

BRINGING THE KING BACK

NO. 808

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 19, 1868
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?”
2 Samuel 19:10

THIS morning we were indulged with the Master’s blessing while considering one of the most delightful subjects that can ever occupy the minds of God’s creatures this side of heaven. It was a celestial song, fitter for angels’ harps than sinners’ tongues. We sang the triumphs of the once rejected but now exalted Son of man. We lingered lovingly over the guarantees of His sure and blessed kingdom, and fed with delight upon that short, sweet sentence, “He must reign.”

We tried to show that the throne of our Lord Christ is settled on a firm foundation, and that His ultimate and undisputed sovereignty over all things in heaven and earth and hell is a matter of divine decree, and will be asserted by the divine power in due time.

We laid the sheaf upon the threshing floor this morning, let us beat out the precious grain this evening. We showed you the pearl, now let us make it a golden setting of practical holiness. The Son of David is assuredly King, and you know it. “Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?”

Israel had revolted, and set up Absalom against his father, but when the rebel bands had been scattered and Absalom had been slain, the people thought of their old love. They remembered the days when David was the terror of the Philistines and the champion of Israel. Their hearts smote them for their ingratitude to their valiant deliverer, and they said one to the other, “Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?”

There are three sorts of people in this great throng, to each of whom this text might well be addressed. May none of my three arrows miss the mark! I shall endeavor to speak pointedly, and may the Holy Spirit make an effectual application of each word. May I but win a throne for Jesus in any one heart, and my joy shall be full.

I. First, my brethren, MANY AMONG US HAVE LOST THE COMFORTABLE PRESENCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Some have long dwelt in the cold shade of suspended fellowship. Others for a shorter period have passed through the cloud. But surely, the shortest period is all too long—and those who have lost fellowship must be anxiously pining after its restoration.

Now to such as these, who see no longer the bright and morning star, we say, “Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?” My sorrowing brother, you have been mourning much concerning your present condition. Sitting down perhaps, this very afternoon, and taking stock of your spiritual estate, you have felt yourself to be in an almost bankrupt condition, and you have written bitter things against yourself. Your barometer has been going down, down, down, for the last month or two, from rain to much rain and stormy, it now appears as if it never would ascend again.

Upon a review of the past, you observe that your prayers have not been as constant nor as fervent as they used to be. In reading the Word, the promises have not been laid home to your heart as once they were, and in attending the means of grace, you have not so often said with Jacob, “Surely God was in this place.” You are getting now into a sad condition, and all because your eyes have not lately seen the King in His beauty, neither has He brought you into His banqueting house, nor waved over you the banner of His love.

You have been turning this forlorn plight over and over and over in your mind, and you have been anxiously searching for the cause of all this withering of your spirit. You can see that the cause does not lie in *Him*, but in yourself. You perceive that your David has not forsaken you, but that you have forsaken Him, and set up some fair but false Absalom in His place.

He who delivered you has been forgotten, and he who deceived you has been followed. Smooth-spoken sin has made you a traitor to your liege Lord. The luxuriant tresses of Absalom were nets to catch the shallow men of Israel, and Satan has taken care to find suitable snares for you. You know this, and you mourn it, and the temptation is to continue morbidly meditating upon the sin and its cause and consequences until despair burns its horrible brand into the spirit.

My business tonight is to remind you that all your lamentation over your folly will not of itself remove the disease. Your remedy does not lie within you, but beyond and above yourself. It is a good thing to discover where the mischief lies and to lament it, yet the real cure for it does not lie in lamentation, it lies in seeking again the face of your Lord. “Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?”

The royal hand brings health and cure, healing is to be found nowhere else in earth or heaven. Go then to JEHOVAH-rophi, The healing Lord. Oh! if you do but get Him back again, your sorrow and sighing will flee away. Though everything else should be dark and doleful, His presence is enough by itself alone to make a gala day in the heart.

*“Midst darkest shades if He appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul’s bright morning star,
And He my rising sun.”*

If your soul has been nipped with the frosts of a long and dreary winter, if the Sun of Righteousness do but cross the line and manifest His meridian splendor, your summer will return at once. Let the King come, and all His court will follow—all the graces display themselves where the Lord of grace is revealed.

One word then, to you who are under backslidings and declensions, play not with side issues, and secondary remedies, but go straightforward to the root of the matter. Turn your whole soul to your absent Master, and make this your one business—to bring the King back to His palace and throne in your heart.

