

“YOUR OWN SALVATION”

NO. 1003

A SERMON
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“Your own salvation.”
Philippians 2:12

WE select the words, “*your own salvation,*” as our text this morning, not out of any singularity or from the slightest wish that the brevity of the text should surprise you. But because our subject will be the more clearly before you if only these three words are announced. If I had nominally taken the whole verse I could not have attempted to expound it without distracting your attention from the topic which now weighs upon my heart. O that the divine Spirit may bring home to each one of your minds the unspeakable importance of “your own salvation”!

We have heard it said by hearers that they come to listen to us and we talk to them upon subjects in which they have no interest. You will not be able to make this complaint today, for we shall speak only of “your own salvation,” and nothing can more concern you. It has sometimes been said that preachers frequently select very unpractical themes. No such objection can be raised today, for nothing can be more practical than this. Nothing more necessary than to urge you to see to “your own salvation.”

We have even heard it said that ministers delight in abstruse subjects, paradoxical dogmas, and mysteries surpassing comprehension, but assuredly we will keep to plain sailing this morning. No sublime doctrines, no profound questions shall perplex you. You shall only be called on to consider “your own salvation”—a very homely theme and a very simple one, but for all that, the weightiest that can be brought before you.

I shall also seek after simple words and plain sentences to suit the simplicity and plainness of the subject, that there may be no thought whatever about the speaker’s language, but only concerning this one, sole, only topic, “your own salvation.”

I ask you all, as reasonable men who would not injure or neglect yourselves, to lend me your most serious attention. Chase away the swarming vanities which buzz around you, and let each man think for himself upon his “own salvation.” O may the Spirit of God set each one of you apart in a mental solitude and constrain you each one, singly, to face the truth concerning his own state! Each man apart, each woman apart, the father apart, and the child apart—may you now come before the Lord in solemn thought and may nothing occupy your attention but this—“your own salvation.”

I. We will begin this morning’s meditation by noting THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION—*Salvation!*

Salvation! a great word, not always understood, often narrowed down, and its very marrow overlooked. Salvation! This concerns every one here present. We all fell in our first parent. We have all personally sinned. We shall all perish unless we find salvation.

The word salvation contains within it *deliverance from the guilt of our past sins*. We have broken God’s law, each one of us, more or less flagrantly. We have all wandered the downward road, though each has chosen a different way. Salvation brings to us the blotting out of the transgressions of the past, acquittal from criminality, purging from all guiltiness, that we may stand accepted before the great Judge. What man in their sober senses will deny that forgiveness is an unspeakably desirable blessing!

But salvation means more than that—it includes *deliverance from the power of sin*. Naturally we are all fond of evil and we run after it greedily. We are the bond slaves of iniquity and we love the bondage. This last is the worst feature of the case.

But when salvation comes, it delivers the man from the power of sin. He learns that it is evil, and he regards it as such, loathes it, repents that he has ever been in love with it, turns his back upon it, becomes, through God’s Spirit, the master of his lusts, puts the flesh beneath his feet, and rises into the liberty of the children of God.

Alas! there are many who do not care for this—if this be salvation, they would not give a farthing for it. They love their sins. They rejoice to follow the devices and imaginations of their own corrupt hearts. Yet be assured, this emancipation from bad habits, unclean desires, and carnal passions is the main point in salvation, and if it be not ours, salvation in its other branches is not and cannot be enjoyed by us.

Dear hearer, do you possess salvation from sin? Have you escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust? If not, what have you to do with salvation? To any right-minded man deliverance from unholy principles is regarded as the greatest of all blessings. What think you of it?

Salvation includes *deliverance from the present wrath of God* which abides upon the unsaved man every moment of his life. Every person who is unforgiven is the object of divine wrath. “God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword.” “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

I frequently hear the statement that this is a state of probation. This is a great mistake, for our probation has long since passed. Sinners have been proved and found to be unworthy. They have been “weighed in the balances” and “found wanting.” If you have not believed in Jesus, condemnation already rests upon you. You are reprieved for a while, but your condemnation is recorded.

Salvation takes a person from under the cloud of divine wrath and reveals to him the divine love. He can then say, “O God, I will praise You, though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comfort me.” Oh, it is not hell hereafter which is the only thing a sinner has to fear, it is the wrath of God which rests upon him now.

