

CHRIST THE CURE FOR TROUBLED HEARTS

NO. 2408

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts.”
Luke 24:38

IT seems, from these questions of our Lord, that true believers may come into a troubled state of mind. The eleven were truly Christ's disciples, and even His apostles, yet, when their faith failed them and they refused to believe the testimony that Christ was risen from the dead, they were troubled in their minds, and tossed to and fro, as on a stormy sea. Unbelief is a great troubler.

Our peace comes to us by faith, and if our faith grows weak, our peace of mind is apt to decline and we are likely to become much disturbed in spirit. If those who are believers, who have passed from death unto life, are sometimes troubled, you may be sure that others are. It is no wonder that they are troubled who have never experienced the grace of God in conversion and have never felt the joy which Jesus brings to those whom He saves. If every unconverted man could see his true state, he would not dare to give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, until he had been brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you who are living without a Savior realized your lost condition, your pillows would be stuffed with thorns instead of with feathers. I scarcely think that your bread would be sweet to your taste, or that light would be pleasant to your eyes, if you really knew your present condition and the jeopardy in which your souls are found. I tremble for you and I shall be glad if you learn to tremble for yourselves—and to flee from the wrath to come.

I want, at this time, to speak more particularly to some who are, in a measure, awakened and aroused to their real position before God, and have been so for a long while. They are not happy. They never will be happy until a very great change comes over them, yet I do not see why they should not at once have done with doubts, and fears, and troubled thoughts, and enter immediately into rest and peace.

I say that I do not see why they should not receive this great blessing, but I see a great many reasons why they should. I can truly say that when I preach to you, I labor with all my heart and soul to bring you to the cross of Christ. And I have sometimes thought, when I am going home, “That was a poor sermon if it be judged merely by the rules of rhetoric, yet it was such a sermon that if I could have heard it myself when I was in despair—when I was longing for salvation—it would have been worth a Jew's eye to me, for it would have been the very thing I wanted to show me the road to heaven. It would have been a key to unlock my dungeon door and to set me at liberty.”

And I am praying that it may be so now—every word I speak is steeped in prayer that some of my truly anxious hearers, who would be right if they could, may now end their wanderings at the cross—have done with their uneasiness and restlessness—and find peace in Jesus Christ the Savior.

So, with that object in view, I am going to take the question out of its connection, and though Jesus put it to His eleven apostles, I shall venture to address it to you who are very far from being apostles—who are not yet even disciples, but who at least wish that you were numbered even among the least of God's people. To you I say, in the words of the text, “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?”

I. And first, THIS QUESTION IS WORTH CONSIDERING—“Why are ye troubled?”

Many of you are troubled, some of you are very greatly troubled, though not always to the same extent. You shake off your anxiety sometimes. Unhappy men that you are, that you should be able to shake off a trouble which is driving you to the Savior! You get out into company, you become immersed in business, and you forget this great sorrow, this sad perplexity. But after a while, it comes back to you. A little sickness, or a death in the family, or even the east wind and the fogs, with the dullness that often accompanies them, will bring back to you those sorrowful thoughts, and you are again troubled.

And you have many questions in your heart—you cannot get rid of them. It has been so with you for months, I know some with whom it has been so for years—they have been attending my ministry, perhaps, or the ministry of some other preacher of the Word, and after a sermon which has been pressing and personal, they feel dreadfully uneasy. They cannot tell what to make of themselves and sometimes, they have said, “This state of things must come to an end. We cannot any longer endure to have this indefinable something, this mysterious fear which haunts us, and takes away the very joy of life.”

It will be a good thing to ask this question, “Why are we so troubled?” because *it would be a great pity to be troubled for nothing*. If there is no cause for the anxiety, let us get rid of it. Count it one of the wisest actions to battle with despondency. I do not suppose there is any man in this place who is naturally more inclined to despondency than I am, but when I feel this pressure upon my spirit, I seek to overcome it by hoping in God.

