

REAL GRACE FOR REAL NEED

NO. 889

**A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“He healed them that had need of healing.”
Luke 9:11.*

“HE healed them that had need of healing,” that is to say, on this gracious occasion no single case came before Him which baffled Him. However rampant might be the disease, however extreme the condition of the patient’s malady, Jesus wrought an instantaneous cure. And truly to this very hour no spiritual sickness has defeated the great Physician. No sick souls have ever been carried away from His feet to perish hopelessly, because their need outreached His power. Satan’s worst is soon undone by Jesus’ best. The Son of God in no solitary instance has been foiled, still in the goings forth of His mercy He has “healed them that had need of healing.”

The text also indicates that our Lord continued unweariedly to heal all the multitudes that came. From morning till night, as fast as the various patients presented themselves, He wrought their cure. There was an eye to be opened here, hearing to be given there, a lame man to be made to leap, a withered limb to be outstretched, there was leprosy to be cleansed, dropsy to be dried, fever, epilepsy, madness, and all manner of maladies to be subdued, but Jesus paused not, virtue still continued to flow to heal “them that had need of healing.”

Though they had been countless as the sands, His love, like the sea, should have touched them all. His restoring power was by no means exhausted, the oil only ceased to flow when there was not another vessel to fill. But had the needy continued still to come even to this day, our Master would still have multiplied His miracles of mercy. In spiritual sicknesses, the great Healer of our sin-sick nature has by no means declined in power. He is far from being exhausted by the number of applicants who have come to Him. We do well to sing—

*“Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Is saved to sin no more.”*

If this present world should continue through a century of thousands of years, yet no sinner shall apply to Jesus for pardon, and find that His cleansing efficacy has ceased. So long as sin shall pollute this earth, the Savior shall remain to purify those who believe in Him.

But the text seemed particularly to me, as it flashed upon my mind, to indicate this further truth, that as the Redeemer was neither baffled by any one disease, nor drained of His healing virtue by the multitude, so the diseases which He healed were intense, the cures which He wrought were memorable. They were not feigned sicknesses which were brought before Him, nor counterfeit miseries, else His cures also had been shams, and He Himself had been a mock Savior.

Those whom He healed had deep, true, undoubted, urgent need of healing. They were not pretended patients, with sores which they had manufactured for the occasion, or sentimental sufferers with griefs imagined but not existent. But He wrought health for persons who were well known to be cruelly diseased, in whom the mischief was no dream, the misery no fiction, and consequently the cures which He wrought were no fictions either, but they were evident, permanent, and true.

Fancied ills He left to others. He healed those that had need of healing. Sentimental grievances may be left to jangling philosophers and hair-splitting rabbis—Jesus deals with actual evils whose cure is urgent. Of all men who ever lived, the Prophet of Nazareth was the most practical, doing nothing for show, nothing for mere custom, but everything to work solid good, and efface real evil. Not a motion of His finger has He for feigned or fancied grievance, but all His power goes forth to those who have true need of healing.

We shall take this thought, this morning, and dwell upon it. It seems to us to be full of comfort. May God grant it may bring into light and liberty some who have long been bound.

I. Our first head, this morning, shall be that THOSE WHOM CHRIST HAS SAVED WILL ALL CONFESS THAT THEY HAD NEED OF SAVING.

Out of the whole multitude who have believed in Jesus, there is not one to whom His salvation has been a superfluity. I will be spokesman for them, this morning, according to my ability—they will all confess that what they have received was what they greatly wanted, that the salvation which Jesus has given them was a salvation without which they would have perished everlastingly.

For first, beloved, all the saved saints confess that they had need of healing through *their natural depravity*. There is a sad bias in us all towards sin. Whoever may dispute concerning original sin as a universal fact, all the saints confess it as a particular evil in their own case. We are compelled to acknowledge that David's confession must be ours, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Our nature was corrupted at its fountainhead. When at any time we were put upon right courses by the stress of moral persuasion, or by the urgency of fear, yet still our heart labored to follow its own devices against wind and tide. Even as the bowl from the potter's hand, however straightly it runs for a while, before long begins to curve according to the bias, even so under all circumstances we tend towards evil.

