to be with his Savior in glory, we may congratulate him that he is the sooner to be out of the strife and the sin—and to forever wear the crown of victory and glory, so we will not weep about that.

Perhaps I am addressing one who says, “My sorrow is neither bereavement, nor personal sickness, nor the sickness of friends, nor poverty—I sometimes think I could bear any or all of those trials. But I have been the victim of a treacherous friend *I trusted and have been deceived*. I gave my heart’s best affections and have been betrayed.”

You, too, dear friend, are not alone in that trial. There was One, better far than you, on whose cheek came the hot kiss from the betrayer's lips, so that Jesus said unto Judas, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Many have had so-called friends who, in the time of testing, have been more cruel than avowed foes. They have been as the cunning fowler who spreads his net so warily that he may catch the little birds.

Well, if your case is like that of the birds, fly away to Jesus. Trust Him, for He will never deceive you. If Jesus shall fill that vacancy in your heart, it will have been a blessed vacancy. A broken heart is best healed by a touch of the pierced hand of Jesus. Get away to Him, you Hannah, you woman of a sorrowful spirit—go you to the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and He will find a balm for your spirit.

I cannot go further into these natural sorrows—they are so many, and the river of grief is so deep and rapid. But whatsoever your sorrow may be, one piece of advice I have to give to every weeping one—find the Divine Comforter and whatever your griefs may be, they shall be assuaged.

II. Now I come to our main question, which is this, IS IT SPIRITUAL SORROW? If so, *is it sorrow for others or sorrow for yourselves?*

I will begin with the nobler form. "Woman, why weepest thou?" Do you weep for others? Are there some whom you love, and for whom you have often prayed, who remain in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity? This is a suitable subject for mourning. Weep not for those who have gone to be "forever with the Lord," for all is well with them. But weep for those who are living in sin—for the young man in his unbridled lust, who has dishonored his father's name—for the daughter who, in her willfulness, has gone astray into the paths of transgression.

Weep for the heart that will not break. Weep for the eyes that will not weep. Weep for the sinners who will not confess their sins, but are resolutely seeking their own damnation. Ah, my dear friends, when you are weeping like that, you are weeping as your Savior did when He wept over Jerusalem—and God will put your tears into His bottle. Be comforted, for those tears of yours are omens of good to the souls you pity. For, as surely as you groan and sigh and cry over these beloved ones, you are doing what you can to bring them the blessing. And I think that is a token that the blessing of God is on its way to them.

You remember that it is written that "the power of the Lord was present to heal" on a certain occasion? Why was it more present then than at any other time? Was it not because there were four men, who were breaking up the roof to let down a sick one into the room where Christ was? Wherever there is real concern for souls, although it is only in four persons, there is about the ministry a power of an unusual kind.

Go on, then, and still weep, but not hopelessly, not with the bitterness of despair. The Lord will see your tears, and will hear your prayers, and will grant your petition, even though you may not live to see it. Peradventure, when you are in heaven, your son, your husband, your sister, over whom you now are weeping, shall be brought to Christ.

Possibly, however, the sorrow for others relates to the church with which this mourner is connected. It is often my lot to meet with brethren and sisters coming from country towns, who say to me, "What are we to do? The place of worship, where we attend, might almost as well be pulled down, for there is no life, no energy, no power there." Oh, it is wretched work indeed when that is the case. Many towns and villages would be all the better if the meeting house and the parish church, too, were utterly demobilized—because then they would feel that they had not any religious means at all and would, perhaps, be stirred up to seek them.

But now there is dead formalism in both places. There is nothing worse than sluggishness in the pastors and members of a church. What is the use of a dead church? It is no use at all. The fact is, the better a church is, the sooner it rots when it is dead. The man who is very stout is the very worst person to keep in the house when once he is dead—and the church that seems to be most packed with divine truth is the most obnoxious to all when once the life goes out of it.

Well, my dear friends, if you are sorrowing over the low condition of the church to which you belong, and the state of religion in general in the neighborhood where you live, I would not stay your tears, yet I would try to comfort you, and I would advise you to take the case to your Lord. He is the Head of the church, so carry that burden to Him. Do not go about finding fault. Do not try to sow dissension and dissatisfaction, or you will do hurt instead of good. But lay the matter before your Lord and Master, and give Him no rest till once again He puts forth His almighty power and raises His church to life.

Now I must leave this point, but I think that it is a grand thing to sorrow and weep for others. We ought to make it a rule of our life to bear the sorrows of other people. If sinners will not repent, we cannot repent for them. If they will not believe, we cannot believe for them. True religion can never be a matter of sponsorship, but we can do this for sinners—we can say to the Lord, “O Lord, these sinners will not feel their sin, but we feel it. It grieves us and cuts us to the heart! O Lord, will You not give them repentance? Will You not cause these sinners to believe in You? We confess their iniquity before You, for we know the guiltiness of their hearts in rejecting You. We weep and mourn that they will not admire Your beauty and will not yield their hearts to You, but dear Savior, *do* win their hearts in answer to our prayer. They are far away from God by their wicked works—bring them nigh by Your precious blood.”

