

THE ERRAND OF MERCY

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“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Luke 19:10

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same passage are as follows:
#204, The Mission of the Son of Man; #1100, Good News for the Lost,
and #2756, Saving the Lost]

GOD came down from heaven but once to be united with human flesh. *On what errand did He come and who were the objects of it? What messenger was sent on that errand? What method was pursued by Him? With what success was it attended?* Our text gives us the information—“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Let us speak briefly upon these four points.

I. First, AS TO THE OBJECT OF CHRIST’S ERRAND—“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

That word “lost” is constantly applied by desponding and despairing persons to themselves. Such people say, “We are lost—we feel that we are lost, wholly lost. There is no hope for us.” Herein they betray both their ignorance and their unbelief—their ignorance, for to be lost is nothing so peculiar that they should claim to be heritors of a strange doom, since the whole human race is lost.

And their unbelief, since Christ came specially to seek and to save the lost. Therefore, their being lost is not a ground for despair, but may be construed into a ground of hope. Let us think over that word “lost” and see in what sense those are lost whom Christ came to save.

Christ came to save those who were *lost hereditarily*. You often hear people say, “Man is in a state of probation.” No such thing. There is no man now in a state of probation. Adam was in a state of probation and man in Adam was in a state of probation in the garden so long as he stood in obedience to the test that was given. He was upon his trial, but the moment that Adam tasted of the forbidden fruit, the probation was over—he was a lost man. And our probation was over too, for we were lost in him.

Man, in this world, is either in a state of condemnation or a state of salvation. “He that believeth not” is not in a state of probation—he is “condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” We have divine authority for this. A man who has believed in Jesus is not in a state of probation, for “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” and “beloved, now are we the sons of God.”

The fact is that we are all absolutely lost through the sin of Adam and we need a revelation to show us that we are absolutely saved in the righteousness of Christ. It is not a question whether I shall fall or no—I have fallen in Adam. [Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon based upon Romans 5:15-16, and dealing with the Federal Headship of Adam, and the Fall of the whole human race through his disobedience, are as follows: #1591, Honey from a Lion; #2544, The One and the Many, and #2744, Lost Through One; Saved Through One]

“By one man’s disobedience,” says the apostle, “many were made sinners.” I stood in Adam as long as he stood, but when Adam fell, he so represented me, and all my kith and kin, that I fell in him—and fell so as to be hopelessly and forever lost—if Jesus Christ had not stepped in “to seek and to save that which was lost.”

We are lost, again, in another sense. We are *lost naturally*. It is supposed, by some, that man has it now in his power to choose his own character and so become the arbiter of his own destiny. That his nature is, at first, in such a state of equilibrium that he can select either the strait and narrow path of rectitude or pursue the broad road which leads to destruction.

Nay, my dear friends, both Scripture and experience teach us otherwise. We are born with natures that incline towards that which is evil and never of themselves tend towards that which is good. "Behold," says David, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Well did Job ask, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." [See sermon #2734, Out of Nothing Comes Nothing]

How, then, can he be pure who is born of a woman who is herself sinful? How can we, who are impure, be the parents of pure children? Such a thing is not possible. The whole head of human nature is sick and the whole heart faint. Naturally, from our very birth we go astray, speaking lies. There is written upon human nature, by the finger of our first parent, this word, "Lost!"—lost to God, therefore lost to the virtuous exercise of the affections and the true balance of the judgment, lost to rectitude, the will lost to obedience, the mental vision lost as to a sight of God, the moral sense lost as to that proper sensibility of conscience by which it shall stand out against sin.

The reigning power in man is dislodged from its place—manhood's glory, his victory and integrity, lost, lost forever—unless some greater Man shall restore it. This is how we truthfully describe the whole human race and so, surely, those whom Christ came to save were hereditarily and naturally lost.

Among these, *there are some so totally lost to all feeling that they do not know they are lost*. Even the preaching of the Gospel does not suffice to bring them to a consciousness of their condition. Their conscience has become seared and their heart hardened by perversity in sin. If they once knew what it was to tremble at the wrath to come, that time is past. Even the wooing of divine mercy fall upon them as oil would fall upon marble, and runs off without producing any effect.