To our nature, to do evil is easy, to do good is difficult. We loved darkness naturally rather than light. Uphill work it was to serve God, but as swiftly as a stone hurled down from a crag pursues its downward course, so readily did we follow the way of rebellion. Our sin was of the heart, not of the surface, "The leprosy was deep within." Our tendency to evil did not spring from imitation—for we had set before us, some of us, the noblest of Christian examples, but the prompting to evil was within, the taint was in our vital blood. Now there was need of healing here, since the disease had corrupted our essential being, and rendered us hopelessly unclean. To our heart's center there was urgent need of healing.

But beloved, many of us have been led to feel that in addition to ordinary original sin, evil tendencies had in the case of some of us assumed peculiar shapes and dreadful forms of *besetting and constitutional sin*. I will appeal to certain of my brethren here, whether they had not a natural tendency to a quick temper, an anger soon excited, and exceedingly mad when once aroused? In others, there was a strong disposition to pride. Even now, with the grace of God in them, it costs them much to keep their heads in their proper places.

Alas! in how many others the animal passions are forceful and eager like hungry lions roaring for their prey, and nothing but grace can keep them in check! Ah! there are some of us who may do well to imagine what we should have been if grace had not interposed. We are bold in spirit, eager in desire, intent in purpose, stubborn in will, energetic and ardent, and had we been set on mischief, nothing could have restrained us in our headlong course. Grace leads us in glad captivity, but apart from this we would have been terrible sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

All providences that might have thwarted us would but have incited us to more vehement endeavors to pursue our wicked and willful way. Grace has conquered, but what if we had been left alone? A Scotch gentleman was observed to look very intently upon the face of Rowland Hill. The good old man asked him, "And what are you looking in my face at?" The observer replied, "I have been studying the lines of your face." "And what do you make out of them?" asked Rowland. "Why I make out," said he,

“that if the grace of God had not changed your heart, you would have been a great rascal.” “Ah!” said Rowland, “you have made out the truth indeed.”

Many of us have to confess humbly that in us there was pressing need of healing, for if healing had not come, we should not only have been sinful as others, but should probably have taken the lead in iniquity, and been carried away by the wild sweep of inward passion to the utmost excess of riot.

Brethren, this need of healing will be confessed by the saints in this further respect, that there was not only in us a tendency to sin, but *we had grievously sinned* in act and deed before conversion. I know it is very customary with those who are seeking Christ to imagine that the saints of God whom they respect and esteem could never have sinned before conversion as they themselves have done. They cannot imagine that the man who is now rejoicing in Christ was once as hardened in sin as themselves. Yet in truth we were even as you.

When the apostle mentioned the greatest of sinners, he added, “Such were some of us: but we are washed, but we are sanctified.” O dear seeker, do not believe as Satan tells you, that those who are washed were never as black as you, we were just as vile. It were a shame for us to confess in public all our transgressions and iniquities before we knew pardoning mercy of the Lord, but it will suffice us to say that the remembrance of them lays us in the very dust, so that we should not dare to lift up our head were it not that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

There is not a saint in heaven but what had sinned enough to damn him to the lowest hell if he had not been saved by one who knew he had need of saving. Where had Peter been? As bad as Judas certainly if sovereign grace had not prevented. Where had John been, even loving John? Cursing and blaspheming the very Christ upon whose bosom he laid his head, if it had not been that converting love stepped in and made him in the fullness of time to become a child of God.

There would have been no difference between the best and the worst of men if divine favor had not wrought some better thing in the godly. And let this always be treasured up as a hopeful circumstance to you who would be saved, that in the matter of actual sin, there was a deep and real need of healing in the saints who are healed. No, sirs, our sins were not mere fiction. Our repentances were not fanatical sentiment.