That is what I mean. And if you can do this, appropriating as it were, the sins and sorrows of mankind to yourself, you will be showing your sympathy with them in the best possible way. Woman, if you weep thus for others, blessed are you among women.

But now, “why weepest thou?” *Is it for yourself?* Are these spiritual sorrows on your own account? Are you a sorrowing child of God? Do you know yourself to be a Christian and yet do you weep? Then, what is the cause of your grief? Do you miss your Lord’s presence? If so, there is reason enough for your weeping, yet why should you weep? He is present even now—you have not seen Him, but He has seen you and is gazing upon you at this very moment.

Beloved mourner, do not say, “I am out of fellowship with Christ and I am afraid I cannot return to that blessed experience for months.” Listen to this text—“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door”—that is all—“I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

It was to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, the lukewarm Laodiceans, that these words were written, and they are also written to you, my sister, and to you, my brother, if you have grown lukewarm. Be willing for Christ to come to you and before you are aware, your soul shall make you like the chariots of Amminadib. Do not imagine that restoration to communion with Christ need occupy a longer time than conversion—and conversion is often wrought instantaneously. So you may be lifted up from the depths of despondency to the heights of sacred fellowship with your Lord before this present service closes. Be of good cheer and let your joy be renewed this very hour.

But perhaps you say, “I weep because I have grieved my Lord.” Those are blessed tears, although the offense which caused them is grievous. Well may we be grieved when Christ has been grieved by us, but mourning soul, though He is rightly grieved with you, remember this gracious declaration, “He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever.” And this comforting promise, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD your Redeemer.”

Only confess that you have transgressed against the Lord your Redeemer and you may come back to Him at once. Nay, even now He comes to meet with you and He brings with Him the basin and the towel, that He may wash your soiled feet, for He has washed you once in His blood, and now He will again wash your feet, and you shall be clean every whit, and shall walk with cleansed feet in renewed fellowship with your Lord.

Possibly some of you say that your sorrow is that you are not as holy as you wish to be. Ah! that is a sorrow which I share with you, for I can say with the apostle Paul, “When I would do good, evil is present with me.” And though I hear of some who do not find that evil is present with them, I suspect that the reason is because they do not know themselves as they really are, or they would find that it was so with them, at least at times.

If I could, I would be without one sinful thought, or word, or deed, or imagination, or wish—and so would you—and because you cannot be so at present, you weep. It is well that such tears should fall, only do not let these tears dim your view of Christ. Do not let those longings prevent your knowing that you are perfect and complete in Christ Jesus. Do not let your struggles hinder you from believing that Christ has conquered for you and that He will yet conquer sin in you. Do not let anything take away from you the full conviction that sin shall be altogether destroyed in you, and that Christ will present you to His Father, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” “holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.”

Perhaps you say that your sorrow is because you can do so little for Christ. Ah! there again, I have sympathy with you, but do not fret about that. Those of us who have the largest opportunities, are often those who most regret that we can do so little avail ourselves of them. But I know some godly women who are confined to the house with the care of a numerous family, or worse still, are confined to their bed in constant pain—and one of their greatest griefs is that they can do so little for Christ.

But brother, sister, do you not know the rule of David and the rule of David’s Lord? They that abide by the staff shall have the same portion as they who go out to the battle. You are like the soldiers who have to keep in the rear and guard the baggage. But when the King comes back with all the active troops who have been doing the fighting, you will share the victory with them.

You who are at home keeping the camp preserve many things which might be forgotten if we were all on active service. Be you comforted, then, if you are called to suffer or to be in obscurity—you shall be equal to the man and woman who are called to labor more prominently. Do what you can. I do not know that Christ Himself ever praised anybody more than He did that woman of whom He said, “She has done what she could.” I daresay she wanted to do a great deal more, but she did what she could. And if you have done what you could, it is well.

“Ah!” says another, “but I am conscious of a great deal of weakness. What I do is done so badly. Even in prayer, I do not always prevail. My petitions often seem to come back to me unanswered.” Well, dear friend, do not altogether regret your weakness, for there was one who said that when he was weak, he was strong. If you have many infirmities which make you weak, there is a way of glorying in infirmities because the power of Christ does rest upon you.

Suppose that you are not only weak, but that you are weakness itself—that you are nothing and nobody? For when you have reached that point, the cause of your weeping will have vanished because where you end, there God begins. And when you have done with self, then Christ will be all in all to you, and you will lift up your voice in praise of Him who has done such great things for you.

