

A MESSAGE FROM GOD

NO. 3455

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1915
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“I have a message from God unto thee.”
Judges 3:20

CAN there be a person here present to whom God has never sent a message? Possibly the question may startle you. The very thought of the great invisible God sending such a message seems to you strange and unlikely. To me it is far more surprising that anyone should imagine He has never done so. Is He your Creator? And has He who made you launched you forth on the tempestuous sea of life to drift in solitude without compass or guide?

We know that He has made you immortal, and is it possible that during that short life which is a preface to eternity, upon which that never ending period depends—is it possible that He has left you without any sort of communication? Does it seem likely? You call Him, “Father,” because He is the author of your being—can He be your Father and yet have no concern for your well-being—never have spoken to you, never have sent a message from His great throne to your hearts? How improbable this sounds.

Is not the question open to another solution? The truth of the matter, I think, is that you have been deaf to God’s messages. He has often desired to correspond with you, nay, He has sent some communications to you, but you have resented and rejected them. Is it not likely that He has often spoken when you have not heard, and that He has drawn near to you, and called to you when you would not listen to Him?

I think, from the analogy of nature, this looks like a correct statement of the case. It cannot be that God has left the world—it must be that the world has left God. It is not possible that God has ceased to speak to the soul. Surely the soul has ceased to hearken to God, to acknowledge His messages, or to reply to them.

I believe, my dear hearers, and I especially address my remarks this evening to those of you who have not yet received Christ by faith and love into your hearts—I believe that the most of you, although still without God and without Christ, have had many messages from Him. Let me remind you of some of them. Then, let me admonish you that the Gospel itself is a distinct and direct message to you. And finally, let us occupy a few minutes in endeavoring to consider how we ought to treat that message.

I. WE HAVE NOT BEEN WITHOUT MESSAGES FROM GOD.

This Bible is in the house of every Englishman. You can scarcely find a cottage so poor that it does not now contain a copy of the Word of God. If your Bible could speak to you—or rather, if you would listen to what it says to you—you would hear in the chamber where that Bible lies, the words, “I have a message from God for thee.”

Do but open it, look down its pages, let your eye glance along its sacred verses, and I think it would not be long before it would have communion with your spirit, and this would be its voice, “I have a message from God for thee.” Sure I am that each one of you would read some verse that is personally applicable to yourself, perhaps more applicable to you than to any other man.

There is some one special book in Scripture which was prepared specially for you. There is an arrow there that was intended for your heart—some oil and wine fitted to assuage your pain and heal your wounds. Whether your case be that of carelessness or of despondency, that Book says, “I have a message from God for thee.”

Shall I chide the indifference which neglects the Book? Shall I rebuke the levity which had rather turn to a novel, or to any frivolous magazine, than to this momentous volume which appeals to you as with the voice of God? Scarcely need I do so. Each man must be conscious that it is the height of guilt to slight the King's proclamation, and pursue the common and ordinary things of everyday life as if no Royal mandate had been issued.

How much more when it is the voice of Him that speaks from heaven! Your unread Bibles shall rise up in judgment to condemn you. Attempt to alight from the railway car while the train is in motion, you are liable to a penalty of forty shillings. Do not say you are ignorant of the law. It was posted in the carriage that conveyed you. The angel of Time might surely write with his finger upon the dust of your Bibles the sentence of your condemnation. Beware, you who refuse to listen to Moses and the prophets. If you will not hear them, you will not be converted, though one should rise from the dead and admonish you of your peril.

Other messengers you have had. Some of them have come to you in golden type—their words have been sweet as honey. I will call them *a bountiful Providence*. I know not what you would call them. Perhaps a vein of luck. Have you been favored with success in business? A prosperous wind has filled your sails. In your families you have had welcome mercies. Children have been given you. Those children have been restored from beds of sickness when your heart has been sick with anxiety. In your own health of body, you have not been strangers to God's choice favors.