Southey, when he writes upon the repentance of John Bunyan, and his terrible accusations of himself, cannot refrain from thinking him a little beside himself, and morbid in his feelings. The good man is candid and honest, and wants to make something out of it, but he cannot see in young Bunyan any cause for such outcries against himself. Had Southey been able to look upon sin in that same vivid but truthful light which had shone upon the young tinker’s soul, he would have seen the least sin to be exceeding sinful, and would have felt that exaggeration in horror against sin is not possible.

To sin against light, against conscience, against the Holy Ghost, is to sin with a vengeance. No degree of outward moral purity can comfort a heart which is once made aware of its inward defilement, and of the actual sinfulness of what man calls a trifle. Our actual sins would have been draughts of poison to our souls if the divine antidote had not been given. There was, indeed, great need of healing.

Further, let me say there was need of healing in our case because, in addition to having sinned, we willfully continued in it. In the very teeth of divine mercy, in spite of conscience and of the invitations of the Gospel, we persevered in our sinful courses. Do I not remember how often I was invited to come to Christ, and even felt the gentle drawings of His cords of love? But I drew back like a bull unaccustomed to the yoke! Do I not recollect how God’s law plowed me again and again? And yet in those very furrows, the cursed grasses and thistle of my sins dared to spring up!

How often have I stood and wept, and trembled, but have procrastinated, and so have gone my way to dry those eyes and look again into the face of sin without alarm! Yes, there was need of healing in that heart which the cross of Christ could not affect, which the terrors of hell could not subdue, which the loving invitations of a mother could not persuade to holiness, and that even the warnings of sickness and the fear of death could not bend to the will of God.

Some of you were long years before you yielded to the power of divine grace. You will sorrowfully acknowledge, this morning, that in your obstinate will there was need of healing, for had not that healing come, it is as certain as that you are here today pilgrims on the way to heaven, that you would have continued to pursue the road to hell. There was need of healing, for the disease was not one that would have died out by itself. It would never have come to a head, and then have lost its power. It was a disease that would have spread until it defiled you beyond bearing, and until the righteous God would have said, "Put it away with the unclean forever and ever, for within the courts of heaven it can never dwell."

O praise your God, this morning, you that are saved, for you had solemn need of saving. The longer I live the more I feel the need of daily salvation. I have need of my great Master's healing hand every hour. If the Lord do not carry on the work which He has begun, it will surely fail. If He does not continue to repress and destroy in us our carnal inclinations, they will get the better of us even now. If the Holy Spirit does not fan with His living breath that spark of grace which lives within us, it will certainly be quenched with the waterfloods of temptation. If there were no other proof of our need of healing than our experience since conversion, we should have more than enough. If ever I get to heaven, I will praise God more loudly than any of you, for I shall owe more to the grace of God that will bring me there.

But I suppose the same feeling is in every man that is conscious of the sin that dwells in him, and trembles at his own lack of strength. God will carry on His work, He will not take away His hand from you, nor suffer you to perish. But in the fact that if He did so withdraw, the best of you would be cast away, and ere tomorrow would be apostates from the faith, you have proof that you have need of healing.

You will have need of healing all along until you come to die. Even when just about to enter into the joy of your Lord, when the last sin is under your foot, and your sanctification is all but perfect, when you have almost destroyed by His grace the last indwelling lust, even then you will have need of healing. He must be the Omega who was the Alpha, or you can never finish. He must carry on even to its close the work which in His tenderness He has commenced, or else it will be incomplete to your eternal overthrow.

So then, it is established beyond a doubt, and I speak as the witness of ten thousand of God's servants, that those who are saved were such as had need of saving. The Son of Man came to seek and to save us when we were lost, emphatically lost. He has healed us, but it has not been of a finger ache or a flea-bite disease, He has healed us of a disease most deadly, that was damnable. Blessed be His name, while we are forced to speak evilly of ourselves, in that very proportion we can speak gloriously of Him. We had need of healing, and He has given us just the healing that our spirits needed.