To be unreconciled to God now is an awful thing. To have God’s arrow pointed at you as it is at this moment, even though it flies not from the string as yet, is a terrible thing. It is enough to make you tremble from head to foot when you learn that you are the target of JEHOVAH’s wrath. “He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.”

Every soul that is unreconciled to God by the blood of His Son is in the gall of bitterness. Salvation at once sets us free from this state of danger and alienation. We are then no longer the “children of wrath, even as others,” but are made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. What can be conceived more precious than this?

And then, we lastly receive that part of salvation which ignorant persons put first and make to be the whole of salvation. In consequence of our being delivered from the guilt of sin, and from the power of sin, and from the present wrath of God, we are *delivered from the future wrath of God*. Unto the uttermost will that wrath descend upon the souls of men when they leave the body and stand before their Maker’s bar, if they depart this life unsaved.

To die without salvation is to enter into damnation. Where death leaves us, there God’s judgment finds us, and where His judgment finds us eternity will hold us forever and ever. “He which is filthy, let him be filthy still,” and he that is wretched as a punishment for being filthy, shall be hopelessly wretched still.

Salvation delivers the soul from going down into the pit of hell. We, being justified, are no longer liable to punishment, because we are no longer chargeable with guilt. Christ Jesus bore the wrath of God that we might never bear it. He has made a full atonement to the justice of God for the sins of all believers.

Against him that believes, there remains no record of guilt. His transgressions are blotted out, for Christ Jesus has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. What a comprehensive word then is this—“salvation”!

It is a triumphant deliverance from the guilt of sin, from the dominion of it, from the curse of it, from the punishment of it, and ultimately from the very existence of it. Salvation is the death of sin, its burial, its annihilation, yea, and the very obliteration of its memory. For thus says the Lord, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

Beloved hearers, I am sure that this is the weightiest theme I can bring before you, and therefore I cannot be content unless I see that it grasps you and holds you fast. I pray you give earnest heed to this most pressing of all subjects. If my voice and words cannot command your fullest attention, I could wish to be dumb, that some other pleader might with wiser speech draw you to a close consideration of this matter.

Salvation appears to me to be of the first importance, when I think of what it is in itself, and for this reason I have at the outset set it forth before your eyes. But you may be helped to remember its value if you consider that God the Father thinks highly of salvation. It was on His mind or ever the earth was. He thinks salvation a lofty business, for He gave His Son that He might save rebellious sinners.

Jesus Christ, the only begotten, thinks salvation most important, for He bled, He died to accomplish it. Shall I trifle with that which cost Him His life? If He came from heaven to earth, shall I be slow to look from earth to heaven? Shall that which cost the Savior a life of zeal and a death of agony, be of small account with me?

By the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, by the wounds of Calvary, I beseech you, be assured that salvation must be worthy of your highest and most anxious thoughts. It could not be that God the Father, and God the Son should thus make a common sacrifice—the one giving His Son and the other giving Himself for salvation, and yet salvation should be a light and trivial thing.

The Holy Ghost thinks it no trifle, for He condescends to work continually in the new creation that He may bring about salvation. He is often vexed and grieved, yet He continues still His abiding labors that He may bring many sons to glory. Despise not what the Holy Ghost esteems, lest you despise the Holy Ghost Himself.

The sacred Trinity thinks much of salvation. Let us not neglect it. I beseech you who have gone on trifling with salvation to remember that we who have to preach to you dare not trifle with it. The longer I live, the more I feel that if God do not make me faithful as a minister, it had been better for me never to have been born.

What a thought that I am set as a watchman to warn your souls, and if I warn you not aright, your blood will be laid at my door! My own damnation will be terrible enough, but to have your blood upon my skirts as well—! God save any one of His ministers from being found guilty of the souls of men. Every preacher of the Gospel may cry with David, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.”

Bethink you, O careless hearers, that God’s church does not consider salvation to be a little matter? Earnest men and women, by thousands, are praying day and night for the salvation of others, and are laboring, too, and making great sacrifices, and are willing to make many more, if they may by any means bring some to Jesus and His salvation. Surely, if gracious men, and wise men, think salvation to be so important, you who have hitherto neglected it ought to change your minds upon the matter and act with greater care for your own interests.