Moreover, you have had times of gladness and of merry-making. Your hearts have held their festivals. The streets of Mansoul were illuminated, the houses decked with fair colors, and the streets of your mind strewn with flowers. On those days did not these mercies seem to say, as they came trooping along down the streets of your soul, "We have a message from the Lord for thee"?

Oh! if you would but listen, each one of these parental gifts would have said, "My son, give me thy heart." Surely such mercies should have been like the bonds of love and the cords of a man to have drawn you. Ought not the kindness and compassion extended to you in Providence to have led you to say, "How can I grieve such a God? How can I provoke Him to anger? Does He not deal with me generously and lavish His treasures at my feet? How shall I forget Him? I will celebrate His favor with sacrifices of thanksgiving. I will bind my offerings to the horns of the altar."

Other *messengers have come to you draped in black*. Their garments have been rent, sack-cloth has been about their loins, and ashes on their heads. They have spoken in hoarse notes, but solemn tones, and though they have not led you to repentance, their admonitions have stilled your pulse, chilled your blood, and constrained you to pause and think.

Remember that sickness—fever, or ague, or cholera, or diphtheria—which prostrated your strength, disqualified you for your daily labor, or your ordinary business, and summoned you in the quiet of your chamber to look back upon the past and look forward to the future? Can you forget the season when life trembled in the scale and the physician knew not which way it would turn—that hour, that silent hour, when they trod the room with gentle footsteps and the nurse closed not her eyes through all the still hours of the night? Then the noisy watch uttered the only sound that broke the silence of that room.

Do you not remember those diseases that laid hold of your vitals and said, "We have a message from God for thee"? And some of you have escaped from manifold perils by sea and by land, from shipwreck and from fire. You have been preserved in accidents and catastrophes in which others have died. All these strange, these terrible things, spoke to you in righteousness when you were careless and unconcerned. They had a message from God for you. Oh! deaf ears that will not listen when God speaks to you in such solemn tones and strikes you while He speaks that He may compel you to listen!

Another dark messenger has come to you. *Death has bereaved* you of friends and comrades. Those with whom you were most familiar have been suddenly called away. Have you not been startled by the news that a neighbor or acquaintance with whom you chatted a day or two ago is dead? "Dead!" you said. "Why, he was in my shop only a few days ago! Dead! Why, He seemed to be in good health,

strong in body, vigorous in mind, full of plans and projects. I should have thought of any man dead sooner than he!”

Do not you recollect the time when you heard the bell toll for a near relative and when you stood over the open grave? Ah! then, when the dust fell upon the coffin lid, and the words were uttered, “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes,” each of those thundering morsels said, “I have a message from God for thee.” Walk the cemetery and while every grave tells of our common mortality, how some graves speak to us of the precarious tenure by which our frail life is held! In all, what a warning message we may hear!

Turn over the list of the friends of your youth, the companions of your hale manhood—and you who have grown grey call to remembrance the names of those old acquaintances of yours who have passed from this land of shadows to the bar of God—let the ghosts of the departed start up before you and pass in solemn procession before your eyes. Then let each one say, with all the pathos of their final exit, “I have a message from God for thee.”

Among them all, is there one who learned aught of vice or scoffing from you, young man? Is there a soul among the lost that you first led astray? Man, you who have blasphemed—are there some now ruing their bitter doom whose ruin you helped to precipitate? Oh! you base deceiver, are there those whom you did delude? Are there those whom you did ensnare who have gone their way before you to feel the terrible remorse, and are waiting for the grim time when they shall look on you with eyes of fire and curse you, because you did lure them on to their eternal destruction?

Those ghosts, of all others, must be the most startling, and their fingers of fire must point the most fearfully, and make one feel that they have, indeed, a message from God to us from the place of torment. Let the remembrance of them make you pause, and think, and turn from your sins to the living and true God.

But though these messages have too often been unheard, the Lord, who desires not the death of a sinner, has sent to us by other and equally useful messengers. Oh! in what kind ways has He been pleased to select *the persons who should bring the tidings to us*.