II. Having, as it were, cast up my earthworks round about the soul that I desire to win for Jesus, I shall now come point blank to the attack. You, dear hearers, you unsaved hearers, **YOU ALSO HAVE NEED OF SAVING.**

I am not going to talk to you, this morning, about your feeling your need of Christ. I know that you make that quite a favorite question, and a fond excuse for unbelief. So we shall not speak of your sense of that need, but what is far more vast a subject, namely, your need itself. You unsaved souls, you have great need of saving. You have need of saving because *you are inclined to evil.*

You have lately been in a measure, desirous to find eternal life. You are not now as callous as you once were, conscience is awakened, and you are seeking more or less earnestly after Christ. But still with all this, your natural inclinations are towards evil. Your goodness will soon pass away like the dew of the morning, but your love to sin is graven as with a diamond into your heart of stone. The strong self-will within your soul is still set on mischief. You will not come to Christ that you may have life.

Perhaps you have never thought of your natural corruption, and above all, have never been humbled by it, but it is there notwithstanding your forgetfulness of it. You are a fallen, degenerate creature. You are not a pure spirit, whose judgment is accurately balanced. You judge unrighteous judgment. You are

not a creature with a free will that is equally inclinable either to good or evil, according as it may seem most beneficial to yourself. Your overpowering tendency now is towards that which is evil. Your mind puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, darkness for light, and light for darkness. And your nature, like an evil tree, brings forth evil fruit.

You perhaps have never perceived this, but the very fact that you have not perceived it only proves that you have the greater need of healing, since the disease has become so thorough as to have made you insensible of its own existence. When there is no pain in the limb, then is it certainly in greater risk of mortification. And while your natural depravity causes you no pain whatever, and you are even inclined to deny it and take no shame to yourself concerning it, the more urgent is the need that the Holy Ghost should convince you of sin and that the Lord Jesus Christ should come and deliver you from it.

Ah, poor sinner, what a ruin you are at best! Alas! for human dignity, with its lofty pinnacles of morality and turrets of excellency. What theatrical pasteboard! What sand-built rubbish all appears when seen in the blaze of divine light! Vain are your filmings of your deadly sore. Your heart is in itself vile and deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. You may wash the platter as you may, you may make the outside of the cup as clean as you will, but your inward parts are very wickedness. The imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts are evil, only evil, and that continually. "You must be born again." Your nature is too depraved for mending. You must be created anew in Christ Jesus. You have need of healing indeed.

And in addition to this, dear hearer, you are day by day proving your need of healing by *your actual sin*. I cannot publicly rehearse your particular and personal sins, but this I know, the charge may be legitimately brought against every unconverted person here that you are daily living in sin. Take down the ten commandments and read them through. I will but remind you of one, and beg you to examine yourself upon it, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." Are you keeping that? Why, you live as if there were no God, you know you do.

And day after day, and even month after month, you never do anything to manifest love towards God. You have some love towards your relatives, but no passion like that is kindled in your spirit towards your God. You have no love at all, and yet the precept is, "You shall love Him with all your heart." Why, that one command is lodging charges against you at the bar of God every day. Indeed, the whole ten you are constantly breaking, there is not one that you do keep.

These sins of yours are speeding as messengers up to the record office in heaven, and there you shall find written down every idle word, every sinful thought, and every guilty action of your whole life. How will you bear to hear of all these in the latter days, when your body shall have arisen from the grave at the archangel's trumpet? How will you bear to hear the book read out that shall rehearse your sins? At the very thought thereof your bones may be dissolved within you—sins against a righteous God, sins against His people, sins against His day, sins against His book, sins against your bodies, sins against your souls, sins of every kind, sins unseen of human eye, sins unknown to any but yourself and your God, all read and all proclaimed with trumpet voice while men and angels hear.

You have need of healing, for you are scarlet, you are crimson, you are double-dyed with your iniquities. O that you did but know this! O that you did but feel this! You have need of healing, and yet dark as the thought is, it gives me comfort, and it ought to give you comfort to remember the text, Jesus healed those that had need of healing, and if you are such, why should He not heal you? Your many sins only prove that you have need of healing, and the desperate depravity of your heart only proves still more that you are such as Jesus came to heal. He healed those that had need of healing. He healed just such as you are.