The angels think it a weighty business. Bowing from their thrones, they watch for repenting sinners, and when they hear that a sinner has returned to his God, they waken anew their golden harps and pour forth fresh music before the throne, for “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

It is certain also that devils think salvation to be a great matter, for their arch-leader goes about seeking whom he may devour. They never tire in seeking men’s destruction. They know how much

salvation glorifies God, and how terrible the ruin of souls is, and therefore they compass sea and land, if they may destroy the sons of men.

Oh, I pray you, careless hearer, be wise enough to dread that fate which your cruel enemy, the devil, would gladly secure for you! Remember, too, that lost souls think salvation important. The rich man, when he was in this world, thought highly of nothing but his barns and the housing of his produce. But when he came into the place of torment, then he said, “Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

Lost souls see things in another light than that which dazzled them here below. They value things at a different rate from what we do here, where sinful pleasures and earthly treasures dim the mental eye. I pray you then, by the blessed Trinity, by the tears and prayers of holy men, by the joy of angels and glorified spirits, by the malice of devils, and the despair of the lost—arouse yourselves from slumber and neglect not this great salvation!

I shall not depreciate anything that concerns your welfare, but I shall steadfastly assert that nothing so much concerns any one of you as salvation. Your health by all means. Let the physician be fetched if you be sick. Care well for diet and exercise, and all sanitary laws. Look wisely to your constitution and its peculiarities.

But what matters it, after all, to have possessed a healthy body if you have a perishing soul? Wealth, yes, if you must have it, though you shall find it an empty thing if you set your heart upon it. Prosperity in this world, earn it if you can do so fairly, but, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

A golden coffin will be a poor compensation for a damned soul. To be cast away from God’s presence—can that misery be assuaged by mountains of treasure? Can the bitterness of the second death be sweetened by the thought that the wretch was once a millionaire, and that his wealth could affect the politics of nations?

No, there is nothing in health or wealth comparable to salvation. Nor can honor and reputation bear a comparison therewith. Truly they are but baubles, and yet for all that they have a strange fascination for the sons of men. Oh, sirs, if every harp string in the world should resound your glories, and every trumpet should proclaim your fame, what would it matter if a louder voice should say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”?

Salvation! *Salvation!* SALVATION! Nothing on earth can match it, for the merchandise of it is better than silver and the gain thereof than fine gold. The possession of the whole universe would be no equivalent to a lost soul for the awful damage it has sustained and must sustain forever. Pile up the worlds and let them fill the balance—ay, bring as many worlds as there are stars and heap up the scale on the one side. Then in this other scale place a single soul endowed with immortality and it outweighs the whole.

Salvation! nothing can be likened unto it. May we feel its unutterable value and therefore seek it till we possess it in its fullness!

II. But now we must advance to a second point of consideration, and I pray God the Holy Spirit to press it upon us, and that is, **WHOSE MATTER IS IT?**

We have seen what the matter is—salvation. Now, consider whose it is. “*Your own* salvation.” At this hour nothing else is to occupy your thoughts but this intensely personal matter, and I beseech the Holy Spirit to hold your minds fast to this one point.

If you are saved, it will be “your own salvation” and you yourself will enjoy it. If you are not saved, the sin you now commit is your own sin, the guilt your own guilt. The condemnation under which you live, with all its disquietude and fear, or with all its callousness and neglect, is your own—all your own. You may share in other men’s sins and other men may become participators in yours, but a burden lies on your own back which none besides can touch with one of his fingers.

There is a page in God’s Book where your sins are recorded unmingled with the transgressions of your fellows. Now, beloved, you must obtain for all this sin a personal pardon or you are undone forever. No other can be washed in Christ’s blood for you. No one can believe and let his faith stand instead of your faith.

The very supposition of human sponsorship in religion is monstrous. You must yourself repent, yourself believe, yourself be washed in the blood, or else for you there is no forgiveness, no acceptance, no adoption, no regeneration. It is all a personal matter through and through—“your own salvation” it must be or it will be your own eternal ruin.