Many strange things happen to young Christians between the time of their conversion and their entrance into heaven. Their program of life is seldom carried out. The map which they make of the route is not according to the true geography of it. They reckon that, as soon as they have believed in Jesus, they will enter into sweet peace and rest, which is probably correct, but they also suppose that this peace and rest will always continue and probably increase—that they will go to heaven singing all the way, along pleasant roads and paths of peace—and that the light upon their way will get brighter and brighter till it comes to the perfect day.

They feel so happy and they sing so sweetly that they imagine it will always be with them just as it was in the first hours of their Christian experience. They are like persons who have, for the first time in their lives, come into the bright light of day, after having lived in a deep mine or been immured in a dark dungeon. They ask what season of the year it is, and they are told that it is springtime, that the flowers have begun to bloom, but that there are more to follow. They hear the birds singing, but they are told

that there are brighter days to come, that May is a fairer month than April, and June brighter still, and then will come the months of harvest, when the sickle shall be thrust in among the golden grain.

All this is very cheering, so this new beginner plans that tomorrow he will be out all day upon the green grass, or in the gardens admiring the bursting buds and gathering for himself many a delightful garland of flowers. But perhaps, when he gets up, tomorrow morning, the heavens are black with clouds and a torrent of rain is falling. "Oh!" says he, "I never reckoned upon this."

Then, perhaps, in June, there comes such a hurry-burly in the sky as he never thought of—flames of fire and loud thunders out of the heavens and dreadful drenching showers intermixed with rattling hail. "Oh!" says he, "I never calculated upon this. I thought the months were to grow brighter and brighter, and that, at last, there would come the golden harvest." We tell him that these rains and storms all conduce to the very result which we promised him and that they are by no means contrary to our statement. We were only giving him a brief outline of the year's history and these things are by no means contrary to our outline—nor need he fear but that the month of harvest will come in due season.

It is true, young Christian, that you will have a light upon your road, and that it will grow more and more bright unto the perfect day. It is true that the ways of wisdom "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Your highest conception of the joy to be found in Christ is not an exaggerated one. However much delight you may anticipate, you shall have all that, and you shall also have even more, as you are able to bear it.

But intermittent times will come—strange times to you—in which your joy will seem to be dead and your peace will be fearfully disturbed. Your soul will be "tossed with tempest and not comforted." You will sorrowfully sit in sackcloth and ashes, and you will not go to the table of feasting, but to the house of mourning. There will you be made to drink the water of tears, and have your bread salted with grief. Be not surprised, then, when this comes to pass, as though some strange things had happened to you. Remember that we have told you of it. We, who have gone further on the road to heaven than you have gone, tell you that there will come dark times, and stormy times, and we bid you prepare for them.

Now I must turn to others in our assembly. "Woman, why weepest thou?" Perhaps you say, "O sir, I dare not put myself down among the saints!" Well, then, will you put yourself down among the sinners? "Yes, I am a sinner," you reply, "yet I think—I hope I am not altogether without some little faith in Christ. I sometimes feel myself inclined to love Him, but oftentimes, I am of another mind, averse to all that is good."

Ah, my friend, I know you and I have met with many like your class. I said once to one of your sort, "You say that you are not a Christian." "No," she said, "I fear I am not." "Then," I asked, "why do you go to the house of God on the Sabbath? Why don't you stay at home, or go where sinners go?" "Oh, no, sir!" she answered, "I could not do that. When I hear people blaspheme the name of Christ, it cuts me to the quick. And I am never as happy as when I am with the people of God. I enjoy the hymns that they sing, and while I am with them, my heart gets so warm that I feel as if I must praise the Lord. I think it is a great mercy that I cannot help blessing and praising God." "Well, then," I said, "I think that you must really have some faith in Christ, or you would not feel and act as you do."

I remember hearing of a minister who wrote down these words, "I do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and asked a person who was full of doubt to sign her name to that declaration, but she would not do that. She did believe in Christ, though she did not think that she believed. I once offered a person who said she had no faith, a five pound note if she would give up her faith, but she said that she would not take a thousand worlds for it!

Mrs. Much-Afraid, and Mr. Despondency, and Mr. Feeble-Mind, and Mr. Ready-to-Halt—there are plenty of that family still living. And I know why you weep, good woman, for you also belong to that tribe. Well, then, if you cannot come to Christ as a saint, come to Him as a sinner. If you have made a mistake and have never trusted in Christ—do it now. If you really have not repented, and have not believed, and have not been renewed in heart, remember that it is still written, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

If the title-deeds of your spiritual estate are not genuine, but forgeries, do not dispute the question with one who is wiser than yourself—come straight away to Jesus Christ, empty-handed, in the manner in which He bids all sinners come to Him—and then I shall not have to ask, “Why weepest thou?”

