MOURNING FOR CHRIST

NO. 1362

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
the spirit of grace and of supplications;
and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,
and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son,
and shall be in bitterness for him,
as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."
Zechariah 12:10

SEE, beloved, whence every good thing flows, "I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace." The starting point is the Lord's sovereign act in giving the Spirit. Every work of grace begins with God. No gracious thought or act ever originates in the free will of unregenerate man. The Lord is first in all things which are acceptable in His sight. It is God that "worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure." "Thou hast wrought all our works in us."

Then notice how exceedingly effectual the work of the Lord is. Men may persuade, and even inspired prophets may warn, without effect, but when the Lord puts His hand to the work, He never fails. As soon as ever He says, "I will pour," the next sentence is, "and they *shall* look." When He works, who shall hinder?

His people shall be willing in the day of His power. "They *shall* look upon me whom they have pierced, and they *shall* mourn." This is effectual calling indeed. In such results we see what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

Observe, thirdly, the dignity and the prominent position which is occupied by faith. "I will pour upon them the spirit of supplication, and they shall look." Faith is evidently intended here, for faith is ever that glance of the eye which brings to us the blessing which Christ has to bestow. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish."

A look at the brazen serpent healed Israel, and according to the figure, believing in Jesus Christ is a saving look. Now, this faith-look is mentioned as the first fruit of the Spirit—before they mourn, they look. When the Spirit of grace and supplication is given, its principal result is looking unto Jesus.

But now see what a choice fruit follows upon faith—a soft, sweet, mellow fruit of the Spirit, "They shall mourn *for him* as one that mourneth for his only son." This sorrow is a sweet bitter, a delicious grief, full of all manner of rare excellencies. It is a peculiar order of mourning, and differs greatly from the sorrow of the world, which works death.

Those who mourn in this fashion are made sorry after a godly manner, for godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of. Mark, it is *godly* sorrow or repentance *towards God*. Its specialty is that it looks Godward, and weeps because of grieving *Him*.

The lamentation described in the text is a mourning *for Christ*. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn *for him* as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness *for him*, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

This is a very remarkable peculiarity of true Spirit-wrought repentance. It fixes its eye mainly upon the wrong done to the Lord by its sin. No other repentance but that which is evangelical looks in that direction. The repentance of ungodly men is a horror at their punishment, an alarm at the dire result of their transgressions.

They repent like Esau, not of eating the pottage, but of losing the birthright. They see sin only in reference to themselves and their fellow men, but its higher bearings in reference to the Lord, they quite ignore.

The ungodly at times, and especially in the hour of death, feel remorse, but it has nothing to do with God, unless it be that they tremble at His justice, and fear the punishment which He executes. It is, after all, pure selfishness. They are sorry because they are about to suffer the consequences of their rebellion.

Evangelical repentance sympathizes with the Great Father, and grieves that He should have been so sadly provoked. See it in David, "Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." See it in the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before *thee*, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

See how it was wrought in Saul of Tarsus, for the voice from heaven said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" It was sin as against the exalted Savior which struck home to Paul's heart, and laid him low at the feet of his Lord.

All true repentance has this for its special mark, that it is attended with evident reconciliation to God, since it now regrets the wrongs done to Him. One sure seal of its genuine spirituality is that it is a lamentation on account of the dishonor which sin has done to God and to His Christ. We are going to view the special case before us from that point of view, and work it out in three or four ways.

I. First, according to our text, when the spirit of grace is given, THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL MOURNING FOR CHRIST ON THE PART OF ISRAEL.

You must take the text in its primary significance, for we must treat the Word of God fairly. There will come a day when the ancient people of God, who have so long rejected Jesus of Nazareth, will discover Him to be the Messiah, and then one of their first feelings will be that of deep humiliation, and bitter regret before God.

They will mourn as at the mourning of Hadadrimmon, when the beloved Josiah fell in battle, and all good men knew that the light of the nation was quenched. "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen." They justly mourned for pious Josiah, for he was the last of their godly kings, and the full shower of wrath began to fall upon Judah when he was taken from the evil to come.

