

CHILDREN'S BREAD GIVEN TO DOGS

NO. 715

A SERMON
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AT THE FREE TABERNACLE, NOTTING HILL

*“And she said, Truth, Lord:
yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.”
Matthew 15:27*

IN this narrative we have the portrait of a soul for which a sure blessing is reserved. If the story closed without its final verse, one might be quite sure as to what the result of the woman's pleading would be. Christ must change His nature if a person coming as she is said to have come could be sent away empty. I shall with a few touches sketch the woman's picture, and shall beg you to see if you are like her, for if so it will be evidence to you that the time to favor you, yea, the set time, has come.

This woman had *a great and pressing need*. Her daughter was vexed with a devil, and she could not endure to see the misery which that evil spirit caused her child. The pain and anguish, the delirium and horror into which the child was thrown were too much for her to bear. Her need was conscious, troublesome, burdensome. She had grown desperate under it. She *must* be rid of it.

Is it so with you, dear hearer? Does your sin plague you? Does your transgression come up before you like a continual offense? Does it vex you both day and night till it has come to this pass, that you cannot live without pardon, that you must be forgiven or driven into madness? Do you feel that things are at such a point with you that you cannot live any longer under the sentence of divine wrath? This is a very blessed and hopeful sign. If there be many such here, there is music in store for angels.

When her case was come to such a point, *she heard of the Lord Jesus, and what she heard she acted upon*. They told her that He was a great healer of the sick, and able to cast out devils. She was not content with that information, but she set to work at once to try its value. She went to Jesus with all speed, finding that it was a convenient season, for He was near to her land and she hastened to cry unto Him.

Ah! dear hearer, you too have heard of Jesus. I shall not ask you whether you know the doctrine of His Godhead and of His manhood and of His atonement for sin—you know it well, but have you put it to the trial? You understand that He saves souls, have you taken your own soul to Him to be saved? You know that He can forgive sin, are you looking to Him now to forgive *your* sin?

If it be so, though as yet you sit in the shadow of death, your hour of deliverance hastens on apace, for a soul that under a sense of need honestly seeks the Savior's face is not far from the kingdom of heaven.

This woman was most *desperately resolved*. She had made up her mind, I believe, that she would never go back to the place from whence she came till she had received the blessing. She would dog the Savior's footsteps, she would waylay Him. If the disciples pushed her back she would wait another opportunity. If not then successful, she would try the next occasion, and if that would not suffice, she would venture yet again.

She was sorely tried by the Savior, for He sometimes tests those whom He knows to be strong enough to bear the trial. And when she obtained no answer from Him, but rather met with a rebuff, she was nothing daunted but pressed her suit, for she had drunk deep into the spirit of the hymn—

*“Resolved, for that's my last defense,
If I must perish there to die.”*

If there be here a soul who has come to this, that he will never give up praying until he receives a comfortable answer, that he will never cease to weep for sin until the blood has washed it out, rejoice, ye heavens, and be glad, O earth, for there are souls here who have come to the birth, and they shall be brought forth this day. There are souls here who are now upon the edge of liberty, upon the verge of peace. They shall even this day obtain complete freedom from all their bondage.

I said at the commencement, that this woman was a correct portrait of the most hopeful case in the world. Can you spy your own face in her story, even as men see their countenances in a glass? Then am I happy, for your position is full of hopefulness.

I may not leave this picture however, without observing that this woman *triumphantly endured a trial very common among seeking souls*. Brethren, those evangelists who are not pastors will perhaps differ from me in what I am about to say, but if they knew more about souls they would not. It is customary in the pulpit to exhort people to believe in Jesus Christ. It is not only customary but it is most proper and right, and the more of it the better. But there are some who are content with giving the exhortation generally, and do not with affectionate discrimination deal with the separate cases of men.

There are cases in which the bare exhortation to believe is not enough. I wonder what mere exhorters would do with certain peculiar instances which I have now under my own hand. I have explained the Gospel to them to the best of my ability many times, and have prayed with them and for them. I have given them books which God has blessed in other cases. I have directed them to passages of Scripture which have been the means of giving light to thousands. Yet these persons month after month remain in as much doubt and distress of mind as at first, nay, they are even worse.