The first messenger that some of us had was that fond woman upon whose breast in infancy we hung. We should never breathe the word “mother” without grateful emotions. How can we forget that tearful eye when she warned us to escape from the wrath to come? We thought her lips right eloquent—others might not think so, but they certainly were eloquent to us.

How can we ever forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about our neck, prayed for us, “Oh! that my son might live before You”? Nor can her frown be erased from our memory, that solemn, loving frown when she rebuked our budding iniquities. And her smiles have never faded from our recollection, the beaming of her countenance when she rejoiced to see some good thing in us towards the Lord God of Israel.

Mothers often become potent messengers from God, and I think each Christian mother should ask herself in secret whether the Lord has not a message to give through her to her sons and to her daughters. And did you despise that messenger? Had you the hardihood to reject God when He spoke in this way, when He selected one so near and so dear, who could speak so well, and could talk to that tender instinct which respects and hallows a mother’s love? Could it be? Ah! thus it has been up till now with some of you.

God has spoken with other messengers to you. Was it your sister? Did she not write a note to you, because her timidity would scarcely let her speak? Or perhaps, it was a friend. It may have been that young man you ridiculed and called fanatical, but you know how soon you shook off the impressions which those pointed remarks of his seemed to make upon you at the time. Or possibly, it was a tract that met your eyes. Or a book like Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress*, or Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted*, or Alleine’s *Alarm*. Through these printed appeals God spoke to you.

Yet again, it might have been through some preacher of the Gospel. God’s ministers have been God’s messengers to many thousands of immortal souls. Within this house of prayer, sometimes, there are many who hardly know how to keep their seats when we try to ply the conscience with all the

arguments of the truth and seek to move torpid souls by some of the thunderbolts of the Almighty. Oh! how many men here have been rebuked and rebuked, times without number, but still they go on in their old sins?

Take heed, take heed, men, for if you refuse God when He speaks by His servants, and by His Providence, and by your friends, He will one day speak to you by a bony preacher, who will deliver his message so that you must hear him. You know from where my text comes? “Ehud said, I have a message from God for thee.” It was a dagger which found its way to Eglon’s heart—and he fell dead.

So shall death deliver his message to you. “I have a message from God unto thee,” he will say, and ere you shall have time to answer, you shall find that this was the message, “Because I, the Lord, will do this, prepare to meet your God, O Israel; thus says the Lord, cut it down; why cumberst thou the ground? Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.” Oh! may you hear the other messengers of God before He sends this last most potent one, from which you cannot turn away.

I have thus sought to refresh your memory, by reminding you of the many warnings you have received. The intent of them all has been to awaken your conscience. But now, in the second place, we admonish you that—

II. THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD IS IN ITSELF A MESSAGE FROM GOD TO YOU.

Oh! how passing strange are the reasons, the extraordinary reasons, why many people attend our churches and chapels! Some people go merely because everybody else goes. Others go because—well, perhaps it helps their business a bit. Some go when they happen to have fashionable clothes, in which they like to make an appearance.

Ask the large majority of men and women what they go. Even the best of people, were they to be candid, would tell you that they suppose it is the right thing to do—it is their duty. But how few go with the idea that God will speak to them, there, and that the Gospel preached there will be a message from God to their souls!

And I am afraid, there are some ministers who hardly think that the Gospel is intended to come personally home to the people. They talk, as I read of one the other day, who said that when he preached to sinners he did not like to look the congregation in the face, for fear they should think he meant to be personal, so he looked up at the ventilator, because there was no fear then of any individual catching his eye.

Oh! that fear of man has been the ruin of many ministers. They never dared to preach right at the people. We have heard of sermons being preached before this and that honorable company, but preaching sermons before people is not God’s way. We must preach sermons at the people, directly to them, to show that it is not the waving of a sword in the air like a juggler’s sport, but it is the getting of the sword right into the conscience and the heart. This, I take it, is the true mission of every minister of Christ.