Further, I think I hear some of you confess *that you do not feel this as you ought*. Now I was about to bring this to you as a proof that you have need of healing. When a man does wrong, and yet will not confess it, how wrong he must be! Or when having confessed it, he feels not the proper shame, or feeling for a while the proper shame, he yet returns to the same evil like the dog to his vomit, how deep

must the evil be in his moral nature. How trebly diseased must he be, inasmuch as he does not feel sin to be sin at all!

When a man has done wrong, and knows it, and stands with bitter repentance to confess the evil, why, you think hopefully of him. After all, there are good points about the man. There is a vitality in him that will throw out the disease. But when the villain, having perpetrated a grave and causeless offense, does not for a moment acknowledge that he has done amiss, but continues calmly to perpetrate the offense again, ah, then, where is there any good in him? Is he not thoroughly bad?

Now, such are you. If you were at all right with God you would fall at your Father's feet and never rise until you were forgiven, your tears would flow day and night until you had the assurance of pardon. But since your heart seems to yourself to be made of hell-hardened steel, and to be like the nether millstone that feels not at all, why, then there is the more need of healing, and you seem to me this morning the very man I am after, the very man that Christ came to save, for He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, not to save those who had no need of healing, but to heal just such as you whose need is desperate indeed.

As if to prove your own need of healing, you are this morning, according to your own statement, *unable to pray*. You have been trying to pray of late, and wished you could. You put yourself upon your knees, but your heart does not talk with God. A horrible dread comes over you, or else frivolous and vain thoughts distract you. "Oh," you have said, "I would give a thousand pounds for one tear of repentance. I would be ready to pluck out my eyes if I could but call upon God as the poor publican did with, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I thought it the easiest thing in the world to pray, but now I find that a true prayer is beyond my power."

O soul, you have need of healing indeed, possessed with a dumb devil, and all your other devils to boot, and unable to cry out for His mercy. Yours is a sad case. You have need of healing, and I cannot help repeating my text to you, "He healed them that had need of healing." Why should He not heal you?

Ah, but you tell me your feelings, your desires after good things, are very often dampened. Perhaps this morning you are sincerely in earnest, but tomorrow you may be just as careless as ever. The other day you went into your chamber and did wrestle with God, but a temptation came across your path, and you were as thoughtless about divine things as if you had never been aroused to a sense of their value. Ah! this shows what a need you have of healing. You are indeed vile when you dare to trifle with eternity, to sport with death and judgment, and to be at ease while in danger of hell—your heart indeed has need of healing. And though I grieve that you should be in such a plight, yet I rejoice that I am able to add, "He healed those that had need of healing."

Though you know your case to be so bad, yet at times you set up a kind of self-repentance, and try to justify yourself in the sight of God. You say, "I have repented, or tried to do so. I have prayed, or tried to pray. I have done all I can to be saved, and God will not save me." That is to say, you throw the blame of your damnation upon God, and make out yourself to be righteous in His sight. You know this to be wrong. If you are not saved, it is because you will not believe in Jesus. There is the only hitch and the only difficulty.

Your damnation is not of God, but of yourself. It is necessitated by your own willful wickedness in not believing in Christ. But inasmuch as you are so wicked as to dare to excuse yourself, you have great need of healing, urgent need of saving. But then, the minute that you have thus excused yourself, you rush to the opposite extreme. You declare that you have sinned past hope, that you deserve to be now in hell, and that God can never forgive you. You deny the mercy of God, you deny the power of Christ to forgive you and cleanse you. You fly in the face of God's Word, and you make Him out to be a liar.