This was my own case for years as a child. The Gospel was taught me by my parents, but I was in such darkness and despondency of spirit that I could not do what I was bidden to do, and felt as if when bidden to look to Christ I had no eyes to look with. Even the Gospel did not then appear to suit my case. It was my sinful blindness and guilty folly which made me think so, but alas! how many are there equally blinded who need to have their cases handled gently and wisely.

Albeit that we say to them, "Believe," they are far from being comforted by the advice. There is needed some further explanation, some simpler opening up of the saving truth, and perhaps a laborious answering of their difficulties, before they can find peace.

Genuine seekers, who as yet have not obtained the blessing, may take comfort from the story before us. The Savior did not at once give the blessing, even though this woman had faith. Startle not, it is the truth. She had real and genuine faith in Christ when she came to Jesus, else she would never have put up with the rebuffs of the disciples. Yet, believer as she was, she did not at first obtain the blessing which she sought.

The Savior always intended to give it, but He waited awhile. "He answered her not a word." Were not her prayers good? Never better in the world. Was not her case needy? Sorrowfully needy. Did she not *feel* her need sufficiently? She did feel it overwhelmingly. Was she not earnest enough? She was as earnest as ever woman could be. Had she no faith? She had such a high degree of it that even Jesus wondered and said, "O woman, great is thy faith." Yet for a while she could not obtain an answer to her prayers.

See then, dear friends, although it is true that faith brings peace, yet it does not always bring it instantaneously. There may be certain reasons calling for the trial of faith, rather than the reward of faith. Genuine faith may be in the soul like a hidden seed, but as yet it may not have budded and blossomed into joy and peace. Comfort is the child of faith, but it is not always as old as its mother.

I say this to cheer some of you. Do not, I beseech you, give up seeking. Do not give up trusting my Master, because you have not yet obtained the conscious joy which you long for. I doubt not but that you certainly will be saved, even though as yet no kindly promise has gladdened your heart. "Slow breaks the light" on many a heart, but surely will it break ere long.

A painful silence from the Savior is the grievous trial of many a seeking soul, but heavier still is the affliction of a harsh cutting reply such as this, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."

Many in waiting upon the Lord find immediate delight, but this is not the case with all. Some, like the jailer, are in a moment turned from darkness to light, but others are plants of slower growth. A deeper sense of sin may be given to you instead of a sense of pardon, and in such a case you will have need of patience to bear the heavy blow.

Ah! poor heart, though Christ beat and bruise you or even slay you, trust Him. Though He should give you an angry word, believe in the love of His heart, and even if for the next few months you should not be able to say, "I know comfortably that He is mine," yet cast yourself on Him, and perseveringly depend even where you cannot rejoicingly hope.

We come to the text itself. The woman's case is an instance of prevailing faith, and if we would conquer, we must imitate her tactics. If I were called to be a commander in an army, I should observe how other commanders who have been successful have managed the matter. Here is a woman who conquered Christ, let us go by her rule, and we will conquer Christ too by His own grace.

I. In the first place, observe that SHE ADMITS THE ACCUSATION BROUGHT AGAINST HER.

Jesus called her a dog, and she meekly said, "Truth, Lord." Here is no controversy with Christ, no setting up of oppositions, palliations, excuses, and mitigations. She is frank, prompt, humble, and open. "Truth, Lord"—that is her only answer to Him.

When a man wrestles, much depends upon his foothold. If he does not stand firmly he cannot win the day. And if we would wrestle with the angel of mercy, we must find a foothold where this woman did, in a deep sense of unworthiness. She knew herself to be an outcast from Israel, and at once confessed it.

The most of men if they had been called dogs, would either have turned on their heel and gone away in sullen despair, or else would have blazed into a bad temper and replied to the Master, "I am no more dog than You, and if I come to ask a charity, can You not at least give me a civil refusal?"