Ah! I can well imagine what lies Satan will tell you. He will insinuate that you are no child of God, for if you were, your love would never grow so cold. He will whisper accusingly that never was any of the whole family of God so lifeless, so graceless as you are. He will say to you, “Your religion is a sham, your enjoyment is a delusion, you were never born again. You felt a little excitement, and you thought you were converted, but you were not. Your repentance was not deep enough. Your faith is not the faith of God’s elect.”

He will tear up, one after another, all your comfortable experiences even as the wild boar out of the wood rends up the vines, till he will reduce your soul to a howling wilderness of doubt and fear. How can you best meet this roaring lion? Will you try by your own wit to answer this accuser of the brethren? Will you try to prove your experience to be right, and his insinuations to be false? If you are wise you will attempt nothing of the kind, for at that sport Satan can play better than you, and as fast as you set up your evidences he will knock them down again.

There is a surer and safer method, and when I see you forgetting it, I inquire in the words of the text, “Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?” Why not tell the case to Jesus? That is the true answer to the adversary—answer him by your advocate. If you can regain the comfortable presence of Jesus, your evidences will all be seen in His light. Satan himself will not be able to disturb the

conviction of your mind that you are a child of God, when your Lord again kisses you with the kisses of His lips, and you drink of His love which is better than wine.

I can readily conceive that your legal tendencies will suggest to you, “Now, having fallen into this condition, seeing that it is very doubtful whether you are saved or not, you should labor after salvation by being more zealous and more devout.” Thus may you hear the voice of a deluding spirit, gendering unto bondage, crying out, “You must attend to religious observances and ordinances. You must mortify the flesh in this direction, and deny yourself in that, and then by degrees, you will come back to your old comfort and peace of mind.”

This all might be very good advice if it were not thrust into an improper place, and made to be a foundation for renewed confidence. To thrust out declension by a legal spirit is for Satan to cast out Satan, which cannot be.

God will not have His child’s face washed in the scalding water of the law. Let the child of God beware of being brought into legal servitude in which he will find himself wearily working for life, and slavishly toiling for salvation, for then he will be a mere slave, and will be ready to die in the wilderness like Hagar and her cast out son, instead of enjoying the liberty of the child of the promise who dwells forever in the Father’s house.

Always beware, dear friends, of any instruction or direction which would withdraw you from the cross as the sole and simple ground of your comfort. Duties I trust you will never neglect. Services and ordinances I trust will always be very precious to you. But when you have lost your comfort, you might as well search for fire beneath the ice, as look for comfort in duties, and you might certainly as well turn over the dunghill and look for a diamond, as search within yourself for jewels of consolation.

“Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?” for if you bring King Jesus back, He will be made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—you shall find in Him all you want. As Charles Wesley puts it so sweetly in the hymn—

*“Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find.”*

If you would obtain all good things in one, seek to win Christ and to be found in Him. Desponding one, your whole business lies with Jesus. You have nothing to do today with attainments and experiences, it is not even desirable to practice self-examinations while you are in despondency—these are to be attended to by and by, but just now, while the present stress of weather lasts, your one cry must be—

*“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.”*

While your bark is tossed about at sea, it is very likely that she needs a new copper bottom, or the deck requires holy-stoning, or the rigging is out of repair, or the sails want overhauling, or fifty other things may be necessary. But if the wind is blowing great guns, and the vessel is drifting towards those white-crested breakers, the first business of the mariner is to make for the haven at once to avoid the hurricane. When he is all snug in port, he can attend to hull and rigging, and all the odds and ends besides.

So with you, child of God, one thing you must do, and I beseech you do it. Do not be looking to this, or to that, or to the other out of a thousand things that may be amiss, but steer straight for the cross of Christ which is the haven for distressed spirits. Fly at once to the wounds of Jesus, as the dove flies to her nest in the cleft of the rock. May the Eternal Spirit give you joy and peace through believing.

“Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?” Perhaps you reply, “We speak not a word of this *because we are afraid that the King may have forgotten us.*” Oh, cruel thought, concerning so kind a friend! Hear ye His own words, “I am God; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Your Lord forgotten you! Ah! you know what you deserve, but He will not treat you as your sins demand. Shall Christ forget His people for whom He shed His blood? He has said, “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” How can He forget what is written there?

You have played the harlot, and gone away from your first husband, but He says, “Return, return, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you.” You may forget the nuptial tie which binds you to your Lord, but He neither forgets nor doubts it, but plainly affirms, “I have espoused you unto myself in faithfulness.” And He declares that He hateth putting away. Though we believe not, He abides faithful.