But last of all, is this person who is weeping, a seeking sinner? Christ not only said to Mary Magdalene, “Why weepest thou?” but also, “whom seekest thou?” for He knew that she was seeking HIM. I would give all I possess if I might always preach to weeping sinners who are seeking Christ.

I sometimes think that I would like to be always weeping on account of sin, if I might be always sure that I was seeking Jesus. It is possible that there has come into this place someone who is seeking a Savior. Ah, weeping woman! do you weep because sin burdens you? Do you weep because sweet sin has become bitter to you? Do you weep because the things, wherein your soul once delighted, have now become your torment and your grief? Then I rejoice over your tears, for they are precious in God’s sight. They are more valuable than the finest diamonds in the world. Blessed is the soul that can repent of sin.

But possibly, your weeping is because you are afraid of being rejected by Christ. Put every tear of that kind away, for there is no fear of one sinner who comes to Christ being rejected by Him. As I reminded you just now, He has said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Come, then, you burdened sinner. Come, you heavy-laden soul and trust yourself with Jesus, and then He cannot—unless He can completely change, and that is impossible—He cannot reject you. Come and trust Him even now and you shall be saved this very hour.

But perhaps, your weeping is for this reason. You say, “Alas! I have been aroused before this, and I thought that I would seek the Lord, and I did get some hope, and I fancied that I was relieved of sin, but I have gone back and my last end has been worse than the first.” Well may you weep if that is really the case and I cannot forbid you to do so.

But my dear friend, if you came falsely once, that is only one more reason why you should come truly now. If you once built on the sand and that house is gone, it is but another argument for building on the rock. If you were excited and mistook a transient emotion for the work of the Spirit of God—if you put presumption in the place of faith, do not do so again, but come, just as you now are, and rest your weary soul on Christ’s atoning sacrifice and you shall find peace—immediate and permanent peace.

But possibly you weep because you say, “If I came to Christ, I fear I should not hold on to Him to the end.” I know you would not by yourself, but I also know that He will hold you on if you will but come and trust Him. It is not you who has to keep Christ—it is Christ who has to keep you. I should not wonder if your former failure arose from your having so much to do with it. So, have nothing to do with it this time. If you are very weak, lean all the more heavily on your Beloved.

No, if you are nothing, let Christ be all the more to you because of your nothingness. If you are black, give all the more praise to the blood that can make you whiter than snow. If you realize that you are lost, and fear that you will be found among the damned, flee the more eagerly to those bleeding wounds which give life, not merely to perishing sinners, but to sinners dead in trespasses and sins.

“Ah!” says one, “I think you have invited me, but I feel as though I cannot come, and I weep because I cannot come, for I do not properly understand the matter.” Well, then, dry your tears and listen while I tell you the story again, and we who believe in Jesus will pray the Holy Spirit to lead you to understand the truth.

The Father, whom you have offended, does not ask you to do anything to make Him pleased with you. He does not wish you to contribute either good works or right feelings in order to make an atonement for your sin. His dear Son, Jesus Christ, has made the only atonement for sin that can ever be made. What the Father bids you do is to accept what His Son has done and trust alone to that.

Can you not do this? What more do you need, you doubting, sorrowing seekers, but that you trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was nailed to Calvary’s cross, but is now risen from the dead and gone back to His glory with the Father? We sometimes sing, in one of our hymns—

“What more can He say than to you He hath said,

You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"

And I say the same to you who are seeking Christ. "What more can He say to you?" What sort of a promise would you like Him to make to you? Shall it be one like this, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"? You say that you would like such a promise as that—well, there is that very one in the Bible. Or would this one suit you, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"?

Or would this one meet your case, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin"? Surely this one must suit you, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Or this message, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Or this, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."

If these do not meet your case, I do not know what you would wish to have. My Lord, by His blessed Spirit, seems to have put the Gospel into all sorts of lights to suit all sorts of eyes, and He tells us, His ministers, to labor for this end, to get you to look at Jesus Christ. I have tried to do this and I beseech you not to be content with your weeping, or your feelings, or your Bible searchings—do not be content even with prayer.

The way of salvation is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." So, rest you in Him—that is believing. Trust in Him, depend upon Him—that is another way of believing in Him. And when you have done that, you are saved—saved the moment you believe in Jesus. The great work of salvation then commences in you, as the work of salvation for you is already complete, and you shall be saved from your sins, made new creatures, and made holy creatures, through the power of that blessed Spirit whom Jesus Christ bestows upon those who believe in Him.

May God bless the words I have spoken to the comfort of some! I believe He will. I expect He will. I know He will. And He shall have the glory. 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.