I say to myself “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” When I press the question home and find that there is nothing really to disquiet me, I am not disquieted any longer. And I suppose that you are of much the same make as I am, and if you look your trouble fairly in the face, and you find that there is nothing in it, then you will shake yourself loose from it and come to a cheery state of heart once more.

But suppose that there should be something that ought to cause you anxiety—is it not best at once to make a full investigation of the matter? *It may be that the cure of the evil lies in the search for it*. Here is a man who is half afraid that he has contracted a disease, but if so, at present it is only in its early stages. Now, if he is a foolish man, he will say, “I shall not trouble about it. If it gets to be much worse, then I will see to it.”

But if he is a wise, intelligent man, he says, “I must know the ins and outs of this affair. I will go to the best physician I can find, and he shall thoroughly examine me, and I will know what these symptoms mean, for even if there is disease, perhaps it may be nipped in the bud and my life may yet be saved. If I go to the doctor at once, he may be able to battle with this mischief before it takes a greater hold upon me.” I think that he is a very sensible man to say to himself, “Suppose that my health is all wrong, possibly there is a cure for my malady—I will go and see if I can have this cure.”

Remember that the first thing you ought to see to is your *soul*. Sirs, by all means, attend to your health. Look well to the title deeds of your property, make your wills, and so forth, but first of all, see to the well-being of your immortal nature, for what will you do if you should pass into another world and find yourselves forever shut out from hope? What an awful thing that would be!

Therefore, first and foremost, look to that which is to last forever, and make your calling and election sure. God help you by His grace to see to this matter this very hour! If there be a cure to be had anywhere, there will be no particular reason for fearing and being troubled if we resolve to go and obtain it. If it is indeed put within our reach, let us stretch out our hand and take it at once—and so end our troubles and questions in the best manner possible—by getting the cure for our disease, the heal-all for our soul-sickness.

The disciples, at the time mentioned in our text, were troubled, because when Jesus stood in their midst, they supposed that it was a spirit, a ghost—yet it was no ghost, it was the real living Lord Jesus, whom they afterwards handled, who was there, but “they supposed that they had seen a spirit,” and therefore “they were terrified and affrighted.”

I wonder whether *your present troubles arise out of a supposition*. I have known some who have said to me, “I am afraid, sir, and this is my daily trouble, that God has never chosen me to eternal salvation. Suppose that, after all, I should not be one of His elect?” Now, listen—suppose that you should be one of His elect? Is there not as much sense in supposing the one thing as the other?

And suppose that you were to leave off supposing—that would be a very sensible thing to do. There is not much good that ever comes by indulging suppositions of that kind. Neither you nor I can climb to heaven and unfold that roll. “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God.” Leave that secret thing with Him.

I will tell you something in which there is no supposition. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Under no supposable circumstance will Jesus Christ ever cast away a sinner who comes to Him. Therefore, kindly leave the supposing alone and just take the certainty that whoever comes to Christ, He will in no wise cast out.

I hear another one say, “But suppose I have committed the unpardonable sin?” To which I answer, “But suppose you have not?” And there is just as much reason for supposing one way as supposing the other. And again I say, suppose you are wise enough to leave off supposing altogether? If you have committed the unpardonable sin, I should really like to know what it is, for after reading, I think, as much of sound divinity as anybody, I have never yet been able to discover what it is. Nor have I ever met with any divine who has even seemed to me to approximate to any sure and certain description of what the unpardonable sin may be.

This much I do know about it—it is called a sin that is unto death, and as soon as ever a man commits it, a spiritual death steals over him, so that he never desires mercy, never is conscious of his guilt, and never wishes to find salvation by Jesus Christ. He becomes dead, so dead that it is not merely the sin which is itself unpardonable, but the condition of heart into which it throws the man, so that he never seeks pardon, or even wishes for it. Now, my dear friends, you know that you have not come to that terrible state, because you are always restless about your soul’s salvation and always wishing that by some means you might be saved.

Whatever supposition you bring, I believe that I can sweep your supposition away, or that it goes to be swept away. Therefore, do not be in doubt or fear because of a supposition. I could bother you with suppositions if I liked to do so. Suppose there were to be an earthquake. Suppose that top gallery were to come tumbling down. Why, I could go on supposing till I had frightened every nervous soul in the place. But what a fool I would be and what fools you would be to be frightened thereby!