Reflect anxiously that you must personally die. No one imagines that another can die for him. No man can redeem his brother or give to God a ransom. Through that iron gate I must pass alone and so must you. Dying will have to be our own personal business. And in that dying we shall have either personal comfort or personal dismay.

When death is past, salvation is still our “own salvation.” For if I am saved, *mine* “eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” Mine eyes shall see Him and not another on my behalf. No brother’s head is to wear your crown. No stranger’s hand to wave your palm. No sister’s eye to gaze for you upon the beatific vision, and no sponsor’s heart to be filled as your proxy with the ecstatic bliss.

There is a personal heaven for the personal believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be if you possess it, “your own salvation.” But if you have it not, reflect again, that it will be your own damnation. No one will be condemned for you. No other can bear the hot thunderbolts of JEHOVAH’s wrath on your behalf. When you shall say, “Hide me, ye rocks! Conceal me, O mountains!” No one will spring forward and say, “You can cease to be accursed and I will become a curse for you.”

A Substitute there is today for every one that believes—God’s appointed Substitute, the Christ of God. But if that substitution be not accepted by you, there can never be another. But there remains only for you a personal casting away to suffer personal pangs in your own soul and in your own body forever. This, then, makes it a most solemn business. O be wise and look well to “your own salvation.”

You may be tempted today and very likely you are to forget your own salvation by thoughts of other people. We are all so apt to look abroad in this matter and not to look at home. Let me pray you to reverse the process, and let everything which has made you neglect your own vineyard be turned to the opposite account, and lead you to begin at home, and see to “your own salvation.”

Perhaps you dwell among the saints of God, and you have been rather apt to find fault with them, though for my part, I can say these are the people I desire to live with and desire to die with, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” But O, if you live among the saints, ought it not to be your business to see to “your own salvation”?

See that you are truly one of them, not written in their church-book merely, but really engraven upon the palms of Christ’s hands. Not a false professor, but a real possessor—not a mere wearer of the name of Christ, but a bearer of the nature of Christ. If you live in a gracious family be afraid lest you should be divided from them forever.

How could you endure to go from a Christian household to the place of torment? Let the anxieties of saints lead you to be anxious. Let their prayers drive you to prayer. Let their example rebuke your sin and their joys entice you to their Savior. O see to this!

But perhaps you live most among ungodly men, and the tendency of your converse with the ungodly is to make you think as they do of the trifles and vanities, and wickednesses of this life. Do not let it be so—but on the contrary, say, “O God, though I am placed among these people, yet gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men. Let me avoid the sins into which they fall and the impenitence of which they are guilty. Save me, I pray You, O my God, save me from the transgressions which they commit.”

Perhaps today some of your minds are occupied with thoughts of the dead who have lately fallen asleep. There is a little one unburied at home or there is a father not yet laid in the grave. Oh, when you

weep for those who have gone to heaven, think of “your own salvation,” and weep for yourselves, for you have parted with them forever unless you are saved.

You have said, “Farewell” to those beloved ones, eternally farewell, unless you yourselves believe in Jesus. And if any of you have heard of persons who have lived in sin, and died in blasphemy, and are lost, I pray you think not of them carelessly lest you also suffer the same doom—for what says the Savior, “Suppose ye that these were sinners above all the sinners?” “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

It seems to me as if everything on earth, and everything in heaven, and everything in hell, yea, and God Himself, calls upon you to seek “your own salvation” first, and foremost, and above all other things.

It may be profitable to mention some persons upon whom this theme needs much pressing. I will begin at home. There is great need to urge this matter upon official Christians, such as I am, such as my brethren, the deacons and elders, are. If there are any persons who are likely to be deceived, it is those who are called by their office to act as shepherds to the souls of others.

Oh, my brethren! it is so easy for me to imagine because I am a minister, and have to deal with holy things, that therefore I am safe. I pray I may never fall into that delusion, but may always cling to the cross as a poor, needy sinner resting in the blood of Jesus. Brother ministers, co-workers, and officials of the church—do not imagine that office can save you. The son of perdition was an apostle—greater than we are in office, and yet at this hour he is greater in destruction. See to it, you that are numbered amongst the leaders of Israel, that you yourselves be saved.