The natural heart rebels against what the Scriptures says about it. Until a man is truly humbled he scorns to admit the depravity of his nature. Though he may be quite willing to use the common terms of humility, he does not mean them, for if they were applied to him in another shape he would grow very angry. Like the monk who said he had broken all the commandments and was as bad as Judas Iscariot, but when a bystander remarked, "I always thought so," the monk grew dreadfully angry, and vowed vengeance on the man who so insulted him. Call me a horse if you will, but it is quite another thing to put a saddle on my back.

I have heard of a woman who told her minister who visited her that she was a shocking sinner. "Well," said the minister, "I have no doubt you are, let us go over your sins." So beginning with the first commandment, she declared that she had never broken that, she had never worshipped any other god but God. As to the second commandment, she had never set up any graven images she knew. Nor had she broken the Sabbath day. She had honored her father and mother, never coveted, never borne false witness, never killed anybody, and in fact she pleaded that she had not broken one of the ten commandments, notwithstanding she had confessed herself so sad a sinner. We plead guilty to stealing a forest, but deny that we ever thieved so much as a couple of sticks.

The woman before us believed in her heart the degradation of her state, so that when the Savior addressed her in apparently the coarsest manner as a dog, she was so thoroughly conversant with her own fallen condition that it did not startle her to be called what she knew herself to be. She had heard sin bark within her so often, and so loudly, that when the Savior called her a dog, she only felt that He was calling things by their right names.

If I were to go over the whole statement of the fall, and the mischief of sin, everybody in this place would say, "That is true." But oh! how few there are who really feel it to be true, and are deeply grieved over it! We are all sinners, *so we say*. But we all have our excellencies, *so we feel*.

The Word of God does not give us a very complimentary picture of humanity. It informs us that our first father sinned, and that through him, as he stood for all of us, we all fell and lost the favor of God. The Herald's College of Scripture draws up for us a miserable pedigree. Those aristocrats who are so proud of their Norman ancestors would do well to trace the family tree to a still earlier date, and they will find the one of blue blood ending in the gardener who stole his Master's fruit, and was sent adrift without a rag to cover his nakedness. A beggarly pedigree this, you nobles of the earth, this is a *bar sinister* on your escutcheon which nothing can wipe out.

The inspired Word goes on to tell us that, in consequence of this, we are all born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and that in sin our mothers conceive us. It testifies that we are not only sinners with the hand, but with the heart, that sin is not merely a scab upon the skin, but a leprosy in the soul, that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint," that the heart itself is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Nay, it goes further, and certifies that we are not simply sick and depraved, but utterly perverted, that through our sin our wills have become perverse, so that we will not come to Christ that we might have life, habitually putting the bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, choosing the evil and eschewing the good. It tells us that this inability of ours to goodness is so great as to be tantamount to spiritual death. It describes us as being by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," in such a state that we can no more restore ourselves to salvation than the dead in their graves can raise themselves by their own power and put themselves into a state of life and health.

The Book of God says all against man that can be said, and more than man is willing to confess except when the Spirit of God comes, and then our heart answers, "Truth, Lord."

Moreover, God's Word goes on to say that our sin is so great that it must always be hateful to God, that it deserves that we who have committed it should be banished from His presence into unutterable woe. But human nature kicks at this, and says, "No, sin is a weakness, a foible, a mistake, and nothing more." But when the Holy Ghost enters the heart we cry, "Truth, Lord," it *is* a black thing, a devilish thing, an infernal thing, and if You cast us into hell, You only do with sin what ought to be done with it.

Beloved friends, whenever you meet with a sinner bowed down with the burden of sin never try to make his sin appear to be lighter, on the contrary, say to the soul that is most despairing, "You feel that you are a great sinner, but you are a much greater sinner than you feel yourself to be." When the soul cries, "My sin is very heavy," do not attempt to comfort it by making excuses for it, but on the contrary, say, "Heavy as you think your sin to be, it is much heavier than you know of." Never play into the devil's hands by excusing sinners in their sins.

If you give comfort to your friend by saying to him, "Well, you have not been such a sinner as you think you are," you are giving him ruinous comfort. You are presenting to him a poisonous drug which may lull him to sleep, but which will therefore lull him to destruction. Tell him that sin is in itself so horrible, that if a man could see a naked sin it would drive him mad, that the very least offense against God is so intolerable, that if hell fire were put out, one sin could kindle it again.