Right well also will it be for them to mourn bitterly as a nation, when they discern the Lord whom they have pierced, for is there not a cause? *They had a peculiar interest in the Messiah*, for it was to them, and almost to them only, that His coming was clearly revealed.

God spoke of Him to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the fathers. It was from their race that the Messiah was to come. It is no small honor to Abraham's seed that the man Christ Jesus is one of them. It was a Judean virgin of whom He was born, and to Israel He is indeed bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.

When He came on earth, He confined His ministry to them. Of them He said, "I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He healed their sick. He opened the eyes of their blind ones, and raised their dead. It was in their streets that He delivered His gracious messages of love. And when He was gone, it was in their chief city that the preaching of the Gospel began, and the Holy Spirit was poured out. "Go ye and teach all nations," He said, "beginning at Jerusalem."

It was from among the Jews that the first vanguard of the church's host was chosen. The first to preach the Gospel were of the house of Israel, and they might have been to this day in the very front of the army, peculiarly adapted as they are in many respects to lead the way in the teaching of a pure faith. But they judged themselves unworthy, and therefore the ministers of Christ, though chosen from themselves, were obliged to say, "We turn unto the Gentiles."

Then came their casting away for a time, during which season their own Messiah was despised, and blasphemed by the nation which ought to have received Him with exultation. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Their rejection of the Lord Jesus was most determined, and carried to the utmost length. It was not sufficient for that generation in which Jesus lived to turn a deaf ear to His admonitions, they must needs seek His life. Once they would have cast Him headlong from the brow of a hill. At another time, they took up stones to stone Him, and at last they did take Him and bear false witness against Him, fiercely seeking His blood.

By their malice, He was given over to the Romans and put to death, not because the Romans desired to slay Him, but because the clamor of the multitude was, "Crucify him, crucify him." And their voices prevailed with Pilate.

They imprecated on their heads His blood, saying, "His blood be on us and on our children." They pushed the rejection of the King of the Jews to the utmost possible extreme, for they rested not till He hung upon the shameful tree, and life remained no more in Him.

Peter said, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." How bitterly then will they lament when that ignorance is removed! They will mourn as one who has lost his firstborn and only child, as for a loss never to be repaired.

Worse still was this, that their ignorance was, to a large extent willful, for *Jesus was rejected by them against the clearest possible light.* John came as a voice crying in the wilderness, and all men knew that John was a prophet. Those who most hated Jesus of Nazareth were yet afraid to say that John was not sent of God. Yet he bore witness of Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Moreover, Jesus Himself spake as never any man spake—His teachings carried their own evidence within themselves, so that He justly said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."

His words were accompanied, also, with signs and wonders, by which He proved His deity and His Father's pleasure in Him, so that He said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

In memory of this He stood and wept over Jerusalem, saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." What agony will rend their hearts when they perceive how blinded they were, and how they despised their own mercies.

One great reason for the bitter mourning of restored and believing Israel will be *the long ratification of this rejection of Christ by generation after generation.* For nearly nineteen hundred years have passed since Calvary's cross was erected, but they reject the Nazarene still. Alas, poor Israelites! The veil is still upon their faces, though Moses be read in their synagogues every Sabbath day.

Alas! for the sorrowing seed of Jacob, waiting still, with their wailing hymns, for the coming of the Messiah, who has come already, but who was "despised and rejected" of His own people, and made by them "a nan of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

They will mourn as over the grave of an only child when they come to know that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the virgin-born Emmanuel, God with us. They will wring their hands and seek to blot out the pages of their history with tears, because they did so despitefully maltreat, and so obstinately reject their Lord, the Prince of the house of David.

If another Jeremiah shall be found to lead the singing men and singing women in their lamentations, he will have no need to look long for subjects for his laments. Looking to Him whom they pierced, the whole house of Israel will weep bitterly.

And now, dear brethren, it will tend to increase the blessed sorrows which will then sweep over Israel *to think how the Lord has had patience* with them, and still has never cast them away. To this day they are as distinct a people as ever they were. They dwell alone—they are not numbered among the people.

Persecuted almost beyond conception, poor Israel, for many a century, has been the butt and jest of those—I am ashamed to say it—who called themselves Christians, and yet despised the chosen people of the Lord. Alas! the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, have been esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!