When He tells you that if you trust Jesus you shall find peace, you tell Him it is not possible there can be any peace with you. When He reminds you that He never rejected one, you insinuate that He will reject you. You thus insult the divine majesty by denying the truthfulness and honesty of God. You have need of healing when you thus allow wicked despair to get the mastery of you. You are far gone, very far gone. But oh! I rejoice to know that you are still among such as Jesus was come to heal. He came to

heal those that had need of healing, and you cannot deny you are one of those. Why, Satan himself will not have the impudence to tell you that you have no need of healing. O that you would but cast yourself into the Savior's arms—not trying to make yourself out to be good, but acknowledging all that I have laid to your charge, and then, trusting as a sinner that dear Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Remember, dear hearer, you have need of healing, for except you be healed of these sins and of all these wicked tendencies and thoughts of yours, as sure as you are a living man you will be cast into hell. O my dear friend, I know of no truth that ever causes me such pain to preach as this, not that sinners will be damned, awful truth as that is, but that *awakened* sinners will be damned unless they believe in Jesus. You must not make a Christ out of your tears, you must not hope to find safety in your bitter thoughts and cruel despairs. Except you believe, you shall never be established. Unless you come to Christ, you may be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and judgment too, but those convictions will only be preludes to your destruction.

My dear hearer, do you know what you are this morning? You call yourself a seeker, but until you are a finder, you are an enemy to God, and God is angry with you every day. Let but one drop of your blood go wrong this morning, let but your beating pulse be suspended, and where are you? Why, in hell, in spite of those tears, in spite of those cries, for if you will not believe in Jesus, there is no purgatory for you, no place where afterwards you may find space for repentance, and seek the Christ whom you today disregard. I have no alternative for you, however tender and broken-hearted you may be, but this one, believe and live. Refuse to believe, and you must perish, for your broken-heartedness, and tears, and professed contrition can never stand in the place of Christ. You must have faith in Jesus, or you must die eternally.

I shall press on very briefly to the next point, but I pray God to make these words of use to you before you forget them. I am endeavoring to speak simply, personally, and pointedly. He knows how my soul yearns over those who are here, that they may this morning find life in Jesus. O may He grant the desire of my soul, and bring them to Himself now.

III. Our third point is to you, O needy sinner. JESUS CAN SAVE YOU.

I need not enter into what your case is. Remember, Jesus has saved a parallel case to yours. Yours may seem to yourself to be exceedingly odd, but somewhere or other in the New Testament you will find one as singular as yours. You tell me that you are full of so much wickedness. Did not He cast seven devils out of Magdalene? Yes, but your wickedness seems to be greater than even seven devils. Did not He drive a whole legion of devils out of the demoniac of Gadara?

You tell me that you cannot pray, but He healed one possessed of a dumb devil. You feel hardened and insensible, but He cast out a deaf devil. You tell me you cannot believe, neither could that man with the withered arm stretch out his arm, but he did it when Jesus bade him. You tell me you are dead in sin, but Jesus made even the dead live. Your case cannot be so bad, but it has been matched, and Christ has conquered the like of it. O poor soul, if you do but come to Him, you shall not find yourself one half the singularity that you suppose, for another has been saved just like yourself.

Remember again, Christ can save you, for there is not a record in the world, nor has there ever been handed down to us by tradition a single case in which Jesus has failed. If I could meet anywhere in my wanderings a soul that had cast itself on Christ alone, and yet had received no pardon, if there could be found in hell a solitary spirit that relied upon the precious blood, and found no salvation, then the Gospel might well be laid by in the dark, and no longer gloried in. But as that has not been, and never shall be, sinner, you shall not make the first exception.

If you come to Christ—and to come to Him is but to trust Him wholly and simply—you cannot perish, for He has said, "Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." Will He prove a liar? Will you dare to think so? O come you, for He cannot cast you out. Think for a moment, sinner, and this may comfort you, He whom I preach to you as the healer of your soul is God. What can be impossible with God? What sin cannot He forgive who is God over all? If your transgressions were to be dealt with by

an angel, they might surpass all Gabriel's power, but it is Immanuel, God with us, who is come to save. Though you were between the jaws of hell, so long as the pit had not shut her mouth upon you, He could save you. Doubt not, where you have to deal with deity, nothing is impossible, or even difficult.

Moreover, you cannot doubt His will. Have you ever heard of Him—He that was God and became man? He was gentle as a woman—

*“His heart is made of tenderness,
His heart melts with love.”*

It was not in Him to be harsh. When the woman taken in adultery, in the very fact, was brought to Him, what did He say? “Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.” It was said of Him, “This man receives sinners, and eats with them,” and He is not changed now that He reigns above. He is just as willing to receive sinners now as when He was here below.