I pray you, believe me, that there is enough in the black facts of your case to trouble you without your vexing yourself unnecessarily by suppositions. It used to be thought to be a mark of sanctity for a man to wear a hair shirt and an iron girdle round his waist which covered him with sores. We know better than that now. Therefore, why make a hair shirt of suppositions and an iron girdle of pure inventions of your own imagination? Get rid of them all, I beseech you.

But suppose that you have done with suppositions, yet *it may be possible that you are troubled with thoughts*. “Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?” You are unable to get peace because you have certain thoughts in your hearts. Well, what are your thoughts?

“I have been thinking,” says one, “perhaps the Bible is not true.” Now, when these disciples thought that Jesus Himself was not really there, but that it was only a vision, our Savior said to them, “Handle me, and see.” And the best way to prove whether the Bible is true is not to stand and listen to the evil suggestions of skeptics against it, but to hear its own challenge, “Handle me, and see.” There is something wonderfully substantial in the religion of Jesus Christ.

To me, it is life, joy, comfort, strength—everything. I handle it, and I have tried and proved it for myself these many years, but I do not expect my experience to stand in the stead of your own experience of it. Go to Christ with prayer yourself, go to God with repentance yourself and see whether He does not pardon you, and bless you, and change you, and make a new creature of you.

And when He has done that, believe me, you will never again doubt whether the Bible is true, for when it shall have saved you from your fears, rescued you from your sins, and brought you into life and light and liberty, you will be absolutely certain that it is true, because you have tried and tested it yourself.

“Oh, but I have a different thought from that!” says another friend, “I think that I cannot be saved because I do not feel all that I ought to feel. I have not had sufficient horror of sin. I have not felt myself to be the worst sinner who ever lived. In fact, I do not think I can ever drag myself down to that state of despair which I have read of as the experience of a great many who have been saved.”

Now that is another of your foolish thoughts which you had better give up thinking. Who told you that you must weep a certain quantity of tears? Who told you that you must feel a certain degree of anguish? That Book has not told you so, nor has God’s preacher. But we are continually telling you that the suffering on account of sin was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ, that the atonement for human guilt is in His precious blood, and that you may come to Him just as you are.

Have we not often tried to draw a line of distinction between repentance, which is the fruit of the Spirit, and despair which is a temptation of the devil? Many, no doubt, do come to Christ in black despair, but why should you not come with great hopefulness expecting that He will bless you? And if you do so come, depend upon it that He will not send you away empty. Get rid of that foolish thought, I pray you, and believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord. May the Holy Spirit help you so to do!

Perhaps a third troubled one says, “My thought is, sir, that, if I professed to be a Christian, I should not live up to it.” I heard a good reply to that remark from one who came to see me last week. One said to her, “You know, if you make a profession of religion, you must live up to it.” “Oh!” she answered, “all the profession I make is that I put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ—and I put my trust in Him to help me to live up to it—I dare trust Him as far as that.”

Mind that you do the same and get rid altogether of the thought that it is you by yourself who has to live up to your profession. Salvation is of the Lord alone. You have to accept grace from Christ for nothing and He will delight to give it to you. And he will delight also to continue to give you all the grace you need till He brings you safe home to glory.

Our Lord asked His disciples, “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?” There are some who say, “*It is the feelings that we have in our heart that cause us anxiety.*” Well now, what are your feelings? As a rule, I care much more about faith than about feelings, but for once, do tell me what your feelings are, you who are troubled and vexed with anxious thoughts.

“Well, sir,” says one, “I am afraid that I shall not be saved.” But why not? “Oh, I do not know why, but I am afraid I shall not!” Well, do you not think that you are very foolish? If you will think of it a little, you will be sure that you are. Because when a person says, “I am so fearful,” and you ask, “What are you afraid of?” and he says, “Oh, I do not know, but I am so fearful!” you would say to him, “My dear fellow, if you do not know what it is that you fear, then give up being fearful.” If you have nothing to be afraid of, do not be afraid, for what can be the reason of it?