"How hath the LORD covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel!" They have for centuries endured a terrible chastening. They have been turned upside down, and wiped as when a man wipes a dish, but still they stand waiting for a vainly expected King.

They would not have their true King, Jesus the Son of David, and they have no other—where is there any king of the Jews? The sceptre has departed from Jacob, and the lawgiver from between his feet, for Shiloh has come, even He who, as He did hang upon the cross, was thrice named, "King of the Jews."

Jesus is the sole and only King of the Jews, and they are preserved and kept alive notwithstanding a thousand influences which threatened to make them lose their nationality. They shall yet be gathered again, and their restoration shall be the fullness of the Gentiles, and we and they shall rejoice together in Him who has made both one, and broken down the middle wall or partition, so that there is now neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarous Scythian, bond nor free, but we are all one in Christ Jesus.

II. I now come to more personal matters. In the second place, THERE IS A GENERAL MOURNING WHICH GOD GIVES TO HIS CHURCH ON BEHALF OF CHRIST—a mourning which is only known and manifested when the Spirit of grace and supplication is fully poured out.

I would we might have a large measure of that mourning at this present hour. Let us deplore at this time, beloved brethren and sisters, that *Jesus Christ, by the great mass of men, is treated with utter indifference, if not with contempt.* Where are the multitudes even of our own city at this present moment?

There are many gathered in places of worship to sing hymns in the Redeemer's praise, but there are many, many thousands in this city—I have even heard it said that there are millions of people—who seldom, if ever, enter within the walls of the house of God. Jesus has suffered and bled to death for men, who, when they hear of it, treat His loving sacrifice as an idle tale.

He is not quite unknown, I hope, to any of our city—some tidings of Him must have reached their ears, but they scarce have enough curiosity to inquire more about it. Their little children go home from school, and sing to them on the Sabbath day, and so they have sweetly sounded in their ears the "old, old story" of redeeming love.

But ah, they break the Sabbath—they make it a day of amusement and pleasure, or they spend it in sloth. The Bible is left unread, or read without interest in its divine message. They have no care for the bleeding Lamb, no regard for their best friend. If they do not sorrow about this, we ought to sorrow for them, for they are men and women like ourselves, and they are living in contempt of our Lord Jesus.

Some of them have many amiabilities—there is so much indeed of human excellence about them that we have deplored that the "one thing" which they lacked was not sought after by them. Yet they continue as they are, and it is to be feared many of them will continue so till they perish.

Weep not so much because Jesus suffered on the cross, as because He is practically crucified every day by this carelessness and contempt. The crucifixion at Calvary is over now, and it is but the visible token of a crucifixion to which careless men and women are putting the Redeemer every day. They care nothing about Him—dead or alive He is nothing to them. At the thought of such unkindness will you not cry, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water."

Reflect sorrowfully, too, how the Lord Jesus has been ill-treated, and pierced, and wounded *by His opponents*—and I mention here as among the chief of them those who deny His deity. At this moment there are men of great attainments and abilities who will extol our Lord's manhood, and even profess to be in love with His character, but they will not yield Him divine honors.

Oh, Thou Son of God, to whom the Father bare witness by an audible voice out of heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him"—they reject the witness of God and so dishonor You. You did

not count it robbery to be equal with God, but they fain would pierce You in Your divinity, and make You nothing but a man.

Men also reject our Lord's atonement. By many that truth is obscured or utterly denied! I hear still the cry in many quarters, "Let him come down from the cross and we will believe on him." Modern philosophers will accept anything except the bleeding Substitute for guilty man.

When I think of the false doctrine which is preached about the Lord Jesus, and how His glory is tarnished by the lips of His professed ministers, who think His Gospel a worn-out tale, I see that there is, indeed, occasion for us to get to our chambers, and there pour out our hearts in lamentation. Alas, my Lord, why are You thus blasphemed by the worldly wise? Why is Your truth despised among the learned and ridiculed by the scribes?