It is said of Whitefield, that if you were the farthest away from him in a throng, where you could but hear the sound of his voice, you felt persuaded that he meant to speak to you. And of Rowland Hill it is said, that if you got into Surrey Chapel, you could not hide in a corner there. If you did manage to get into a back seat, or were squeezed tight into the windows, you would still feel persuaded that Mr. Hill was addressing you, and that he had singled you out for his expostulations, as though no one else were present. Surely this is the perfection of preaching. Should it not be our aim to find men out and make them feel that at the present moment they are themselves addressed? That there is a message from God to the soul?

Now, my friend, the Gospel is a distinct message directed to you. I know it speaks to your neighbor and tells him that he is fallen. That is for him, not for you, to think of. Your portion is that which singles you out and tells you that you were in Adam when he sinned. That you fell in him, and that as the result, your nature is corrupt, you are born in sin, and prone to commit sin—there is no good thing in your natural disposition. Whatever seems good in your own eyes, or the eyes of others, is so tainted by the inherent vice of your own depravity, that it cannot be acceptable in the sight of God.

When we preach to sinners, never think that we mean the riff-raff in the streets. The Gospel, which saves a sinner, is a message from God to you. Think of your own sins and the naughtiness of your own heart. I have heard of a woman who affected to believe that she was a sinner, and her minister, convinced that she did not know what she meant, thus exposed her folly.

He said to her, "Well, if you are a sinner, of course, you have broken God's law. Let us read the ten commandments and see which you have broken." So turning to the decalogue, he began to read, "Thou shalt have no other God before me." "Did you ever break that?" "Oh! no. Not that she knew of." He proceeded, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," and so on. "Did you ever break that?" "Never, sir," said she.

Then "Thou shall not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." "Oh! dear, no, she had been very particular on that point. She did not know that she had ever offended in that respect in her life." "Remember the seventh, to keep it holy." "Oh!" she said, "I never do any work on a Sunday—everybody knows how particular I am about that."

"Honor thy father and thy mother." "Yes," she replied, "she had been quite perfect in this matter. You might ask her friends if she had not been." "Thou shall not kill." "Kill anybody!" She wondered how the minister could ask her that. Of course, "Thou shall not commit adultery," must be passed without a question.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness." Much of a gossip though she was, she protested she never did backbite anybody in all her life. And as to the idea of coveting, well, she might sometimes have wished that she was a little better off, but she never wanted any of anybody else's goods—she only wanted a little more of her own.

So it turned out, as the minister suspected, that she really was not a sinner at all in her own estimation. It is marvelous how people who indulge in general confessions of sin attempt to exculpate themselves of each and every particular offense. Whatever the indictment is, they plead, "Not guilty." But the condemnation which the Gospel pronounces upon all who have transgressed the law of God is a message from God to you.

Oh! I would have those of you who have not fled to Christ feel and realize the terrors of the law. How stern its precepts! How dreadful its penalties! How divine its sanctity! And remember it is a message from God to you. Where is the possibility of escape from the justice it metes out, the judgment it pronounces?

I think I hear the cry of spirits lost without hope—mark the worm that never dies and witness the agonies of conscience never appeased, while the remembrance of opportunities haunts them and the wrath of God stirs the fire of remorse that never shall be quenched. Of that appalling spectacle I might speak at length to you, but I will not.

Oh! my dear hearers, I would have you remember that this is a message from God to you. As sure as you live, except you repent, the everlasting burning must be your portion forever. You must make your bed in hell, if you continue in unbelief. Do, I pray you, forget your neighbor for a while. Think not of anything that is applicable to the person sitting next to you. To you, to your own self, is the thunder of God's threatening sent. "If ye repent not, ye shall all likewise perish." If you turn not from the error of your ways, God will not turn from His righteous indignation. Your destruction slumbers not, though you be ever so drowsy. His wrath will burn like coals of juniper—forever and forever it will abide on you.