The woman in this case, if it had been a sound way of getting comfort, would have argued, "No, Lord, I am not a dog. I may not be all I ought to be, but I am not a dog at any rate, I am a human being. You speak too sharply, good Master, do not be unjust." Instead of that she admits the whole. This showed that she was in a right state of mind, since she admitted in its blackest, heaviest meaning whatever the Savior might choose to say against her.

By night the glow-worm is bright like a star, and rotten touchwood glistens like molten gold. By the light of day the glowworm is a miserable insect, and the rotten wood is decay and nothing more. So with us, until the light comes into us we count ourselves good, but when heaven's light shines our heart is discovered to be rottenness, corruption, and decay. Do not whisper in the mourner's ear that it is not so, and do not delude yourself into the belief that it is not so.

You *are* a lost sinner. You do deserve damnation. *You* deserve it especially, if no one else deserves it. You have sinned against light and against knowledge. You are ruined, and ruined utterly. Bad as you

think yourself to be, your case is infinitely worse than you conceive it to be, and I am not here to give you any comfort by saying peace, peace, where there is no peace. Your state, O sinner, is horribly bad, and will soon be worse, hopelessly worse. And before God may you be made to feel this and to say, "Truth, Lord."

II. But notice, in the second place, SHE ADHERES TO CHRIST NOTWITHSTANDING.

Did you notice the force of what she said? "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from"—where? "*From their masters' table.*" Dogs in the East very seldom have any master. There are big dogs about every Eastern city that live on the garbage thrown from the houses, and these big dogs are such a nuisance that I am not aware that there is one word in the whole of Scripture in favor of them.

The dog, as we know him, is a most affectionate faithful servant of man, and deserves great honor. But the dog, as he is in the East, deserves nothing but contempt. He is simply a big howling brute, who will bark at or bite anybody who is passing.

In the Savior's days the Easterners had learned Roman manners, and had introduced little household dogs. And it is remarkable that our Lord did not call this woman one of the big dogs without a master, but one of the little lap dogs. It was a name of contempt certainly, but still not the severest form of it. "It is not meet to give the children's bread to these little dogs."

There is a word here which I want you to notice. The woman does not say, "The dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the table," but "from *their masters' table.*" Notice her adherence to Jesus, she says in effect to Him, "Thou art my Master." She seems to say, "Lord, I am asking for a great blessing, and say what You will to me, I mean to have it. But if I cannot obtain the blessing, at any rate, I will always follow *You*, You shall be my Master. If You shall never say, 'go in peace, thy faith hath given thee the blessing,' yet I take You to be my Master."

As a stray dog picks up with a stranger and follows him home, and seems to say, "You may kick me or shut the door, but I have taken you to be my master. If you shut me out of one door I will go in at the other. If you shut me out at both doors I will lie on the doormat. And if you kick me into the street, I will stand there until you come out, and then I will follow you. I have taken you to be my master, and my master you shall be."

Now, poor soul, is this your case? If not, I urge you to take that stand. You have admitted that all which Jesus has said is true, but say you, "For all that, whether I am a dog or a devil, I will never leave off coming to Christ as my Savior. If I be a dog I will follow at the heels of mercy, morning, noon, and night I will crouch at my Master's feet, and I will never give up trusting in Jesus even if I have no comfort from Him. I have argued out the case with my own heart, and I have concluded that if God becomes a Savior, there can be no case beyond His infinite power. If the Son of God dies and sheds His blood there can be no scarlet sin which His blood cannot wash out, and if He rose again and is gone up on high, then He is able to save unto the uttermost them who come unto God by Him. I am resolved therefore to wait and wrestle until He deigns to give me an answer."

No man clings more closely to Christ than he who is most sensible of his lost estate. Who holds the plank the tightest? Why the man who is the most afraid of being drowned. Fear frequently intensifies faith. The more afraid I am of my sins the more firmly do I grasp my Savior. Fear is sometimes the mother of faith.