I do not know when my grief has been more stirred for my Lord and Master than when brought actually to see *the superstition* by which our holy faith is travestied, and His blessed name blasphemed. Turning from skepticism, where He is wounded in the house of His enemies, you come to superstition, where He is wounded in the house of His professed friends, and what wounds they are!

I have felt sometimes as if I could tear down the baby image held in the Virgin's hands, when I have seen men and women prostrate before it. What, O you sons of Antichrist, could you not make an idol, like the Egyptians, out of your cats and dogs, or find your gods in your gardens? Could you not make a golden calf, as Israel did in the wilderness, or borrow the fantastic shapes of India's deities?

Could nothing content you till the image of the holy child Jesus should be made into an idol, and Christ upon the cross uplifted should be set up as an image for men to bow before it? The idolatry which worships the image of the devil is less blasphemous than that which worships the image of Christ. It is an awful sacrilege to make the holy Jesus appear to be an accomplice in the violation of the divine command.

Yea, and to turn that blessed memorial of death into an idolatrous rite in which divine honors are given to a piece of bread. Was there ever sin like unto this sin? Thou, innocent Savior, it is grief indeed to think that You should be set up in the idol temple, among saints and saintesses, and that men should think that they are honoring God by breaking His first and second commands.

This must be to our Lord the most loathsome of all things under heaven. How does He in patience bear it? Let not His people behold it without a mourning like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, because our blessed Christ is so blasphemed by Antichrist that the image of the incarnate Son of God is set up as an object of idolatrous worship.

There should be great sorrow and mourning when we read the history of the past, and look even at the present, at *the fearful wrongs which have been done in the name of Jesus*. Jesus is all love and tenderness, and yet they place His cross upon the blood-stained banners of accursed war. Jesus, who said, "Put up thy sword into its sheath, for they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," is, nevertheless, adjured to go forth with armed hosts to blow men to pieces with guns, or pierce them with bayonets.

When the Spanish nation captured Peru and Mexico, it makes one's blood boil to read that, while they murdered the defenseless people for their gold, they set up in every town the holy cross. What had the cross to do with their murders and robberies! They tortured their victims in the name of Jesus, and when they put them to death, they held up before them the image of the crucified Jesus.

What horrors have been wrought in Your name, O Christ of God! Men have, indeed, pierced You, and they who take Your name and call themselves of "the Society of Jesus" have been chief enactors of these abominations. Your crucifixion at Calvary is a small part of the matter, for the sons of men have gone on piercing You by maligning You thus infamously, You, Lord of boundless love.

And now today, what is done in our land? I can scarcely stay to enlarge, but there are multitudes of things done in the name of the religion of Christ which are a dishonor to it. Under the pretense of guarding the interests of His church, a certain community of professing Christians beg that their fellow

Christians may not be buried within the same enclosure as themselves—indeed, Christ's name must sanction such un-Christly bigotry!

One section of the church must also be patronized, and made dominant in the land—and this wrong is done in the name of Jesus. It is to honor Him that this crying injustice is perpetrated! Hear it, you heavens! There are multitudes of things besides, which I shall not mention for which the Christian church ought perpetually to sorrow. That she does wrong is enough to make her humble, but that she has dared often to do wrong, even in the very name of Jesus, is worst of all.

Still, brethren, the worst sorrow probably for us all is that there should be *so many professing Christians who act in a manner the very opposite to what Christ would have them do*. The heathen everywhere point to our countrymen, who are supposed to be Christians, and they say of us that we are the most drunken race of men upon the face of the earth—and I suppose we are.

Charges are brought against us which are supported by the conduct of our sailors and soldiers, and others who go abroad, which make the followers of Mohammed, and the disciples of Brahmanism to think their religion superior to our own. These Englishmen are supposed to be Christians, though they are not. This is a great scandal, and a grievous sorrow under the sun.

And then in the very heart of it all lies this, that *true Christians*, those who are truly Christ's blood-bought, regenerated people, nevertheless, *do not sufficiently bring glory to His name*. Where is the zeal of the church—the all-consuming zeal of other days? Where is the consecration which ought to rest upon all members of Christ's blood-bought body?