But you say, “*How shall I return to Him? I feel ashamed to come to Him yet again.*” And well you may. But the best color you can wear upon your face when you enter His presence will be that crimson of holy shame. Remember that bad as you are, you are not now worse than when you first came to Him. You were then without a spark of grace, or love, or holiness. You were once an enemy, dead in trespasses and sins, but His great love loved you even then.

You may well be ashamed, I say, and yet I entreat you let not this shame keep you from coming just as you are to Him. Ho, you negligent believers, you lax professors, you lukewarm ones, Christ has not cast you away, for this is His message to you—let me give it to you—it was first delivered to the church at Laodicea when it had declined into the same state as your own, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”

He is not gone. He waits at your door still, and knocks at it, longing to enter. “If any man open to me, I will enter in and sup with him, and he with me.” This is the cure for your lukewarmness, and this cure awaits you now, for Jesus Christ in this very house of prayer is knocking at the gate of your heart. O let Him enter, and in a moment all that you have bewailed of coldness and of lethargy will disappear at His return.

“Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?” I hope the answer to that question is not that *you have forgotten Him*. Forgotten the man of Gethsemane, crimsoned with His own blood for you? Forgotten Him whose hands were pierced for you, who bore the crown of thorns, and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost for you? Forgotten that faithful lover who ever since He ascended above the stars has never ceased to intercede for you, and such as you? Oh, shame, indeed!

But you have not quite forgotten Him, I know you have not. Perhaps, however, you have grown so dead in spirit that you hardly care about His company. What shall I say to you? Shall I remind you of—

*“Those peaceful hours you once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still?”*

I bear my testimony tonight that there is no joy to be found in all this world like that of sweet communion with Christ. I would barter all else there is of heaven for that. Indeed, that is heaven. As for the harps of gold, and the streets like unto clear glass, and the songs of seraphs, and the shouts of the redeemed, one could very well give all these up, counting them as a drop in a bucket, if we might forever live in fellowship and communion with Jesus.

When it is our great privilege to press close to our Lord, and to feel that He loves us, and that we love Him, and to lean our head upon His bosom, then it is glory this side of Jordan! Do you not long for it? Have you forgotten the garden of nuts, and the beds of spices? O willful, wayward heart, have you forgotten the banqueting house, and the day when you came up from the wilderness leaning on your Beloved? You said then, “I will never forget Thee.” Then your heart warbled to itself in words like these—

*“O thou, my soul, forget no more
The Friend who all thy misery bore;
Let every idol be forgot,
But O my soul, forget Him not.”*

And now what are you at to be so negligent of your Beloved? O fickle heart, are you not ashamed at your inconstancy? Content without your Lord! A spouse content without her husband! A child happy away from its father's face and under its father's frown? Chide your hearts, my brethren and my sisters, if you know any joy apart from Jesus.

I would fain provoke you to a sacred jealousy. I would fill you with an insatiable hungering and thirsting for your Beloved. I would not merely exhort you to speak a word to bring Him back, but I would fain persuade you to send up an incessant cry.

*“When wilt Thou come unto me, Lord?
O come, my Lord, most dear!
Come near, come nearer, nearer still,
I'm blest when Thou art near.”*

Remember, the heavenly Lover will come. He forgives the past, He is ready to come to you now. Come to Him, dear brother, just as you did at first, fall flat on your face before His dear cross, and then look up to His streaming wounds and say, “Jesus, I rest in Thee.” Give yourselves up to Him afresh.

It is a good thing to renew your youth by renewing your fellowship. See at this season how the year has put on its new mantle of green. Mark how all animal and vegetable nature has been refreshed! Will you not renew your youth like the eagle? Will you not begin again? I trust you will, and if so, the true way to revive is to speak a word concerning bringing the King back.

II. Secondly and briefly. MANY PROFESSORS DO VERY LITTLE TO BRING CHRIST BACK TO HIS KINGDOM IN THE WORLD—and to these we have a message.

I do not think that on the whole, anybody could fairly describe us as being a lazy church, but there never was a hive of bees without there being at times a few drones to be turned out, and if when I am speaking tonight to the drones, any of you should feel that my rebuke comes rather sharply home, I am sure I shall be delighted, for it is my sincere desire to be personal.