“Oh, but sir,” says another, “I feel—well, to make short work of it, I feel that it is too good to be true!” What is too good to be true? “Why, that I may have my sins forgiven simply upon my believing and may now at once become a child of God!” Too good to be true, is it? Well, it would be too good to be true if it came from you—but as it comes from God, nothing is too good to be true of the good and gracious God.

He is willing to blot out all your sins if you will but trust to the Lord Jesus Christ. However much you may have transgressed against His laws, He is prepared to pass an act of amnesty and oblivion, and to blot out all your transgressions. Your wanderings, your blasphemies, even, He is ready to forgive—more ready to forgive than you are to be forgiven—and He puts it simply thus, “Believe in My Son. Trust that He whom I have appointed to save you will save you and upon your so trusting, your transgressions are forgiven and you are saved.”

It is a great message that we have to deliver. Would you have a little Gospel from a great God? Would you have a little Gospel from that great Savior who was the Son of God and yet died upon the cross? If it had been less than it is, you would have begun to quibble about its littleness. But now that it is so great, I pray you, do not quarrel with great mercy, but receive it, believe it, believe it at once, and let your doubts and fears end, from this time forth, through the effectual working of God's gracious Spirit.

I have lingered too long over this first division, yet I hope I have convinced you that the question is worth considering.

II. The question we have now to consider is this—HAS YOUR TROUBLE ANYTHING TO DO WITH JESUS? This is what our Lord meant by inquiring of His disciples, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Their trouble had to do with Jesus, but they had made a great mistake concerning Him.

"Well," you say, "this subject of Jesus and His salvation, it is all a supernatural business." *Do all supernatural matters frighten you?* "Yes, sir, they do. I am afraid of that which goes beyond the verge of things that can be seen." You will be there yourself before long—whether you are afraid of it or not, you will die. As surely as you are in this Tabernacle, you will have to do with that which is supernatural. You may live a considerable time, perhaps, if you are a young man, but it will seem a very short while when you come to the end of it. And then death, and heaven, and hell, and angels, and God, and the judgment seat, and eternity will have to be dealt with by you.

Oh, it would be a great mercy if you could now get to be familiar with these things! Think where you wish to live forever—you had better learn the language of the country. It would be well for you to begin to understand something of the world to come, for come it will, and there is no putting it off.

The strongest man in this place will have to die and it is a reflection which often forces itself upon me that poor, weak, sickly people keep on living when you thought that they would have been dead years ago—but your fine, strong, healthy men—these are they of whom we hear, "Such a one died at the railway station," or "Such a one was taken on a sudden, and is gone."

Therefore, see to this matter, sir, see to it at once. You will have to deal with the supernatural sooner or later, so had you not better begin now?

"Oh!" say you, "*this Lord Jesus Christ, in whom you tell me to trust, seems so unreal.* I cannot see Him and handle Him, as those apostles did. He is so unreal to me." Yes, so the apostles thought, you know. They thought that they saw a ghost—yet there is nothing more real in all the world than our Lord Jesus Christ. I wish that you would seek Him tonight, I wish that you would get to that little room of yours, and kneel at your bedside, and cry, "Savior, if You are indeed a Savior, here is a sinner who longs to be saved. Come and save me." If you do so, you shall soon find that, though not gripped with the hands, or seen with the eye, yet there is no brighter, truer, or more living reality than Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

"But sir," you cry, "*this believing seems so vague and indistinct.* If you told me something that I had to do, I would try to do it. If I had to go barefoot from here to John-o'-Groat's House, for instance, I would know what that meant and I would start tomorrow morning, or if necessary tonight." Yes, I daresay you would, but after all, there is nothing more vague in your being told to believe in Jesus than there would be in bidding you to walk barefoot to John-o'-Groat's House.

To believe in Jesus is a most simple matter, easily understood, even by a child—it is just to trust Him, that is all. To believe that what is written concerning Him is true, and then to trust yourself entirely to Him—that will save you.