They wish they could feel. They envy souls that despair and wish that they could themselves despair. They despair, however, of ever being able to get into a good enough state of heart to despair. "If aught is felt," say they, "'tis only pain to find we cannot feel," and not much of that is felt. Now, even such Jesus Christ came to save—and we know this, because such were some of us.

Do not I recollect the time when I would have given my eyes for a tear, and would have been willing to suffer anything if I could have but bent my knee, and uttered one groan? But my heart would not yield a sigh or my eyes a tear. I turned to the Book of God, but that did not move me. I listened to the preacher without emotion. It seemed as if even a dying Savior's groans could never move a heart so base as mine—and yet I bear witness that Christ came to save such, for I do myself rejoice in His salvation. You who are lost to all feeling may well catch at this text, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Then there are others who are *lost to all hope*. It is in vain that you pray with them. They rise up from their knees and thank you for your prayers, but they are assured that God will never hear them. They do themselves sometimes pray—necessity drives them to their knees—but they pray with the conviction that they are merely talking to a God whose mind is made up about them and determined to cast them forever from His presence.

Comforts that are available to others are of no use to them. You may adroitly seek to adjust your consolation so as to suit their case, but they ward off your comfort as skillfully as a warrior guards himself from the enemy's arrow with his shield. They will not hear a word of comfort, charm you never so wisely. They have made up their minds that there cannot be anything in the Book of God for them except thunder and lightning, and "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

Ay, and if they had their own names put in the Bible, and a promise appended to their names, they would deny their own names and the promise too. They have come to be in such a state of subjection to that tyrant, Unbelief, that they say, "Never shall we have hope. It is impossible that such sinners as we are should ever be partakers of eternal life."

If you ask them the reason for their despair, they cannot always tell you. "No," they say, "we would not tell any man living what we have done and what we feel." In one case, it is some overwhelming sin. In another case, it is having resisted at certain periods the convictions of conscience. Or yet again, it is old age—their having been living so long a time in impenitence. They have all different arguments and none of them are the arguments of truth.

They believe Satan's untruth that God is not willing to forgive, in preference to God's own oath—"As I live," says the Lord God, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn

from his way and live.” [See sermon #1795, Pleading and Encouragement—a sermon upon three texts, Eze 18:23, 32, and 33:11—the passage here quoted]

I do not know how it is that these poor souls manage to get away from such texts as these—“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

And such an one as this—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” I say again that I do not know how they escape from the soothing influence of such words of hope, but they do manage, by some means, to fly from them. And still they hug their chains and sit in a sort of willful bondage in the darkness of their dungeon.

Yet Jesus came to save just such sinners as those, and there are some here of elastic step and bright eye, who once were “bound in affliction and iron.” But you have been brought out of the valley of the shadow of death and Christ has broken your bonds asunder. You can now sing praises unto God and your songs shall testify to others, who were your fellow captives, that Jesus Christ has come “to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Some whom Christ saves are *lost socially*. Their names are not mentioned in the family now—they would bring such a pang to the mother’s heart, such a flush to the father’s cheek. They could not now enter into any respectable society—they are marked men and marked women. There are some who are lost even before the law of the land. The hand of justice has been laid upon them and they are held in bonds under the law. It may be that they are even marked as felons. Yet the Son of man has come to seek and to save those who are socially lost.

When the gates of society are shut, the gates of mercy are not shut. When man considers the case to be utterly hopeless and the social outcasts are put into a sort of leper colony, lest the infection should spread, Jesus walks into the leper-house, and touches the leper, and says, “Be thou clean.” You may shut them out from yourselves, but not from the Savior. When they have come to their worst, and have run the whole round of dissipation, till they are jaded and sick, still can the Master step in, and whisper into that ear, rendered attentive by pain and sickness—and snatch the fire-brand from the flame—to the glory of His own grace.