Where, I say, is that mightiness in prayer and supplication which at the first so gloriously prevailed? Where is that spirit of hearty love and unity, of brotherly kindness and compassion, which ought to be seen in all Christians? The first church brought great honor to the name of Christ—does the church of today do the like?

Do even the most spiritual portions of the church bring to the Lord Jesus such honor and glory as He ought to have? You judge what I say. Are we not all unprofitable servants? Is there not cause for mourning, and for great mourning too, to think that Jesus should thus have been ill-treated by friends and foes? For Him, our best Beloved, perpetually pierced, the church may well proclaim a fast and mourn before the Lord, as in the day of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

III. Suffer, now, a word or two upon the third point, for THE TEXT SPEAKS OF A FAMILY MOURNING.

It will be a very blessed day indeed when we see this—when the Spirit of grace and supplication shall be largely poured out, and the land shall mourn, every family apart. Have you ever seen this in your households? Where the Spirit of God really rests upon a family, there will be much of it, and surely there is cause enough for it in some families where there is none at all.

We ought to grieve to think that there has been such formality and coldness in family devotion, so little love to Jesus manifested in the morning and evening worship. I fear that there are professing families where daily prayer is altogether neglected. The individuals, I trust, pray in their chambers, but they have given up the assembling of themselves as families to worship in the name of Jesus. As families, they are prayerless and dishonor the Lord. Herein is serious cause for sorrow, because our Lord loses by this neglect that which He delights in, namely, family praises.

Families should also mourn because the Lord is not so regarded as He should be in family management. Christ is not made first and chief in family matters. Fathers look to the worldly prosperity of their boys in placing them out, rather than to their moral and spiritual advantage. Many a time, marriages for the daughters are sought, not in the Lord, but solely in reference to pecuniary considerations.

How much of the arrangement of the household ignores the existence of the Savior? As, for instance, much work done on the Sabbath which might be spared by a little care and thought, and consequent inability to go out to worship the Savior with the rest of God's people. There is a way of setting the Lord

always before us in the management of household matters, and on the other hand, there is a way of so acting as to prove that God is not in the least considered.

For family quarrels, family pride, family covetousness, and family sins of all kinds, which bring shame upon our profession, and dishonor upon the name with which we are named, there ought to be great sorrow.

If there be any members of a family unconverted, this should cause to the whole household deep regret. If there be but one child unsaved, the whole should plead for him with tears. Happy are you who have all your household walking in the faith, but if there be one left out, weep not for the dead, neither bewail him, but weep for the living who is dead unto his Lord.

Wife, be grieved in your heart if you have a worldly husband. O husband, mourn for your unconverted wife! If you have brothers or sisters not yet brought to Jesus, fail not to lament concerning them. I would to God that families did sometimes come together to pay their vows with special care, and that the father would confess family faults and family sins in the name of them all, and so acknowledge each wound given to the Lord in that house.

I am not alluding to those private rebukes which every wise parent must give, but I would have a common confession from all, uttered by the voice of the head of the household. Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, how blessed it is to think that You are the God of all the families of Israel, and that You love the tents of Jacob well. Grant that our households, as households, inasmuch as they sin and transgress, may also walk before You in all humbleness.

Let all families mourn. Let the house of David mourn, for there is sin in royal and noble families. Let the house of Levi repent, for, alas, there are sins in ministers' families which greatly provoke the Lord our God. The house of Shimei, of whom we know nothing, may represent the private families which are unknown, and of the humbler order. Let these also draw near to God in penitential grief.

The house of Nathan may be regarded as the prophetic, or perhaps as the princely house. But be they what they may, let them all come before the Most High, each with the language of confession. It will be a grand thing for England when we shall see more family piety and family mourning for sin.

They tell us that in Cromwell's day if you went down Cheapside at a certain hour in the morning, every blind of every house was down, because the inmates were at family prayer. It was then a standing ordinance of all professors of religion, and it was the great buttress against Popery.

Modern Ritualists want us to go to church every morning and night to pray—the church is opened all day long, so I see by a notice on one of our churches, *for private prayer*. It strikes me as being rather a place for *public* prayer, and well-adapted for the *display* of devotion. The idea that prayer is more acceptable in the parish church than in your own houses is a superstition, and ought to be treated with no respect.