See, I have thrown my whole weight upon this platform rail. If that should go down, I shall go down. Do just that with the Lord Jesus—throw your whole weight on Him. If He cannot save you, be lost. I must be lost, I am sure, if He cannot save me. My whole and only hope hangs on that dear hand that was nailed to the cross, my sole trust is in that precious blood which flowed from His pierced side. I risk my

eternal destiny with Him and feel that there is no risk whatever in doing so. Now, tell me, is that vague? It seems to me to be very distinct and clear.

“Well,” says one, “but somehow, *Christ seems so unapproachable*. I cannot get at Him.” Now, that is the last thing that you ought to say, for He will receive you if you breathe only a silent prayer to Him. In the pew down there, sitting on your seat, or standing in the aisle, or away up in the gallery, just speak to Him in your heart and He will hear you in a moment. Unapproachable? Why, beloved friends, there is nobody so approachable as Christ! A wish will reach Him, a tear has already found Him—He is everywhere present wherever there is any heart that longs to obtain salvation through Him.

Then I fancy that I hear one of you say, “*I feel that He is so holy that I, so guilty, cannot come to Him.*” Would you have Him to be unholy, then? If He were so, how could He save you? But being holy, yet He bids you come to Him. Then why do you not come? Why do you make a barrier out of such a glorious fact as this, that Christ is good, and just, and true?

Remember that this also is true, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. If He does not save sinners, then He came into this world to mock us. He came into this world for nothing, and if you, being a sinner, will come to Christ and Christ rejects you, He has forgotten His commission, He has belied His character. He must give up His name, for He is no longer Jesus if He does not save sinners that come to Him, ay, and if He does not save sinners that do not come to Him, too, for He has come to seek and to save—both to seek and to save—that which was lost.

“But” says yet another, “*I cannot think that the Lord Jesus Christ would take any notice of me.*” Oh, that I could nail your wretched, miserable thoughts of my great Lord up on His cross! “Oh, but I am nobody, sir.” Christ died for nobodies. “But I am poor.” “The poor have the gospel preached to them.” “But I am quite illiterate.” Yes, and it is to such that a plain Gospel is sent by our gracious Savior.

“But I am altogether obscure and unknown.” Oh, no, you are not. The Lord Jesus knows all about you! Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not suppose that if you were rich, Christ would think any more of you than He does now. You know how it is among men—if a man wears a good coat and a diamond ring, people give him a seat as soon as he comes into the aisle.

Ay, but that is not the spirit of Jesus Christ! He does not care about your diamond rings and your satin dresses. My Lord Himself wore a smock frock, woven from the top throughout, a garment without seam. He was dressed as the most plain and humble of peasants dressed, and He delighted to associate with the poorest of the poor.

Therefore, do not tell me that He will not condescend to look at you. My Lord would leave off listening to the songs of angels to hear a poor sinner cry. If it were some grand review day in heaven, when helmed cherubim and mailed seraphim marched before His august eye, He would leave the camp of angels to come and listen to a beggar’s prayer. For remember, He is a man as truly as He is God, and everything that is human touches that true heart of His that was pierced for men.

Therefore, cry to Him, ask Him to have mercy upon you, and He will stand still, as He did when blind Bartimaeus cried to Him, and he will command you to be brought before Him—and then He will say to you, “What wilt thou that I should do to you?” and he will give you spiritual sight and spiritual health in answer to your prayer. Come to Him, however poor, and weak, and insignificant you may be, and you shall soon prove that it is even as I say.

If you have made any mistakes about my Lord and Master, I hope that what I have said may help to remove them.

III. Now, lastly, and may God bless this word to you, dear troubled friend, to bring you to the Savior! JESUS RIGHTLY KNOWN WILL MEET EVERY TROUBLE OF EVERY SEEKING SOUL.

If you did but know Him, you would find an end to your trouble at once. Those lines are quite true—

*“His worth if all the nations knew,
Surely the whole world would love Him too.”*

If men did but know what a Savior He is, they would never rest till they had proved Him to be their Savior.