One who was walking in the fields was surprised to find a trembling lark fly into his bosom. A strange thing for a timid bird to do, was it not? But there was a hawk after it, and therefore fear of the hawk made the bird bold enough to fly to man for shelter. And oh! when the fierce vultures of sin and hell are pursuing a poor sinner, he is driven by the courage of despair to fly into the heart of the blessed Jesus.

John Bunyan has somewhere words to this effect, "I was brought into such a dread and horror under the wrath of God that I could not help trusting in Christ. I felt that if He stood there with a drawn sword in His hand I must even run right upon its point sooner than endure my sins." I hope and pray that the Lord may drive you to Jesus in such a way as this if you will not be drawn by gentler means.

Brethren, a soul set upon Jesus, and clinging to Him with a death grip, can by no means perish, the thing is utterly impossible. I have sometimes tried to picture a soul in hell that has sought Jesus, and resolved to die at the foot of His cross. Such a thing cannot be, but suppose it for a moment, and the supposition will destroy itself. "Alas," says that lost soul, "Jesus, I did hang alone upon You, but I am undone. I was worthless, I deserved nothing of Your favor, but I did trust in You as the Savior of the vile, I did depend upon Your power to deliver me, and here I am in the pit."

Can you fancy such a sound as that amid the wailings of hell? How the devils would laugh! "Ha, ha! where are the promises? Where is the great heart of Christ to let a sinner perish who twined his arms about Him? Was it because He *could not*?" Then Satan cries, "Ha, ha! He was not able to save to the uttermost them that came to God by Him, though He claimed to be a physician He could not heal." "Or else," says the arch-fiend, "He *would not* save those who longed and panted to be saved."

You shudder to think what fearful blasphemy all this would be, and how it would tarnish the honor of the glorious Redeemer. It shall not be, sinner, it shall not be. If you be the blackest offender that ever lived, cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, resolved never to leave until He give you pardon. He cannot refuse you.

We must not limit God, and say what He can or cannot do, but we do read that He cannot lie, and certainly if Jesus were to cast out a soul that came to Him He would lie. Therefore be of good cheer. Only stand to it that you will never leave the Savior, that you will die at the foot of the cross, and all shall be well with you.

III. Furthermore, the woman's great master weapon, the needle gun which she used in her battle, was this, SHE HAD LEARNED THE ART OF GETTING COMFORT OUT OF HER MISERIES.

Jesus called her a dog. "Yes," she said, "but then dogs get the crumbs." She could see a silver lining to the black cloud. Christ threw a bone at her, she took it up and cracked it, and got marrow out of it. It looked to be a very hard stone, but it had a lump of gold inside, and she knocked away the quartz and found the clear bright bullion and was enriched. "Call me a dog," says she, "very well, I will be a dog, and I shall get the crumbs." She draws water of comfort from the deep well of her miseries.

Now, poor soul, in the same state try by the Holy Spirit's aid to do the same thing. Satan has been saying to you, "You have broken God's law, you have offended Him, you have been *a sinner*."

Soul, if you have any wit left cut the devil's head off with his own sword, say to him, "I am a sinner, but it is written, 'It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' What say you to that, Satan? If I be a sinner He came into the world to save sinners. If I had not been a sinner Jesus would not have come to save me, for it is nowhere written that He came to save those who are not sinners." The more clearly I prove that I am a sinner, the more clearly I prove that I am an object for the Savior's mercy.

Perhaps conscience whispers, "You are not a sinner of an ordinary kind. You have gone to the greatest lengths until you have made your heart hard, you are *a lost sinner*." "Ah!" say you, "I will catch at that then, for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. He did not come to seek those who did not want seeking. He did not come as the great Shepherd to find out the sheep that were in the fold, but those which had gone astray. And I being a lost one, when I see the Shepherd going over the mountains after the lost ones, I will bleat like a lost sheep, for perhaps He has come to look after me."

But conscience says to you, again, "You are such an *undeserving* one. You are not only a lost sinner, but you are utterly unworthy." Sinner, catch at that and say, "God is a God of mercy. If I deserved anything there would be the less room for mercy, for something would be due to me as a matter of justice. But as I am a sheer mass of undeservingness, there is room for the Lord to reveal the aboundings of His grace."