Unpractical doctrinalists are another class of persons who need to be warned to see to their own salvation. When they hear a sermon, they sit with their mouths open, ready to snap at half a mistake. they make a man an offender for a word, for they conclude themselves to be the standards of orthodoxy, and they weigh up the preacher as he speaks, with as much coolness as if they had been appointed deputy judges for the Great King Himself.

Oh, sir, weigh yourself! It may be a great thing to be sound in the head, in the faith, but it is a greater thing to be sound in the heart. I may be able to split a hair between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and yet may have no part nor lot in the matter. You may be a very sound Calvinist or you may happen to think soundness lies in another direction. But, oh, it is nought! it is less than nought, except your souls feel the power of the truth and you yourselves are born again. See to “your own salvation,” O you wise men in the letter, who have not the Spirit.

So, too, certain persons who are always given to curious speculations need warning. When they read the Bible, it is not to find whether they are saved or no, but to know whether we are under the third or fourth vial, when the millennium is going to be, or what is the battle of Armageddon. Ah, sir, search out all these things if you have time and skill, but look to your own salvation first.

The book of Revelation—blessed is he that understands it, but not unless, first of all, he understands this, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.” The greatest doctor in the symbols and mysteries of the Apocalypse shall be as certainly cast away as the most ignorant, unless he has come to Christ and rested his soul in the atoning work of our great Substitute.

I know some who greatly need to look to their own salvation. I refer to those who are always criticizing others. They can hardly go to a place of worship but what they are observing their neighbor’s dress or conduct. Nobody is safe from their remarks—they are such keen judges and make such shrewd observations.

You fault-finders and talebearers, look to “your own salvation.” You condemned a minister the other day for a supposed fault, and yet he is a dear servant of God, who lives near his Master. Who are you, sir, to use your tongue against such a one as he? The other day a poor humble Christian was the object of your gossip and your slander, to the wounding of her heart. Oh, see to yourself, see to yourself.

If those eyes which look outward so piercingly would sometimes look inward, they might see a sight which would blind them with horror. Blessed horror if it led them to turn to the Savior who would open those eyes afresh and grant them to see His salvation.

I might also say that in this matter of looking to personal salvation, it is necessary to speak to some who have espoused certain great public designs. I trust I am as ardent a Protestant as any man living, but I know too many red-hot Protestants who are but little better than Romanists, for though the Romanists of old might have burnt them, they would certainly withhold toleration from Romanists today, if they could. And therein I see not a pin to choose between the two bigots.

Zealous Protestants, I agree with you, but yet I warn you that your zeal in this matter will not save you or stand in the stead of personal godliness. Many an orthodox Protestant will be found at the left hand of the Great Judge. And you, too, who are forever agitating this and that public question, I would say to you, “Leave politics alone till your own inward politics are settled on a good foundation.”

You are a Radical Reformer, you could show us a system of political economy which would right all our wrongs and give to every man his due. Then I pray you right your own wrongs, reform yourself, yield yourself to the love of Jesus Christ, or what will it mean to you, though you knew how to balance the affairs of nations, and to regulate the arrangement of all classes of society, if you yourself shall be blown away like chaff before the winnowing fan of the Lord.

God grant us grace, then, whatever else we take up with, to keep it in its proper place, and make our calling and election sure.

III. And now, thirdly, and O for grace to speak aright, I shall try to ANSWER CERTAIN OBJECTIONS.

I think I hear somebody say, “Well, but don’t you believe in *predestination*? What have we to do with looking to our own salvation? Is it not all fixed?” You fool, for I can scarce answer you till I have given you your right title. Was it not fixed whether you should get wet or not in coming to this place? Why then did you bring your umbrella?

Is it not fixed whether you shall be nourished with food today or shall go hungry? Why then will you go home and eat your dinner? Is it not fixed whether you shall live or not tomorrow? Will you, therefore, cut your throat? No, you do not reason so wickedly, so foolishly from destiny in reference to anything but “your own salvation.” And you know it is not reasoning, it is just mere talk. Here is all the answer I will give you and all you deserve.

Another says, “I have a difficulty about this looking to our own salvation. Do you not believe in *full assurance*? Are there not some who know that they are saved beyond all doubt?” Yes, blessed be God, I hope there are many such now present. But let me tell you who these are not. These are not persons who are afraid to examine themselves. If I meet with any man who says, “I have no need to examine myself anymore. I know I am saved, and therefore have no need to take any further care.”