But *the Gospel tells of a Substitute*. It informs you that Jesus came and suffered in the place of the sinner. It says that He died for those who trust Him. It assures you that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Have you no anxiety that the Gospel should be a message from God to you? It will be of no use to you that Jesus died, unless He died for you. If He took your sin and carried your sorrow, it is all well—but though He should have died for all mankind, except you, by that omission you would perish.

We know that He died for believers. "Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." The vital question is, "Do I believe in Jesus? Have I unfeignedly trusted in Him? Do I

depend now upon His finished work? Having no other refuge, do I trust in Jesus, sink or swim? Do I commit myself to the tide, relying on His merits, expecting thereby to be borne on safe to the haven of His glory?"

If so, then there is evidence that He died for me. I am free from condemnation, He paid my debts—I am clear from the charges of the law, for He bore my punishment. I am acquitted by His mediation. Therefore, being justified freely, I may go on my way rejoicing. But of what use is the Gospel unless it thus becomes a message from God for me?

Oh! the delight, dear friends, of those who recognize the promise of God as a message of love to them! Hundreds of times did I hear the Gospel preached. I heard of pardon, full and free. I heard of a complete righteousness, that wrapped the sinner from head to foot. I heard of full deliverance from the penal sentence of the law of God. I heard of adoption, of communion with Christ, of the sanctification which the Spirit gives, but what were all these privileges to me when I had no interest in them?

It was as though one should take up the title-deed of an estate and begin reading it in a social party by way of interesting them. What more dull—what more heavy reading? How the words are multiplied! How those lawyers seek to say the same thing over twenty times, till no flesh living can endure them. Ah! but my friend, if that title-deed refers to an estate which has been bequeathed to you, all those words delight you.

Their repetition seems to clench your title. You like to have the thing made out in proper legal form. Your eyes sparkle over that little sketch in the corner. You take notice of the stamps and you are specially taken up with the signatures. Matters that would be of no interest at all under other circumstances seem to be exceedingly precious to you viewed in the light of your inheritance.

It is just so with regard to the Word of God. When we come to read the Book and know that it confers blessings on us, our joy is full to overflowing. To us the message is sent. By us the message is received. The complete salvation it announces is ours. We are wholly saved from every peril, through Jesus' blood. We are delivered from sin. We are endowed with a righteousness, not of our own performing, but of His imputing. Thereby we are adorned—

*“With the Savior’s garment on,
Holy as the Holy One.”*

With what ineffable joy does this message from God make glad our spirit!

Be sure, of this, my friends, let our case be what it may, *the Gospel preached is a message from God to our souls*. The hypocrite cannot long attend upon the means of grace without finding that its doctrines are very heart-searching. They pierce his thoughts. They hold a candle up to him and if he would but look, they would expose his desperate condition.

The formalists, the men who delight in ceremonies, cannot long frequent God’s hallowed courts where His true ministers proclaim His name, without perceiving that there is a message from God to them. The most careless spirit will find in the Word a looking-glass held up to his face in which he can see a reflection of himself. There have been divers messages like circulars from God to us, but the Gospel, faithfully preached, is a private and personal communication.

A minister once sent his deacon to attend a certain anniversary service. The discourse turned upon Diotrephes, who loved the pre-eminence. That deacon’s character was aptly described. He did not, however, agree with the preacher. He was himself a Diotrephes, though he failed to detect his own portrait, or at least with apparent indifference, he asked a friend of his if he supposed there were such persons existing as those who had been described in the discourse? “I cannot think,” said he, “who the preacher could have been aiming at.” So his friend said. “Well, I think he must have been intending you and me.” No better answer could have been given. I like each hearer to make the application to himself.

But Mrs. Jones thinks sometimes that Mrs. Brown must have felt very strange in one part of the sermon. And Mrs. Brown thinks that, if Mrs. Smith had looked at home, she must have known that that

which was said was meant for her, whereas the real truth was that it suited all three of them, and there was something meant for each, as well as for all. Take heed to yourselves, my beloved. Be like the young lad, who, when he was asked why he attended so earnestly, said, "Because I am in hopes that one of these days the truth I hear will be blessed to my own salvation."