Let me tell you a few things that may help to end all your troubles. First, *Jesus Christ is alive*. He died, but He rose again. He is alive and living among men. Spiritually, He is still on earth. His bodily presence is in heaven, but His spiritual presence is everywhere.

“Wherever we seek Him, He is found.”

He is alive, active, living, present with us here, giving us His benedictions, working out His divine projects—a living present force among the myriads of this city—a living present Person in this house of prayer.

Next, *Jesus Christ lives as One who has made a full atonement for sin*. Do you know what that means? This is what I understand by atonement. We were guilty. We had sinned and the law of God has bound punishment to sin with iron clamps. I am sure that the only way in which the world is to be governed is by this law, that the consequences of evil must be evil. If men will do wrong, they must be punished.

With all reverence, we may say that God Himself cannot reverse that law, for it is a right and proper law. Well, then, Jesus Christ came and bore the consequences of human sin in His own body on the tree, and those who believe in Jesus Christ, by the very act of believing, accept Him to be their Substitute, bearing their guilt and punishment, and being unto God a sacrifice instead of them. Therefore, as many as have believed in Jesus Christ may know of a surety that He died in their room, and place, and stead.

I recollect talking, one day, to a poor man, an Irishman, and trying to make this point very plain to him I said, “Now suppose you had committed a murder and you were to be hanged for it.” “Yes,” he replied, “and I should deserve it.” “But suppose I should go to the Queen and say to her, ‘I am willing to be hanged instead of this man. Such is my love for him that, to set him free, and yet to honor the law, I will consent to die in his stead.’”

The man said, “That would be very kind of you, sir.” “Well, suppose that the Queen had the ability to consent to it and I could be accepted as your substitute—and I were hanged instead of you—would the policeman take you up for that murder?” “Oh, no!” he exclaimed, “I should say, ‘You can’t touch me. Why, the gentleman was hanged instead of me! Therefore, I am clear.’”

That is exactly the way of salvation. Jesus Christ suffered in the stead of all of you who trust in Him and you are clear before the bar of divine justice. Every man who believes in Jesus Christ, that is, trusts Him, may know without doubt that Christ was for him a certain and effectual Substitute, by which his sin was put away on the cross. “Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” Now, if you understand that great truth, I think that your doubts and fears ought to come to an end at once.

Remember also that *Jesus Christ lives to give repentance and remission of sins*. In this very chapter, we read that He bade His apostles go and preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations. He says to you, “Turn from your sin and I will turn from My anger. Quit your sin and your sin is forgiven. Leave it. Loathe it. And I will grant you immediate pardon for the sake of the great atoning sacrifice.” This truth also, if it be fully believed, should bring peace and joy to your heart and mind.

Please remember also that *the Lord Jesus Christ lives to pray for sinners*. He lives to make intercession for the transgressors. He lives to give to sinners the Holy Spirit to work in them true belief and true repentance. He lives mighty to save, to do for you what you cannot do for yourself, to bear you up, and bear you through, and bring you at last to His own right hand.

Brothers and sisters, as I trust my Lord Jesus Christ myself with all my heart, with all my future, my past, my present, with, indeed, everything, and as I feel perfect peace in so doing, I would to God that you would do the same, that you might feel the same peace, and get strength within to bear the troubles of this mortal life.

Did you ever hear what good John Hyatt, who used to preach to the sailors, said when he was dying? Someone asked him, “Mr. Hyatt, can you trust Jesus with your soul now?” “Trust Jesus with my soul!” he exclaimed, “if I had ten thousand souls, I could trust them all with Him.” We are not ten thousand here tonight—we are somewhat under that number—but oh, that we might all come and trust our souls with Jesus! Then, in that last great day, with sweet clamor of praise, with united tempests of song, we will bless that dear crucified but now exalted Savior who will not fail one of us, but will bring us to see His face in glory.