There is no room for a man to be generous amongst yonder splendid mansions in Belgravia. Suppose a man had thousands of pounds in his pocket, and desired to give it away in charity, he would be terribly hampered amid princely palaces. If he were to knock at the doors of those great houses, and say he

wanted an opportunity of being charitable, powdered footmen would slam the door in his face, and tell him to be gone with his impudence.

But come along with me, let us wander down the Mews all among the dunghills, and get away into back alleys where crowds of ragged children are playing amid filth and squalor, where all the people are miserably poor, and where cholera is festering.

Now sir, down with your money bags, here is plenty of room for your charity. Now you may put both your hands into your pockets, and not fear that anybody will refuse you. You may spend your money right and left now with ease and satisfaction. When the God of mercy comes down to distribute mercy, He cannot give it to those who do not want it. But you need forgiveness, for you are full of sin, and you are just the person likely to receive it.

“Ah!” saith one, “I am so *sick at heart*. I cannot believe, I cannot pray.” If I saw the doctor's brougham driving along at a great rate through the streets, I should be sure that he was not coming to my house, for I do not require him. But if I had to guess where he was going, I should conclude that he was hastening to some sick or dying person.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Physician of souls. The more sick you are, the more room there is for the physician's art. When a man sets up in a trade, he likes to find a locality where his articles are wanted, and there he opens his shop. What if I say it is my Master's trade to save sinners? What if I say it is the only business and calling that He undertook, to become a Savior of lost and ruined souls? Then He can drive a brisk trade in your heart, and I believe that He will open shop there, and enrich Himself with your praise and your love by saving you.

Do try now, my hearer, thus to find hope in the very hopelessness of your condition, in whatever aspect that hopelessness may appear to you. The Bible says that you are *dead in sin*. Then conclude that there is space for Jesus to come, since He is the resurrection and the life. If you were alive, you would not want two lives, but as you are dead, there is room for Jesus to give you life. The Bible tells you that you are. Do not deny it, say, “Truth, Lord,” but then there is room for Christ's fullness.

If you were full you could not hold two fulnesses. Your own fullness would keep Christ's fullness out. But now that you are empty there is room for Him. Dear heart, instead of trying to make your case out to be better, believe in its thorough badness, and yet be of good cheer. You can not exaggerate your sin, and even if you could it were wiser to err in that direction than the other.

A man called at my house some time ago for charity, an arrant beggar, I have no doubt. Thinking that the man's rags and poverty were real, I gave him a little money, some of my clothes, and a pair of shoes. After he had put them on and gone out, I thought, “Well, after all, I have done you a bad turn very likely, for you will not get as much money now as before, because you will not look so wretched an object.”

Happening to go out a quarter of an hour afterwards, I saw my friend, but he was not wearing the clothes I had given him, not he. Why, I should have ruined his business if I could have compelled him to look respectable. He had been wise enough to slip down an archway, take all the good clothes off, and put his rags on again. Did I blame him? Yes, for being a rogue, but not for carrying on his business in a business-like manner. He only wore his proper livery, for rags are the livery of a beggar. The more ragged he looked the more he would get.

Just so is it with you. If you are to go to Christ, do not put on your good doings and feelings, or you will get nothing. Go in your sins, they are your livery. Your ruin is your argument for mercy. Your poverty is your plea for heavenly alms, and your need is the motive for heavenly goodness. Go as you are, and let your miseries plead for you.

If I were wounded on the battle-field, and the surgeon was going about to attend the sick, he would be sure to visit those first whose wounds were the worst. For in the hurry of a battle, of course they do not look after a man who has had his finger shot off, when there are others whose arms and legs are gone. I would take care to state my case as fully as I could, by no means speaking lightly of my hurts, in order to have my bleeding wounds bound up as soon as possible. I should not feel inclined to say, “Oh,

it is nothing, I am very little injured, it does not signify." I should be for taking time by the forelock, and getting what help I needed as soon as possible.