Others whom the Savior doubtless came to save, were, at one time, *lost avowedly and determinedly*. There have been those who have made a league with Satan and a covenant with death. They have said, “Turn to God? Never, we will burn first.” They have not only resisted conscience, but they have, as it were, proclaimed war to the knife against God Himself. They have called heaven and earth to witness that they were the slaves of Satan and had chosen him to be their master—and would serve him to their dying hour.

Yet their covenant with death has been broken and their league with hell has been disannulled. God has yet, by mighty grace, made them quite as decidedly His servants as they were once the servants of the evil one. Oh! what has not grace done, and what can it not still do? Take the word “lost” in the very worst possible sense that you can attach to it and still my text shall apply to it also—“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Perhaps of all lost souls, *the most miserably lost are those who perish under the sound of the Gospel*. There are some of you who have been prayed over, preached at, and wept over year after year, till you seem to be hopeless cases. You yourselves feel that there is a hardness which is begotten in the light of the Gospel which is not begotten anywhere else. The same sun which melts wax hardens clay and it has hardened you after an awful fashion till, now, you really dread to hear the Gospel lest you should drift still further away from God.

Well, even such lost ones Jesus came to save. I am conscious that my language cannot sufficiently express the extent to which the word “lost” may be applied. Some of you think there is very little difference between you and the damned in hell—they *feel* the flame—you are *waiting* for it. You feel that they are undergoing the execution, while you are in the condemned cell. They have heard Christ say, “Depart, ye cursed.”

You feel that you are cursed though He has not yet said to you, “Depart.” You think (though you think wrongly, let me say), that your death warrant has been signed and sealed—you declare that you might as well be banished from this world, for you know that if you live ever so long, you will live and die without hope and without God. Ah! poor soul! Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save just such sinners as you are. And I trust, notwithstanding all you say to the contrary, He has come to seek and to save you—even you.

Such are the woe-begone objects of this mission of mercy. Now let us turn to the Messenger of mercy—the Savior of the lost.

II. If the lost are to be saved, someone of extraordinary character must come to do it. Nay, IF THEY ARE TO BE SOUGHT AND FOUND, THERE MUST BE A SPECIAL MESSENGER.

Ordinary men, if they go to seek the lost ones, soon grow weary in the search. Perhaps they have to seek them where pride does not like to go, or to follow them when their perseverance fails, and their patience cannot endure. It needs a special One to seek the lost. But when the sinner is found, who can *save* the found one? No human arm is long enough, no human merits strong enough, no human plea prevalent enough—it is delightful, therefore, to read that “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Who is this Son of man? “*Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever.*” Though peerless in dignity, He assumes a humble title with a lowly estate when He condescends to undertake this menial service. Before He came to be the Son of Mary, He was the eternal Son of God. He sat upon the throne of His glory, adored by the spirits which His own hand had made, but He came down from yonder starry sky to seek and save the lost.

This proves how full of pity, how condescending and how kind was God’s eternal Son. Lost one! here is some comfort for you. If Jesus, from His throne of glory, pitied you in your lost estate, and if it is the same pitying One who is come to seek and to save the lost, then is He not the One to find and to save you?

But remember who He is, “*the Son of man.*” He gives Himself that title, “the Son of man”! He feels as you feel. He was tempted in all points like you are tempted. He never had a single sin of His own, but He bore the sins of many, and He knows what the weight of sin is. You think Christ has forsaken you and Christ once thought His Father had forsaken Him—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He cried.

You are broken in heart. He knows what that means, for He said, “Reproach hath broken my heart.” You think that all God’s waves and billows have gone over you. He said they had all gone over Him and in very truth they had. It is not possible that you should have a grief deeper than that which the Savior knew. You cannot plunge lower than He went.

What if I say that, though sin is come over you so that you cannot look up, there cannot be so black a cloud of sin between you and God as there was once between the Substitute and the Father—for all the sins of His elect ones rolled like an ocean’s tempest between the God of justice and the Surety who was smitten in our stead. Think of Christ, you who are lost, as being just such an one as yourself, except in the matter of sin—poor, having not where to lay His head, destitute, afflicted, and tormented as much as you can be. He is the Son of man! Oh, rest you upon that tender bosom and confide in that compassionate heart!