Will you not trust Him tonight? Dear friend, you might go down those stairs, you know, with a firm foot, saying, “I am a saved man.” Yes, out of this area many a troubled heart may make its way and go home with all the bells ringing out sweet hallelujahs—“I have believed. I am forgiven. I am the chief of sinners, but I am forgiven, for I have trusted where God bids me trust. And now, because I am forgiven and am a child of God, I will live a new life, and I will serve the Lord with all my heart.”

You good soldiers who are here tonight, I hope you are already good soldiers of Jesus Christ. But if you are not, I would like to be the recruiting sergeant and enlist you beneath the standard of the cross. Only trust my Lord and you shall be saved in the day of battle, and saved in the hour of death—ay, and saved amidst the temptations of this wicked city.

He shall cover you, He Himself shall cover you, and you shall be perfectly safe beneath that divine shelter. Who will trust Christ and be saved? Lord, give us many souls tonight, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MARK 16:1-14 AND LUKE 24:32-44

Mark Chapter 16. Verses 1-2. *And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun.*

Their love made them prompt. Their affection was about to attempt a needless, and indeed, impossible thing. Yet I do not doubt that it was acceptable before God. Oh, that we had such love that even the dead body of the Christ should be so dear to us that we should be ready at great expense to anoint it! I fear that, nowadays, even his living Word is not valued as it should be.

How few, therefore, should we be likely to find who would have cared for His dead body! These holy women had had cause enough to love their Lord, and they showed that their hearts were full of affection for Him even after He had been taken from them.

3. *And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?*

A question that has puzzled many other people, concerning many other things, perplexed these holy women, yet there was no reason for the question to be raised at all. Peradventure, some of you are at this time distressed when there is no cause for distress, and in fear, where no fear is. It was so with these women, who said, one to another, “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?”

4. *And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.*

And therefore, hard to roll away, and therefore, the more easily seen when it was rolled away, and therefore, the greater cause for joy that it was rolled away. In the greatness of our troubles, there may often be space for the greater display of the goodness of God—a great trial may be nothing more than the prelude of a great joy.

Do not dread the foaming billows, for they may wash you ashore. It is the worst that they can do and it is the best also. The stone at the door of the sepulchre was very great, but it was rolled away, so that it mattered not to the women how great it was.

5. *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.*

An angel had been allowed to assume the appearance of a man—that usually seems to be the way in which angels appear to men. I suppose there is, after all, a great kinship between angels and men, otherwise, angelic beings would not so constantly assume that form when they appear to men. At the sight of the young man clothed in a long white garment, these good women were affrighted.

6-7. *And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.*

Make sure, beloved, that you know the truth for yourselves, and then hasten to tell it to others. I pray you, run not without knowing what your errand is to be. But I also pray you, when you have an errand for the Lord, do not tarry, but, “Go your way, tell his disciples.” It was very thoughtful of this angel to say, “and Peter,” thus linking with the disciples the name of him who had most glaringly transgressed and denied his Master,

8. *And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid.*

But, after this, they summoned up courage, and did tell the story of their Lord’s resurrection.

9-13. *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.*

Unbelief is very hard to kill, even in hearts that are right with God, so we need not wonder that divine grace is required to expel unbelief from the hearts of the unregenerate.

14. *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

The story of our Lord’s appearance to the disciples is more fully told by Luke in the twenty-fourth chapter of his Gospel, to which let us turn.

Luke Chapter 24. Verses 32-35. *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

These were the two disciples who had recognized their Lord in the breaking of bread, though they did not know Him during their walk with Him to Emmaus.

36. *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

This was the common Jewish salutation, but henceforth, it would be sanctified most divinely, and it would be a Christian greeting to say, “Peace be unto you.”

37-44. *But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*

Notice the seals which our Lord continually set upon the Old Testament, the manner in which He always treated the Scripture, the reverent way in which He confessed its infallibility, and His

determination that, in every item, every jot and tittle, it should be fulfilled by Himself. This was often manifested before His death, and on his return from the grave, He had not changed His mind.

He here speaks of the three great parts into which the Old Testament was divided by the Jews and He expressly sets the seal of His royal assent upon “the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms.” May we, in like manner, prize the whole-inspired Word!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—319, 542, 219

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