There are a number of Christians whose whole Christianity seems to lie in attending two services on a Sunday, and doing nothing for Jesus. Some of them think one attendance at worship quite enough for the Sabbath. They are such very easily satisfied people, that one meal in a week satisfies their spiritual appetite. It is an improvement certainly when we see others regular in coming twice, and some who drop in on weeknights to the lecture, but there are numbers who never attend the prayer meeting, and so deny the Lord Jesus even the cheap love-token of their prayers.

Well, perhaps He is no great loser, for those who do not come to the prayer meeting are not the best of church members, but a great deal the worst, as a rule. I speak not of those who are debarred lawfully—servants, or even masters whose business detains them—but there are persons who might come if they would, but forsake the assembling of themselves together. These miss the blessing, and deserve to do so, seeing that they deny the Lord even the poor aid of their prayers.

How many there are who do nothing for our King! They are not Sunday school teachers, they are not street preachers, they do not take a tract district, they are not subscribers, at least to any great extent, to anything. They have no object that is dear to them in connection with the church. They are very glad to see all the work go on well, like a man on the top of the coach, they enjoy the riding, but they have no care to draw an ounce, no inclination to assist in any respect.

Now, to such I say, if you be indeed Christians, “Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?” Have you no desire whatever that Jesus Christ should reign among the sons of men? If you, as a Christian man, have a right to be idle, every man has a right to be the same, and then where would be the exertions of the Christian church, and humanly speaking, where would be anything like the extension of Messiah's kingdom?

God works by instruments, and those instruments are men and women who are themselves saved, and who, being saved, are set to fulfill the loving duty of telling out the plan of salvation to others. And

so you have tied up your tongue, and given up all idea of being of any service to the church of God! My dear brother, were you never then redeemed by blood? “Yes,” say you, “I hope so.” Why, then, you are not your own. On your own showing you are bought with a price, and how can you then live as though you were your own?

My dear Sister, do you owe Christ nothing? “Oh!” you tell me, “I owe him everything.” Then, I beseech you, do not live as one who is devoid of gratitude. Selfishness in religion is detestable—that selfishness which makes us think—“Well, if we get to heaven, that is all we need, we shall not worry ourselves about the concerns of the church, nor take upon ourselves any labor in connection with the Master’s vineyard.”

Ah, but if your Master had said so! Ah, but if your precious Redeemer had said, “Heaven is glorious, and I cannot have more honor than I possess already! I will not go to earth to toil and suffer to redeem the sons of men!” then might you have had an excuse and an example in your selfishness and sloth. But since He loved not Himself, but gave Himself to suffer, bleed, and die, my brethren and sisters, I do entreat you be instant in season and out of season for your Master, that He may be glorified in you.

“Oh! I could not do much,” says one. Then do what you can. No one flower makes a garden, but altogether the fair blossoms of spring create a paradise of beauty. Let all the Lord’s flowers contribute in their proportion to the beauty of the garden of the Lord.

“But I am so unused to it.” Then, my brother, that is a very powerful reason why you should do twice as much, so as to make up for your past idleness. “Oh! but I am afraid nothing would come of it.” What has that to do with you? God has promised a blessing, and if the blessing should not come in your day, yet if you have done what the Master bade you, you will not be blamed for lack of success.

“Sir,” asks another, “will you give me some work to do?” No, I will not, for if you are good for anything you will find it for yourself. In such a place as London, for people to go to their minister to know what they are to do, seems to me to be the height of absurdity. What work can you do? Put your hand out and begin, for there is plenty within reach. Your own unconverted child, whose face you kiss tonight, is to be the first object of your labors. Begin to educate your family for Christ, and pray for the salvation of your own households.

What spheres you may find in the neighborhoods wherein you dwell! They swarm with immortal souls, and abound in sin. The fields are white unto the harvest. Some of you may not be able to work by using your tongue, then use your purses—use whatever gift God has given you—only *do*, I pray you, never let it be said that you do not “speak a word of bringing the King back.”

Oh! when the King comes to His own, how happy shall they be who fought His battles! I think I see Him riding through the streets of this glad world with great acclaim, the angels are in mighty squadrons, ten thousand times ten thousand, ranged on either side. And all men are bowing before Him, scattering His path with roses and crying, “Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD!” Oh, it will be such satisfaction then to feel, “I helped to bring that chariot forth! I helped to subdue the kingdom unto Him!”

But whither will you go, where will you hide your heads, you who have done nothing at all for Him, who cannot, who dare not, in your consciences share in the splendor of His triumph because you took no part in the rigor of His campaigns—who cannot participate in His crown because you did not share in His cross?