Once more, do you still doubt? Remember what He has done to save sinners. My time fails me, else would I ask you to go with me to Gethsemane, and view Him covered with the sweat of blood. I would ask you to stand with me in Pilate's Hall when Pilate cries, “*Ecce Homo.*” To see the Savior as His shoulders are crimsoned with streams of gore for sinners who were His enemies. I would ask you then to stand beneath the cross, and view the hands, and feet, and side, all pouring forth His life-blood. These are the drops that take our sins away. These are the griefs of Him who took our guilt that our guilt might be forgiven.

Can Jesus the Son of God suffer like this, and yet there be no power in His blood to cleanse? What, was the atonement a fiction? Was the death of the eternal Son of God a thing without effect? There must be power enough there to take away sin. Come and wash, come and wash, you vile and black, come and wash, and you shall find instant cleansing the moment that by faith you touch His purifying blood.

Lastly, Jesus demands of you, sinner, this morning, your trust. He deserves it, let Him have it. You have need of healing. He came to heal those that have need of healing. He can heal you. What is to be done in order that you may be healed this morning, that all your sins may be forgiven and yourself saved? All that is to be done is to leave off your own doing, and let Him do for you. Leave off looking to yourself, or looking to others, and just come and cast yourself on Him. You know Dr. Watts' lines—

*“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
On Christ's kind arm I fall.
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”*

“Oh,” you say, “but I cannot believe.” Cannot believe! Then do you know what you are doing? You are making Him a liar. If you tell a man, “I cannot believe you,” that is only another way of saying, “You are a liar.” Oh, you will not dare to say that of Christ. No, my friend, I take you by the hand, and say another word—*you must believe Him.* He is God, dare you doubt Him? He died for sinners. Can you doubt the power of His blood? He has promised. Will you insult Him by mistrusting His Word?

“Oh, no,” you say, “I feel I must believe, I must trust Him, but suppose that trust of mine should not be of the right kind? Suppose it should be a natural trust?” Ah! my friend, a humble trust in Jesus is a thing that never grew in natural ground. For a poor soul to come and trust in Christ is always the fruit of the Spirit. You need not raise a question about that. Never did the devil, never did mere nature empty a man of himself, and bring him to Jesus. Do not be anxious on that point.

“But” says one, “the Spirit must lead me to believe Him!” Yes, but you cannot see the Spirit, His work is a secret and a mystery. What you have to do is to believe in Jesus. There He stands, God, and yet a suffering man, making atonement, and He tells you if you trust Him you shall be saved. You must trust Him. You cannot doubt Him. Why should you? What has He done that you should doubt Him?

***“O believe the record true,
God to you His Son has given.”***

And if you trust Him, you need not raise the question as to where your faith came from. It must have come from the Holy Spirit who is not seen in His workings, for He works where He wishes. You see the fruit of His work, and that is enough for you. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? If so, you are born of God. If you have cast yourself, sink or swim, on Him, then are you saved.

We read in the papers this week how a man was saved from being shot. He had been condemned in a Spanish court, but being an American citizen and also of English birth, the consuls of the two countries interposed and declared that the Spanish authorities had no power to put him to death, and what did they do to secure his life? They wrapped him up in their flags, they covered him with the Stars and Stripes, and the Union Jack, and defied the executioners, “Now fire a shot if you dare, for if you do, you defy the nations represented by those flags, and you will bring the powers of those two great nations upon you.”

There stood the man, and before him the soldiery, and though a shot might soon have ended his life, yet he was as invulnerable as though in a coat of triple steel. Even so Jesus Christ has taken my poor guilty soul ever since I believed in Him, and has wrapped around me the blood-red flag of His atoning sacrifice, and before God can destroy me or any other soul that is wrapped in the atonement, He must insult His Son and dishonor this sacrifice. And that He will never do, blessed be His name.

May the Lord save each one of you. May He do it now, and His shall be the glory. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON, LUKE 7:1-30.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.