Brethren, if you were thirsty, you would not stand by the rippling brook and think how it flowed on to the river, and the river onward to the sea. You would not let your meditations be wandering to the meadows which it made verdant, or the mills which it turned, or the cities which employed it in mercantile industry. No, you would just stoop down and drink—and then meditate on those grand uses it served afterwards.

When there is a cry for bread in the streets, it is of no use telling the people that there is a large stock of wheat in the Baltic and that there has been a fine crop of wheat in the United States. Each man wants bread in his own hands and bread in his own mouth.

It is amazing how personal people become when the thing has anything to do with money. I never knew a man short of cash who was relieved by the intelligence that there were millions of bullion in the bank. A little in his pocket cheered him more than the much that had accumulated at the fountainhead.

How is it that people are not personal with religion? Why are they not looking to get every man a full share in the capital it represents? How is it they do not turn everything that comes in their way to good account when the Gospel is preached? Why, when tidings are published, do they not say, "Lord, is this a message from God to me?"

Now to close, my last point is this—

III. IF THERE BE SUCH A MESSAGE AS THIS FROM GOD TO US, HOW SHOULD WE TREAT IT?

Let the minister entertain this question. He ought to deliver it very earnestly. God's message is not to be preached with marble lips—it must not drop from an icy tongue. It ought to be spoken very affectionately. God's message is not to be announced unkindly. The kindling of human passion should never stir us. Rather let the divine flame of God-like affection burn within our souls.

It should be proclaimed very boldly. It is not for the minister of God to smooth the stones or pare down any of the angles of the Gospel. He should be tender as a lamb, but yet bold as a lion. It is as much as his soul is worth to keep back a single word. He may have to answer for the blood of souls if he trims in the slightest particular. The withholding of any part of a sermon which should have been delivered, should he refrain himself lest he offend anyone, may bring down upon him a condemnation that he knows not how to escape, and he may have to throughout eternity bewail that he had God's message and did not deliver it.

I always feel quite easy in my own conscience if I have preached what I believe to be the truth. If you send a servant to the door, you give him a message. If the person at the door should be angry, the servant would say, "It is of no use being angry with me. You should be angry with my master, for I have given you the message just as he gave it to me."

And if they should be angry with him, he would say, "I would much rather that the stranger at the door should be angry with me for telling the message, than that my master should be angry with me for keeping it back, for to my own master I stand or fall." I think the minister of God, if he has preached faithfully, may say, "Well, I have delivered only what my Master told me. If you are angry with me, you must remember that you ought to be angry with my Master, for it was my Master's message, and it is better for you to be angry with me than for my Master to be angry with me."

Baxter said, "I never rebuke myself for not having used fine flowery language when I am preaching, but I have rebuked myself full often for want of earnestness in what I have delivered." So we, each of us, must humble ourselves before the Lord on account of our coldness in this matter. Yet we must not handle the Lord's message deceitfully, but go on boldly to deliver the message which God has given us, remembering that we only have to give an account to Him.

There lives not a man under the cope of heaven that should be so free from the fear of his fellow creatures as God's minister. To him, prince or peasant, peer or beggar must be alike. To him, kings have no crowns and queens no thrones. He speaks to men as men, going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature, and being God's ambassador to men, he must go right on and speak as he gets utterances from his Lord.

Yes, but if this is God's message, the minister has not only to think how he should treat it, but you have to think how you should treat it, and *I have to ask those who are unconverted what they mean to do with it.* What do you mean to do with God's message? Of all the bad things to do, do not do this—do not say, “Go your way for this time; when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee.” Do not say that.