If it were merely that He came from heaven, it would be a proof of love and a token of sympathy, but that is not enough. It is written, “He is come to seek and to save.” Here is a proof of His activity. He does not sit still and pity men, does not stand up and propose a plan for them, but He is come to seek and to save them!

The angels celebrated His advent when they sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The Son of man is *come!* They watched Him in His journey through the thirty years of His earthly pilgrimage and they seemed to sing, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save.” But how the song must have deepened, with a wondrous emphasis, when they saw Him sweating in Gethsemane great drops of blood, when they saw Him bound, and scourged, and tormented by the Roman soldiers, when they saw Him bearing the weight of the cross, when they marked Him fastened to

the accursed tree, pouring out His soul in streams of blood. How they must have felt then that the Son of man was come to seek and to save!

Earth heard the note, “The Son of man is come.” Sin heard it and death heard it—and when the Savior bowed His head upon the cross, there went up a great shout, “The Son of man *is* come.” And startled hell heard it, when Satan saw those, whom he had expected to be his prey, delivered by the strong arm of the dying Sufferer. Heaven heard it as the peal rolled upward and angels said, “The Son of man is come to bring up hither that which was lost.” So, then, there is activity in the Savior and on this you may rely.

I shall say but little more concerning the Savior, except these few thoughts on which you may meditate at your leisure. He, who has come to save the lost, loved sinners from before the foundation of the world, was appointed of God to be their Savior, comes on a divine mission clothed with the Spirit of power, comes with an atoning sacrifice in His hand, comes with a plea in His mouth—the voice of blood, “which speaketh better things than that of Abel,” comes with love beaming from His eyes, and overpowering compassion in His heart, comes not to those who come to Him, but to those who cannot come and are afraid to come. The Son of man, none other than He who said, “I am meek and lowly of heart,” has come to seek and to save the lost.

III. Now notice THE PLAN OF THIS LOVING COMMISSION.

It does not say, “He is come to save” merely, but “to seek and to save.” It is an astounding thing, and a great proof of human depravity, that men do not themselves seek salvation. They even deny the necessity of it and would sooner run away than be partakers of it. If you pass by a dispensary in the morning, you will often see the poor outpatients at the door. And when the time comes for the doctor to see them, many will be found waiting in his outer room, but you do not often hear of a doctor who goes out seeking for *gratis* patients. But my Savior not only cures, but seeks the patients out—and if He did not, He would never have patients, for our sickness is of a kind that never brings men to the Physician, but drives them farther and farther from Him.

He is come to seek them. *He seeks them by the Gospel.* Tonight He seeks some of you. *He seeks them by providence.* Sometimes His *rough* providences seek them. At other times, the daily mercies of His goodness beckon them to come. He seeks them by the death of their fellows—a mother’s dying bed, the snatching of a baby to heaven—all these are the ways in which Jesus is seeking that which was lost. *He seeks them effectually by His Spirit.* His Spirit comes and reveals to them their darkness, points them to Christ, the true Light, and thus clearly they are found out, just where they are, and stand discovered to themselves in their ruin.

But it is added that He not only came to seek, but to save. “Oh!” says one, “I don’t need any seeking. I am found. Convinced of my folly, here I sit, and own my sin. I am indeed sought out and found, but I need saving.” Now, friend, the Son of man has come to save the lost, as well as to seek them. And He does it in this way—*He saves them from the guilt of past sin.*

In one moment, as soon as ever the blood of Christ is applied to the conscience, every past sin is gone and the man is, in God’s sight, as if He had never sinned. Christ puts away iniquity in a moment. The next thing He does is that *He kills the power of sin within* and makes the man “a new creature.” He does not merely save him from the guilt of the past, but from the power of sin in the present. If He does not tear up sin by the roots, He at least cuts it down. And sin does not have dominion over us because we are not under the law, but under grace.