III. Thirdly, and lastly. There is a large class here, I fear, a sadly large class, WHO ARE REBELLIOUS SUBJECTS OF THIS KING.

Oh! how I wish they would say a word, if it were only such a word as the poor publican said, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” for such a word as that would bring the King into their hearts. O you who do not love Christ, listen to me a minute. You are God’s creatures. God has a right to your services. It is God’s power that keeps the breath in your nostrils—you are, therefore, obliged to God for your very existence.

You would not like it if your child never expressed its obligations to you, why do you not own your obligations to your Father? “The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master’s crib,” but you do not know, and you have lived all these years without considering. Is it not unjust? Does not conscience tell you that you do wrong to rebel against the God that made you?

Christ is your lawful King, and you are a rebel against Him tonight. He is so good a King. He is no tyrant. His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and yet you will not have Him. If He were a despot, and made you wretched, I could excuse your revolt, but Immanuel is all love, and they who serve Him are happy. O wherefore then do you revolt more and more, and go astray and break His blessed bands, and resist His sweet love?

Let me reason with you. You are God’s, and you confess it; He supplies you with life, and you own it. He is a good God, and you will not deny it. O wherefore then do you not seek to make Him your King? Why do you not yield yourselves up to Him? Why do you not give your hearts to His service, and be His forever?

Perhaps you have been like Shimei, who cursed King David, and you are afraid that Jesus will never forgive you. But David forgave Shimei, and Jesus is ready to forgive you. He delights in mercy. I do believe that the harps of heaven never give to Christ such happiness as He has when He forgives the ungodly and saith, “Thy sins are forgiven; go in peace.” Then it is that He performs the darling action of His life, that which is nearest and dearest to His soul.

Oh! it is you who are hard to confess, it is not Christ who is hard to forgive. It is your own heart that is hard towards Him, not His heart that is hard towards you. He is ready to receive you, young woman, *now*. He is ready to receive you, grey-headed offender, and to receive you *now*. “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Never has He cast out any, and never will He. Come and try Him. O that you would come and try Him now! Why speak you not a word of bringing Him back, when He is so willing to come back and to forget the past, and to abide with you forever?

Perhaps you say, “I would fain have Jesus Christ in my heart to save me. I would fain trust Him and be His, but how am I to get Him back?” There is nothing for you to do whatsoever—

*“All the doing was completed,
Long, long ago.”*

You have only to accept what Christ has finished. If you will but trust Christ, you are His. Now see, I cast myself with all my weight, and lean upon this rail not fearing that I shall fall. Do just so with Christ. Lean wholly on Him. If you do so, heaven and earth may pass away, but His promise to you shall never pass away or fail. Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back again?

Hasten to your chamber. Kneel by that bedside and confess your sin. Tell Him that you have lived all these years a stranger to Him, that you have often choked conscience and stifled the admonitions of His Spirit.

Ask Him to forgive you, for you bemoan your offenses, and then look to Him and see all the bitter griefs and horrid pangs which He endured upon the bloody tree and say, “I do believe that there is merit enough in what Jesus suffered to put away my sin. It needs not that I should die, for Jesus died in the sinner’s place as a full vindication of divine justice, and on His atonement I fix my trust.”

I trust that some of you may speak a word to bring the King back. Oh! I have watched some of you with a tender interest—now hoping and then fearing. O when shall the case be decided and the question settled forever? I sometimes think I know a great deal about you. As I stand in this watchtower and look down, there is a curious kind of telegraphing that goes on between me and some of you, for I have looked at you, and you have looked at me, and I have read the signals which your eyes have given me, and I know that you have been almost persuaded but you cannot decide for the Lord and His service.

With some of you it is fear that keeps you back. You still think it too good to be true that such great offenders as you are should be forgiven. Jesus is a great God, and a great Savior. O great sinner, He is just the Redeemer that can save you, come then, and rely upon Him.

Others of you are held back by temptations from evil friends. You get outside the Tabernacle, and somebody meets you who chats and laughs away all impressions. Others of you, in the week, go into bad society, and the devil ensnares you. O that the snare might be broken, and that you might escape. By the sweet persuasions of the Holy Spirit, I beseech you decide for Christ tonight!

May His eternal Spirit constrain you to open your heart's doors to Jesus, and your heart being once given to Him, your state is divinely secure.

*“I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power,
What I’ve committed to His hands
Till the decisive hour.*

*“Then will He own my worthless name
Before His Father’s face,
And in the New Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.”*

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 SAMUEL 19:9-30

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.