I would venture to say to him, “Sir, you are lost already. This strong delusion of yours has led you to believe a lie.” There are none so cautious as those who possess full assurance, and there are none who have so much holy fear of sinning against God, nor who walk so tenderly and carefully as those who possess the full assurance of faith. Presumption is not assurance, though, alas! many think so. No fully assured believer will ever object to being reminded of the importance of his own salvation.

But a third objection arises. “This is very *selfish*,” says one. “You have been exhorting us to look to ourselves and that is sheer selfishness.” Yes, so you say, but let me tell you it is a kind of selfishness that is absolutely needful before you can be unselfish. A part of salvation is to be delivered from selfishness and I am selfish enough to desire to be delivered from selfishness.

How can you be of any service to others if you are not saved yourself? A man is drowning. I am on London Bridge. If I spring from the parapet and can swim, I can save him. But suppose I cannot swim—can I render any service by leaping into sudden and certain death with the sinking man? I am disqualified from helping him till I have the ability to do so.

There is a school over yonder. Well, the first inquiry of him who is to be the master must be, “Do I know myself that which I profess to teach?” Do you call that inquiry selfish? Surely it is a most unselfish selfishness, grounded upon common sense. Indeed, the man who is not so selfish as to ask himself, “Am I qualified to act as a teacher?” would be guilty of gross selfishness in putting himself into an office which he was not qualified to fill.

I will suppose an illiterate person going into the school and saying, “I will be master here and take the pay,” and yet he cannot teach the children to read or write. Would he not be very selfish in not seeing to his own fitness? But surely it is not selfishness that would make a man stand back and say, “No, I must first go to school myself, otherwise it is but a mockery of the children for me to attempt to teach them anything.”

This is not selfishness, then, when looked at aright, which makes us see to our own salvation, for it is the basis from which we operate for the good of others.

IV. Having answered these objections, I shall for a minute attempt to RENDER SOME ASSISTANCE to those who would fain be right in the best things.

Has the Holy Spirit been pleased to make anyone here earnest about his own salvation? Friend, I will help you to answer two questions. Ask yourself, first, “Am I saved?” I would help you to reply to that very quickly. If you are saved this morning, you are the subject of a work within you, as says the text, “Work out your own salvation; for it is God which worketh in you.”

You cannot work it *in*, but when God works it in you work it *out*. Have you a work of the Holy Ghost in your soul? Do you feel something more than unaided human nature can attain unto? Have you a change wrought in you from above? If so, you are saved.

Again, does your salvation rest wholly upon Christ? He who hangs anywhere but upon the cross hangs upon that which will deceive him. If you stand upon Christ, you are on a rock. But if you trust in the merits of Christ in part, and your own merits in part, then you have one foot on a rock but another on the quicksand. And you might as well have both feet on the quicksand, for the result will be the same.

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

You are not saved unless Christ be all in all in your soul—Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending, first and last. Judge by this again—if you are saved, you have turned your back on sin. You have not left off sinning—would to God we could do so—but you have left off loving sin. You sin not willfully, but from infirmity, and you are earnestly seeking after God and holiness.

You have respect to God, you desire to be like Him, you are longing to be with Him. Your face is towards heaven. You are as a man who journeys to the Equator. You are feeling more and more the warm influence of the heavenly heat and light.

Now, if such be your course of life—that you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of holiness, then you are saved. May your answer to that question be given in great honesty and candor to your soul. Be not too partial a judge. Conclude not that all is right because outward appearances are fair. Deliberate before you return a favorable verdict. Judge yourselves that you be not judged. It would be better to condemn yourself and be accepted of God, than to acquit yourself and find your mistake at the last.

But suppose that question should have to be answered by any here in the negative (and I am afraid it must be), then let those who confess that they are not saved, hear the answer to another inquiry, “How can I be saved?” Ah, dear hearer, I have not to bring a huge volume, nor a whole armful of folios to you, and to say, “It will take you months and years to understand the plan of salvation.”