The man who has trembled long, trembles no longer. He who was sinking deeper and deeper in the mire feels that there is a new song in his mouth and that his goings are established. And as He saves him from the power of sin in the present, so *He saves him from future falling.* He saves, not only for a year, or for ten years and then lets men fall, but He finally and completely saves that which was lost. And this one act will enable you, sinner, to realize all this blessedness—cast your guilty soul on Him who saves you. Do this with your whole heart and your sin is blotted out—your soul is saved and you may go in peace.

IV. Lastly, let us rejoice in THE SUCCESS OF THIS BLESSED SCHEME.

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Does He succeed in what He came to do? He does, thank God! And in these later times we live to see how the Master does save that

which was lost. The opening of the theatres for the preaching of the Word has been a very blessed thing. The raising up of evangelists, who have gone throughout the land preaching the Word, has been a proof that the Son of man has not ceased to seek and to save.

When I look back to eleven years ago, when I commenced my pastorate in London, [The only complete record of the wonderful change that had been wrought in London during those eleven years, from 1854 to 1865, appears in the four volumes of *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*] I recollect that there seemed to be very little care then about the preaching of the Word.

We could not, then, do what we now can—count up some twenty evangelists always going through the country, and all of them in their measure useful men—I mean such men as Richard Weaver, and Reginald Radcliffe, and Brownlow North and a great many others, all in their way adapted to the work. It seemed then as if the church of Christ had given up seeking the lost—but God has raised up one and another for the purpose of preaching the Word, fulfilling this Scripture, that “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Some say, “If the people want to hear the Gospel, let them go to church or chapel—they can always hear the Gospel when they like.” That is not Christ’s way. We are to go and seek them. Open-air preaching is a blessed institution, and though you may block up a thoroughfare sometimes, it is better to do that than that the thoroughfare to hell should be crowded. If you can turn a soul from the road to hell, it will not matter though you may turn some passenger in the street out of his way, so that he may have to mire his boots. Midnight services, hunting after the poor sinners in the streets at midnight, the opening of Ragged Schools and Reformatories—all these things are the fulfilling of the Word, “The Son of man is come to *seek* that which was lost.”

We know that He seeks, but does He save them? If I must give an answer from my own observation, I can point to many members of this congregation and say, “Save them? Indeed He does! Has He not delivered them from the bonds of sin? Has He not made them new creatures in Christ Jesus?” But if you look anywhere, wherever a faithful Gospel is preached, you will see that salvation-work does go on.

I hope it may go on with us for many and many a year, until Christ shall come. Christ is not disappointed in the souls He came to save. All for whom He stood as Substitute shall sing His praise in heaven. He has not redeemed souls that may afterwards be cast into hell. He did not suffer for my sins that I might suffer for them too. His atonement is effectual. Every sinner He died to save He does save. He is not foiled at any point, nor disappointed in any single aim. The lost He came to seek and save, He finds and saves.

And in eternity, we shall find, when turning over the register of the chosen, that every one of them has been gathered around the eternal throne singing the praise of His sovereign grace.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LUKE 19

Verses 1-5. *And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*

Remember that the Lord Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to suffer and to die. And there He was, the patient, suffering Lamb of God—but here He speaks in that commanding tone which well became the Prince of the House of David—“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.” [Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon on various aspects of the calling of Zacchaeus are as follows: #73, Effectual Calling; #1319, The Sinner’s Saviour; #2665, A Day to be Remembered; #2701, Jesus Joyfully Received, and #2755, Must He?]

6. *And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

Solomon said, “Where the word of a king is, there is power.” Omnipotence went with the word of this King of kings, so Zacchaeus was bound to obey it.

7-11. *And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*

Their minds were full of thoughts concerning Christ’s coming as a King—and they had very mistaken notions concerning His kingdom, so He indicates to them that, for the present, the practical matter to be remembered was that He had come “to seek and to save that which was lost.” If they had not been so full of their idle dreams of a temporal sovereignty, they would have perceived that in the calling of Zacchaeus, Christ had manifested His Kingship in the realm of mercy, and had there exercised the sovereignty of His grace.