If we will pray in our families, and make every house into a church, and consecrate every room by private supplication, we shall not be fascinated by the foolish idea of the holiness of places or priests, and we shall so be guarded against the seductions of Popery. The Lord pour out the Spirit of grace upon all the families of His people!

IV. But now, lastly, and more personally. According to the text, when the Spirit of God is given, there will be PERSONAL, SEPARATE, AND SALUTARY MOURNING ON THE PART OF EACH ONE.

"Every family apart, and their wives apart," these words, often repeated, bring out vividly the individuality of this holy sorrow before the Lord. Let us now endeavor to enter into it.

First, dear brethren and sisters, let us mourn that our sins occasioned our Lord's death. And when we have done this, which would naturally be the first thought from the text, and therefore will naturally occur to you without my needing to urge it, let us go on to mourn our sins *before our regeneration*.

To me it will ever cause regret that I was unbelieving towards One who could not lie. Now, as I know my Lord, and have proved His faithfulness so well, it looks so strangely cruel that I should have doubted Him, that I should have thought He could not cleanse me, or that He would not receive me. He

is the tenderest of all hearts, the most loving of all beings, and yet there was a day when I thought Him a severe tyrant who expected a preparation of me which I could not produce in myself.

I did not know that He would take me just as I was and blot out my sin. I know it now, but I mourn that I so grievously belied Him. Ought we not to grieve over our long carelessness?

You used to hear the Gospel, dear friend, and you understood its plan and scope, but you did not wish to feel its power. The Son of God in pity came to die for you, and yet you thought it an everyday matter to be attended to at your convenience, and you went your way to mind earthly things.

O Lord, how could I shut the door of my heart against You so long, when Your head was wet with dew and Your locks with the drops of the night? You did gently knock, and knock again, my God, and yet I would not let You in for many a year! Sorrowfully do I repent for this.

Think then, dear friends, of the contempt which we cast upon Christ while we were living in that state of carelessness, for did we not as good as say in our heart, "Pleasure is to be found in the world and not in Christ. Rest is to be had in wealth, not in Jesus"? Did we not deliberately choose when were young to follow the devices of our own hearts instead of the will of Jesus?

Now that we know Him, we think ourselves fools that we should have seen any charms in the painted face of that Jezebel world, when Jesus stood by with all His matchless beauties. Forgive us, dear Redeemer, that we ever thought of these trifles, these transitory toys, these mockeries, and let You go though it were but for an hour. Alas, this base contempt of You was no error of an hour, but a crime which lasted many years. Pardon us, O Lord.

Let us reflect, again, with great regret upon the resistance which we offered to Christ. In some of us the Spirit strove mightily. I do confess that under sermons I was oftentimes brought to my knees and driven to my chamber with tears, but the next morning saw those tears evaporate, and I was as stubborn as before.

Did Jesus persuade us to come to His wedding feast? Did He put His arms about our neck and say, "Come and receive My love?" By His tenderness did He persuade us, and by His terrors did He threaten us, and yet did we resist Him? What a crime is this! Look at Him now! Oh, look at Him with His dear wounds, and His face marred more than any man!

Did we push *Him* aside? Did we contend with Him who only meant our good? Did we not by this conduct pierce our Lord? It was even so. Alas, for those dark days! Let the whole of our life before conversion be counted but as a breathing death. Write down its days as nights, and let the nights perish and be forgotten forever.

But we have more than this to reflect upon, namely, *our sins since conversion*. Do I address any this morning who have grievously backslidden since they professed faith in Christ? Have you committed great and open sins? Has it even been found necessary to remove you from the church of God as the leper is put out from the camp?

Then do not think of it without feeling your eyes swim in tears. What is justly bound by the church on earth is bound in heaven, and therefore do not despise the censure of the church of God.

And if others of us have been kept—as I trust we have—from the great transgression, yet, beloved, what shall we say? Are there not with us, even with us, many sins against the Lord? We too have often been guilty of mistrust. We have doubted the Lord, who is truth itself. What a stab at His heart is this! What a reopening of His veins!