No, the way is plain, the method simple. You shall be saved within the next moment if you believe. God’s work of salvation is, as far as its commencement and essence is concerned, instantaneous. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God now. If you do now stand in spirit at the foot of the

cross, and view the incarnate God suffering, bleeding, and dying there, and if as you do look at Him, your soul consents to have Him for her Savior, and casts herself wholly on Him—you are saved.

How vividly there comes before my memory this morning, the moment when I first believed in Jesus! It was the simplest act my mind every performed, and yet the most wonderful—for the Holy Spirit wrought it in me. Simply to have done with reliance upon myself and have done with confidence in all but Jesus, and to rest alone, my undivided confidence in Him and in what He had done.

My sin was in that moment forgiven me, and I was saved, and may it all be so with you, my friend, even with you if you also trust the Lord Jesus. “Your own salvation” shall be secured by that one simple act of faith, and henceforward, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, you shall tread the way of holiness till you come to be where Jesus is in everlasting bliss.

God grant that not a soul may go out of this place unsaved. Even you, little children, who are here—you youngsters, you young boys and girls—I pray that you may in early life attend to “your own salvation.” Faith is not a grace for old people only, nor for your fathers and mothers only. If your little hearts shall look to Him who was the holy child Jesus, if you know but little yet, if you trust Him, salvation shall be yours. I pray that to you who are young, “your own salvation” may become, while you are yet in your youth, a matter of joy because you have trusted it in the hands of your Redeemer.

Now I must close—but one or two thoughts press me. I must utter them ere I sit down. I would anxiously urge each person here to see to this matter of his own salvation. Do it, I pray you, and in earnest, for no one can do it for you. I have asked God for your soul, my hearer, and I pray I may have an answer of peace concerning you.

But unless you also pray, vain are my prayers. You remember your mother’s tears? Ah! you have crossed the ocean since those days, and you have gone into the deeps of sin, but you recollect when you used to say your prayers at her knee, and when she would lovingly say “Amen,” and kiss her boy and bless him, and pray that he might know his mother’s God.

Those prayers are ringing in the ears of God for you, but it is impossible that you can ever be saved unless it is said of you, “Behold, he prayeth.” Your mother’s holiness can only rise up in judgment to condemn your willful wickedness unless you imitate it. Your father’s earnest exhortations shall but confirm the just sentence of the Judge unless you hearken to them, and yourselves consider and put your trust in Jesus.

Oh! Bethink you each one, there is but one hope, and that one hope lost, it is gone forever. Defeated in one battle, a commander attempts another, and hopes that he may yet win the campaign. Your life is your one fight, and if it be lost, it is lost forever.

The man who was bankrupt yesterday commences again in business with good heart and hopes that he may yet succeed. But in the business of this mortal life, if you are found bankrupt, you are bankrupt forever and ever. I do therefore charge you by the living God, before whom I stand, and before whom I may have to give an account of this day’s preaching ere another day’s sun shall shine—I charge you see to your own salvation. God help you that you may never cease to seek God till you know by the witness of the Spirit that you have indeed passed from death unto life. See to it now, *now*, NOW, NOW.

This very day the voice of warning comes to certain of you from God, with special emphasis, because you greatly need it—for your time is short. How many have passed into eternity during this week! You may yourself be gone from the land of the living before next Sabbath day. I suppose, according to the calculation of probabilities, out of this audience there are several who will die within a month.

I am not conjecturing now, but according to all probabilities these thousands cannot all meet again, if all have a mind to do so. Who then among us will be summoned to the unknown land? Will it be you, young woman, who has been laughing at the things of God? Shall it be yonder merchant, who has not time enough for religion? Shall it be you, my foreign friend, who has crossed the ocean to take a holiday? Will you be carried back a corpse?

I do conjure you bethink of yourselves, all of you. You who dwell in London will remember years ago when the cholera swept through our streets—some of us were in the midst of it, and saw many drop around us, as though smitten with an invisible but deadly arrow. That disease is said to be on its way hither again. It is said to be rapidly sweeping from Poland across the Continent, and if it come and seize some of you, are you ready to depart?

Even if that form of death do not afflict our city, as I pray it may not, yet is death ever within our gates, and the pestilence walks in darkness every night, therefore consider your ways. Thus says the Lord, and with His Word I conclude this discourse, “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—HEBREWS 10:23-39

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.