Better to say, “I despise the message and I will not obey it.” Talk not like the procrastinators, for procrastinators are the most hardened of men. To promise they will do it quiets men's consciences, whereas, if they deliberately said, “I will not,” perhaps conscience might be aroused, and they might be led to do it. No, say either the one thing or the other.

If it were possible for you to meet an angel on your way home—the thing will not occur—but if you could meet an angel, and he should stop you, and should say, “Now, man, not a step further until you have given me an answer. God commands you to believe in Jesus Christ. He tells you to trust Him with your soul—will you or not?”

Suppose yourself placed in the same position as King Antiochus. When the Roman ambassador met him and asked him whether it was to be peace or war, he said he must have time to consider. The ambassador, with his sword, drew a circle in the sand. “Give an answer,” he said, “before you move out of that circle, or if you step out of it, your answer is war.”

I think there is such a phase in a man's life, when he must give an answer. I know what that answer will be, unless God the Holy Ghost makes you give the right one, but you must give it one way or the other, and if the man says, “No, I will give no answer,” yet if he stop beyond that appointed hour, it is war between Him and God forever—and the sword shall never be sheathed, nor go back into its scabbard. He has thrown down the gauntlet, by refusing to give a decisive pledge of obedience. The Lord has declared eternal war against him—peace shall not be made forever.

Before you go farther, which shall it be? Do you say, “I love my sins. I love the world, I love its pleasures. I love my own righteousness. I will not trust Christ”? That shows your depravity—look at the consequences and tremble! But if, from the depths of your soul, you say, “God be merciful to me a sinner. I would be saved!” Then trust Christ and you are saved now. Believe on Him—believe on Him now, and you are now forgiven.

Oh! may the Savior of His own grace give us your salvation as a seal to our ministry, and to Him shall be glory forever and ever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 119:119-126

Verses 119-121. *Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments. I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.*

Eastern kings cannot often say as much as this, but David had been a just king. This was for his comfort when he himself came under unjust treatment. “I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.” It is of the same tenor as another prayer—“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” God often deals with men as they deal with others—“With the forward, he will show himself forward.” “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” May our conduct be such that, though we plead no merit, yet we may dare to mention it in prayer.

122. *Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.*

As nearly as I remember, this is the only verse which does not mention the law or the Word of God. Here you have a “surety” and that is something even better. If the law fails us, the surety stands us in good stead. How I like to think of God the surety of His people! When there is a trial against them and the oppressor is heavy upon them, they can come to God to be a surety for them in the great action of life. “Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.” My Master is surety for His servants—His servant is sure enough.

123. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.*

I have looked until I have looked my eyes out. I am weary with waiting, with watching, with weeping—“Mine eyes fail for thy salvation.” Some do not even look for Him. Here is a man who looked until his very eyes gave out.

124. *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.*

He is a just man. He can plead that he has done justly, but he does not ask to be dealt with according to justice—“Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy”—as far as anyone of us can get. If you have been greatly sanctified, have walked very near to God, I would still not advise you to go beyond this prayer—“Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy.”

Singular is the next sentence—“And teach me thy statutes.” It is a great mercy to be taught the ways of God, to understand His way, to understand the practical part of it, the statutes. To be made holy is a high honor, a great privilege. When you are seeking great favors of God, ask for great holiness.

125. *I am thy servant:*

He called himself, “servant,” many times before. And in this wonderful passage this is the third time. He is delighted to be the “servant of God.” He says little about being a king. He says a great deal about being a servant—“I am thy servant.”

125. *Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.*

You know, generally, a teacher finds the teaching—the pupil has to find understanding. But here is a prayer—“Give me understanding.” The last verse he asked to be taught. Here he asks to have an understanding given to him. What a God we have to deal with! And when we are taught of the Lord, how effectually we are taught. He not only gives the facts, but gives the understanding with which to get at their meaning.

126. *It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.*

When men begin to exercise a destructive criticism upon the Word of God, it is time for God to work. When God’s law is held in small esteem, when men go their own way, call vice by the name of pleasure, “It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.”

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.