In order that they might be able the better to understand the meaning of His spiritual kingdom, and not have their eyes so dazzled by the illusions which had so long deceived the Jews, our Lord pointed out to them, in the parable of the pounds, [See sermon #1960, The Servants and the Pounds] the practical way of preparing for His second coming.

12-15. *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.*

It would have been well if our translators, instead of using that ugly Latin word, “occupy,” had kept to the expression, “trade with it,” for here we get the same words again—“that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”

16. *Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*

The genuine servant, with due humility, puts himself in the background. It is not he who has “gained ten pounds”—it is his lord’s pound that has done it. He is pleased to bring the ten pounds, yet he claims no credit for himself, but says, “Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds.”

17. *And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.*

There is no comparison between the servant’s work and the reward for its faithful performance. That ten pounds, if his lord had given it all to him, would not have bought a house in a village, unless it had been a very tiny one—“a cottage in a vineyard,” or “a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.” Yet his lord gives him “authority over ten cities.”

18-19. *And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.*

How he must have opened his eyes when he received authority over five cities!

20. *And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:*

The napkin with which he ought to have wiped away the sweat from his brow, he had used merely as a wrapper for the pound that his lord had entrusted to him for the purpose of trading with it. He had done nothing with the pound—he thought he was all right because he had not done any harm with his lord’s money. He had not joined the revolting citizens, who said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” He had not spent the pound, nor embezzled his master’s money—in fact, he had been very careful to keep intact the treasure that had been entrusted to him, and he felt proud of his own prudence, and said, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.”

21. *For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.*

This was impudence indeed. But his master took him on his own ground, and showed that, even if his statement had been true, he ought to have been the more diligent in obeying his lord's command.

22-23. *And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?*

“You might have done that, at any rate, even if you were afraid to trade with it, as I bade you.” God often deals with men on their own ground and condemns them out of their own mouth. They say that God is very severe in threatening them with “the wrath to come.” Well, if you so believe and so speak, there is the more reason why you should fear to disobey Him, and so to incur His just displeasure. If, in spite of such terrible threatenings, you still defy Him, it only brings out the more clearly the greatness of your guilt.

24-25. *And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds).*

They were quite astonished. “What! Give more to the man who has so much already?” “Yes,” says the master, “that is my command.”

26. *For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken away from him.*

Hear again the note of sovereignty. Christ will do as He wills. And His mode of action shall sometimes be so singular that even His own attendants will wonder at the strangeness of His procedure and will begin to ask, “How is this?” But as Elihu said to Job, “He giveth not account of any of his matters.”

27-31. *But But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.*

Here we see Christ's true royalty again flashing out from beneath the humiliation of His humanity. He lets us know that, although He is going up to Jerusalem to die, it is not because He is not Lord of all. But that being Lord of all, He makes Himself of no reputation, takes upon Himself the form of a servant, is made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbles Himself and becomes “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” [See sermon #2281, Our Lord in the Valley of Humiliation]

32-34. *And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him.*

The word of the King was again with power and the owners of the colt were willing to let the animal go since the King had “need of him.” They may have been secret disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we have no information upon that point. Our King's warrant runs anywhere—and even when His personal presence is not consciously realized, His royal and divine word still rules the minds and hearts of men.

35-38. *And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.*

They were so jubilant that they seemed to have caught some notes from the song that the angels sang at the Savior's birth—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” There had been war in heaven, but these disciples of Christ sang, “Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”

39-41. *And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,*

What a contrast! The King's courtiers shouting for joy and the King Himself weeping over the guilty city where the greatest tragedy in the history of the whole universe was about to take place. The King saw, in the near and more remote future, what no one else could see, so, "when he was come near, and beheld the city, he wept over it." [See sermon #1517, The Lamentations of Jesus]

42-48. *Saying, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.*

There was a popular wave of enthusiasm in His favor but alas! it soon ebbed away, and then the multitudes that had cried, "Hosanna!" were just as loud in their shouts of, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

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