Now, do you, sinner, learn this art. Do not paint yourself in bright colors, but own yourself to be lost and ruined, and then adhering still to Christ, make your very wants, and needs, and death, and ruin, to be an argument why the Lord of mercy should show His mighty power in you.

IV. Let me, in the fourth place, notice the way in which the woman gained comfort, SHE THOUGHT GREAT THOUGHTS OF CHRIST.

I must have your attention in this. The Master had talked about the children's bread, "Now," argued she, "since You are the Master of that table, I know that You are a generous housekeeper, and there is sure to be abundance of bread on Your table. You are no miserly provider, there will be such an abundance for the children that there will be crumbs to throw on the floor for the dogs, and the children will fare none the worse because the dogs are fed."

She did not think the Lord Jesus to be a workhouse master who must serve out so many ounces of bread for each one, but she thought Him to be a generous provider who kept so good a table that all that she needed would only be a crumb in comparison. Yet remember, what she wanted was to have the devil cast out of her daughter. It was a very great thing to her, but she had such a high esteem of Christ that she said, "It is nothing to Him—it is but a crumb for Christ to give." This is the royal road to comfort.

Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair, but great thoughts of Christ will soon bear you upwards upon eagle's wings.

"My sins are many, but oh! it is nothing to Jesus to take them all away. He can as easily lift the mountains of my sin as I could lift a molehill on a shovel. It is true the weight of my guilt presses me down as a giant's foot would crush a worm, but it would be no more than a grain of dust to Him, because He has already borne its curse in His own body on the tree. It will be but a small thing *for Him* to give me full remission, although it will be an infinite blessing *for me* to receive it."

She opens her mouth to expect great things of Jesus, and He fills it with His love. I ask you, dear friends, to do the same. Oh may the Holy Ghost enable you.

But you may say, "help me." Well, I will help you. You ought to think great thoughts of Jesus when you remember that *He is God*. What limit can you set when you have God to deal with? He with His span measures the heavens, in the hollow of His hand He holds the seas, He takes up the isles as a very little thing.

If Jesus Christ be God, how can you think He cannot save you? O man, when you have to deal with the Eternal and Infinite let your doubts fly to the winds. Think again that He being God *suffered the penalty of sin*, a grief which man alone could not have endured.

The weight of His Father's wrath fell upon Jesus at Calvary. Can you see Him with His pierced hands and feet, can you read the lines of agony written upon His thorn-crowned brow, and not believe that He is able to save? God over all, the glory of whose countenance fills heaven with splendor, yields His face to be covered with shameful spittle, and His brow to be bedewed with drops of bloody sweat. Is anything impossible to the merits of the agonizing God?

Think of that, sinner, and you will put no limit to what Jesus can do. But Jesus *rose again*. See Him as He rises from the tomb, ascending to His Father's throne amidst the jubilations of ten thousand angels. See how He wears the keys of heaven, and death and hell, swinging at His girdle. What cannot He do? Not save you? He who is "exalted on high to give repentance," who is "able to save to the uttermost," seeing that He ever liveth to intercede—can you doubt His power to save? Oh, do not dishonor my Master. Trust Him now.

But you are still doubting. Then I will bring you one thing more that shall by God's sweet love drive your doubts away, and make you cling to the Savior. There are some country towns in the eastern counties where there is a celebrated doctor, and I have heard of wagons starting from remote hamlets loaded with people to go twenty or thirty miles to consult the famous man. Whether he did them good or not I am sure I cannot tell, but the illustration serves my turn.

Suppose one of you were to set off to see this doctor. Feeling very sick and ill, you are afraid that he will be of no service to you when you get there. But on the road you meet wagonloads of persons journeying cheerfully home. They say, "Where are you going?" and you reply, "I am going off to Doctor So-and-so, for I am ill." "Oh!" they say, "you are very happy to be able to go. We have been there. We were all as bad as you and we have been cured, and are now going home."

"But," say you, "had any of you a bad leg like mine?" "Oh, yes," one replies, "I had two bad legs, my case was even worse than yours." "Well, were you perfectly restored?" "Yes," says the man, "see how I can walk, I am fully restored." Would you not go on with confidence? You were half afraid before, but you say, "Now I shall proceed joyfully, for these cures are so many proofs of the physician's power."