We have been gloomy sometimes, and full of murmuring, until men have said that Christians are miserable, and they have taken up a proverb against our holy faith because we have been despondent, and have not felt the joy of the Lord. This is wounding Him in the house of His friends, and for this evil let us mourn.

Might not our Beloved charge lukewarmness upon very many who would be unable to deny the accusation? Lukewarm towards the bleeding Lamb—towards the dear lover of our souls! Have we not been disobedient too, leaving undone certain duties because they were unpleasant to the flesh, and doing

other things which we know we ought not to have done, because we chose to please ourselves? This is a sad state of things to exist between our hearts and our best Beloved.

Has there not been in us a very great want of self-denial? What little we have given to Him! Did we ever pinch ourselves for Him? Might He not say to us, "Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices, but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities."

And how little zeal we have shown for Him. Zeal has just lingered on, like a spark in the flax unquenched, but how little flame has there been, how little love for God, how little love for perishing sinners, how little love even for Christ's own people. How scant has been our fellowship with Jesus.

I know some who, I hope, love Him, who go from day to day without hearing His voice, and some will even live a week in that condition. Shame! Shame! To live a month in the same house with our heart's husband, and not to have a word with Him! It is sad indeed, that He, who should be all in all to us, should often be treated as if He were second best, or nowhere in the race.

Alas, alas, Christ is all excellence, and we are all deficiency. In Him we may rejoice, but as to ourselves, we ought to mourn like doves because of the griefs we must have caused to His Holy Spirit through the ill estate of our souls.

We have asked you, and I pray the Spirit of God to enable you, to mourn over the past, but what shall we say as to *the present*? Take stock now of last week. I invite myself and you, for we are one in Christ if we are believers, to look through last week. Did you make any survey of the days as they passed? If so, I think you might have said with Dr. Watts—

"What have I done for Him that died
To save my guilty soul?
How are my follies multiplied,
Fast as my minutes roll."

Has it been a week of real service for Christ? You have done something, did you do your best? Did you throw your heart into it? Did you feel that tenderness, when you were trying to bring others to Christ, which a Christian ought to feel? You had some little contention with another, did you act in a Christian spirit? Did you show the mildness and gentleness of Jesus?

You were offended, did you forgive freely? For His dear sake did you cast it all behind your back? You have been somewhat in trouble, did you take your burden to Him as naturally as a little child runs to its mother with a cut finger? Did you tell Him all, and leave it all to Him? You had a loss, did you voluntarily resign all to His will? Has there been no pride this week? Pride grieves Him very much, for He is not a proud Master, and is not pleased with a proud disciple. Has there not been much to mourn over?

And now, *at this very moment*, what is the state of our feeling toward Him? Must we not confess that though there is a work of grace in our souls, yet there is much about us at this moment which should make us bow down in grief before the Lord?

Dear Savior, You know there is not one in this house who has more cause to mourn for You than he does who speaks for You now, for he feels that these poor lips are not able to tell what his heart feels, and his heart does not feel what it ought. A preacher should be like a seraph. One who speaks for Christ, and tries to praise Him, should be a very Niobe when he sees the sins of men and his own.

Where are my tears? The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak. Methinks what I have now said of myself will suit most of you who are engaged in my Master's service. Do you not feel that you blunder at it, that when you would paint Him, you make a daub of His likeness? When you would set Him forth visibly crucified among the people, do you not obscure Him with the very words with which you wish to reveal Him?

You must have such feelings, and if you have them, let me close by reading these words to you. They are assuredly true when there is a time of hearty, sincere mourning for Jesus, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

So let us plunge into the sacred bath. Believing in the precious blood, let us wash and be clean. Glory be to His name, those whom He has washed are clean every whit. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ZECHARIAH 12

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—429, 278, 287

ERROR—To our intense regret we perceive that in the last sermon, the Printer has inserted a verse from the First Epistle to the Corinthians instead of from the Second. This entirely spoils our argument. Will the reader kindly correct his copy? Put 2 Corinthians for 1 Corinthians, and mark out the misquoted words. The error was occasioned by a slip of our pen. [*Error now corrected in previous sermon*.]

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.