There are hundreds this morning even in this free Tabernacle who can say, "Yes, Jesus is able to save," and they can give the very best proof of it too by adding, "He saved me!" Dear hearers, I know that Christ can save sinners, for I have seen His salvation in thousands of cases, but the best proof I ever had was when He saved me. When I looked to Him and was lightened, and my face was not ashamed, then I knew, I wanted no further arguments.

O sinner, He has saved drunkards, swearers, harlots, whoremongers, adulterers. Paul says that He saved those that defiled themselves with nameless sins, for he says, "Such were some of you; but ye are washed." Even the murderer can have deeds of blood washed out by the blood of Jesus. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;" for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

He is a great Savior, He is the greatest Savior, He is a Savior greater than the greatest. And as for your sins they shall sink beneath the sea of His atoning blood, and shall be found against you no more for ever. The woman thought great thoughts of Christ, and that brought her comfort.

V. And so you see, in the last place, SHE WON THE VICTORY.

She confessed what Christ laid at her door. She laid fast hold upon Him, and drew arguments even out of His hard words. She believed great things of Him, and she thus overcame Him. Now let me say that the reason why she overcame Christ was really here, that she had first of all overcome herself. She had conquered in another fight before she wrestled with the Savior, that was with her own soul.

I think I see her before she started away from home. She was sitting down one day when a talkative neighbor came in and said, "Have you heard about the new prophet?" "No, I have not. What about Him?" "Oh! He is a great healer of diseases." "Tell me all about it," said the woman, for that subject interested her. She heard the story, she knew that her friend talked a great deal more than she needed, and she did not quite believe it.

The next day she called at the house and said, "Are you certain that what you told me was quite true?" "Well," she said, "I heard it from So-and-so, whose daughter was healed." The woman then determined to hunt the matter out, and at last found an eyewitness whose word could be taken. "Yes," said the friend, "it is the Messiah, the Son of God, who has come down to earth, and I am sure He is able to cure, for I have seen some wonderful miracles wrought by Him. There can be no doubt about His power."

At first the woman was puzzled. She had been brought up as a heathen. She had tried her heathen gods, and they had failed her. She had tried her priests, and they had only deluded her, and she thought that this perhaps was a delusion too. But she thought it over. There were fifty objections, but then she said, "I have heard that there will be such and such marks attending the coming of the Messiah, and this Man is just what they said the Messiah would be. I believe He is the Messiah, and if He be God's Son, He must be able to heal my daughter."

Then hosts of difficulties came up. "You are a Canaanite." "Yes, but it was said of the Messiah, 'A bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax He shall not quench,' therefore, I will go and try Him. And again it is written, 'In him shall the Gentiles trust.' I am a Gentile, and I will trust in Him." I

can suppose that she debated all this over in her mind, and having first conquered herself she easily overcame the willing Savior.

Possibly some of you may suppose that there is a degree of difficulty in bringing the Lord Jesus to save a sinner. There is none whatever. The difficulty is in bringing the sinner to trust Jesus. This is the work, this is the labor. In this woman's case the conflict with Jesus was only external but not real. He was already on her side. The true conflict was with her own unbelief, and when her faith had proved itself victorious within it became victorious with Christ.

Sinner, there is nothing between you and salvation but yourself. Do I speak boldly? Christ has leveled every mountain that stood in your way, He has filled up every valley, and He has made a high road from you to the very throne of God. The difficulty is with you, not with God.

How then is it with you? Can you trust Christ, dear hearer? Can you throw yourself wholly upon Jesus crucified? If so, your sins are forgiven you, go your way and rejoice. But if you cannot, here is your difficulty. Oh! may God help you to contend with it.

It is a sin to doubt Christ, it is a cruelty, it is an unkind cut to suspect that He is unwilling to forgive. Cast away, I pray you, your wicked unbelief! May God the Holy Spirit help you to do so! Do you come just as you are, and rest in Jesus, and you shall find eternal life.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MATTHEW 15:21-39

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.