SOUL SAVING OUR ONE BUSINESS

NO. 1507

A SERMON
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"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."
1 Corinthians 9:22

IT is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master passion. Such a man is sure to be strong, and if the master principle is excellent, he is sure to be excellent too. The man of one object is a man indeed. Lives with many aims are like water trickling through innumerable streams, none of which is wide enough or deep enough to float the merest cockleshell of a boat.

But a life with one object is like a mighty river flowing between its banks, bearing to the ocean a multitude of ships, and spreading fertility on either side. Give me a man not only with a great object in his soul, but thoroughly possessed by it, his powers all concentrated, and he on fire with vehement zeal for his supreme object, and you have put before me one of the greatest sources of power which the world can produce.

Give me a man engrossed with holy love as to his heart, and filled with some masterly celestial thought as to his brain, and such a man will be known wherever his lot may be cast, and I will venture to prophesy that his name will be remembered long after the place of his sepulchre shall be forgotten.

Such a man was Paul. I am not about to set him upon a pedestal, that you may look at him and wonder, much less that you may kneel down and worship him as a saint. I mention Paul because what he was we ought every one of us to be. And though we cannot share in his office, not being apostles, though we cannot share in his talents or in his inspiration, yet we ought to be possessed by the same spirit which actuated him, and let me also add, we ought to be possessed by it in the same degree.

Do you demur to that? I ask you what was there in Paul, by the grace of God, which may not be in you, and what had Jesus done for Paul more than for you? He was divinely changed, and so have you been if you have passed from darkness into marvelous light. He had much forgiven, and so have you also been freely pardoned.

He was redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, and so have you been—at least you profess to have been. He was filled with the Spirit of God, and so are you, if you are truly such as your Christian profession makes you out to be. Owing, then, your salvation to Christ, being debtors to the precious blood of Jesus, and being quickened by the Holy Spirit, I ask you why there should not be the same fruit from the same sowing? Why not the same effect from the same cause?

Do not tell me that the apostle was an exception, and cannot be set up as a rule or model for commoner folk, for I shall have to tell you that we must be such as Paul was if we hope to be where Paul is. Paul did not think that he had attained, neither was already perfect. Shall we think him to be so—so think him to be so as to regard him to be inimitable, and so be content to fall short of what he was?

Nay, verily, but let it be our incessant prayer as believers in Christ that we may be followers of him so far as he followed Christ, and wherein he failed to set his feet in his Lord's footprints, may we even outstrip him, and be more zealous, more devoted to Christ than even the apostle of the Gentiles. O that the Holy Spirit would bring us to be like our Lord Jesus Himself.

At this time, I shall have to speak to you upon *Paul's great object* in life. He tells us it was to "save some." We will then look into Paul's heart, and show you a few of *the great reasons which made him think it so important that at least some should be saved*. Then, thirdly, we will indicate *certain of the means which the apostle used to that end.* And all with this view, that you, my dear hearers, may seek to

"save some," that you may seek this because of potent reasons which you cannot withstand, and that you may seek it with wise methods such as shall in the end succeed.

I. First, then, brethren, WHAT WAS PAUL'S GREAT OBJECT IN HIS DAILY LIFE AND MINISTRY? He says it was *to save some*.

There are ministers of Christ present at this hour, together with City Missionaries, Bible-women, Sunday school teachers, and other workers in my Master's vineyard, and I make bold to inquire of each one of them—is this your object in all your Christian service? Do you above all things aim at saving souls?

I am afraid that some have forgotten this grand object. But dear friends, anything short of this is unworthy to be the great end of a Christian's life. I fear there are some who preach with the view of *amusing* men, and as long as people can be gathered in crowds, and their ears can be tickled, and they can retire pleased with what they have heard, the orator is content, and folds his hands, and goes back self-satisfied.

But Paul did not lay himself out to please the public and collect the crowd. If he did not save them, he felt that it was of no avail to interest them. Unless the truth had pierced their hearts, affected their lives, and made new men of them, Paul would have gone home crying, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

It seems to be the opinion of a large party in the present day that the object of Christian effort should be to *educate* men. I grant you that education is in itself an exceedingly valuable thing, so valuable that I am sure the whole Christian church rejoices greatly that at last we have a national system of education. which only needs to be carefully carried out, and every child in this land will have the keys of knowledge in his hand.

Whatever price others may set upon ignorance, we are promoters of knowledge, and the more it can be spread, the better shall we be pleased. But if the church of God thinks that it is sent into the world merely to train the mental faculties, it has made a very serious mistake, for the object of Christianity is not to educate men for their secular callings, or even to train them in the politer arts, or the more elegant professions, or to enable them to enjoy the beauties of nature or the charms of poetry.

Jesus Christ came not into the world for any of these things, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and on the same errand has He sent His church, and she is a traitor to the Master who sent her if she is beguiled by the beauties of taste and art to forget that to preach Christ and Him crucified is the only object for which she exists among the sons of men.

The business of the church is salvation. The minister is to use all means to save some. He is no minister of Christ if this is not the one desire of his heart. Missionaries sink far below their level when they are content to civilize—their first object is to save.

The same is true of the Sunday school teacher, and of all other workers among children—if they have merely taught the child to read, to repeat hymns, and so forth, they have not yet touched their true vocation. We must have the children saved. At this nail we must drive, and the hammer must come down upon this head always—if by all means I may save some—for we have done nothing unless some are saved.

Paul does not even say that he tried to *moralize* men. The best promoter of morality is the Gospel. When a man is saved, he becomes moral—he becomes more, he becomes holy. But to aim first at morality is altogether to miss the mark, and if we did attain it—as we shall not—yet we should not have attained that for which we were sent into the world.

Dr. Chalmers' experience is a very valuable one to those who think that the Christian ministry ought to preach up mere morality, for he says that in his first parish he preached morality, and saw no good whatever arising out of his exhortations. But as soon as he began to preach Christ crucified, then there was a buzz and a stir, and much opposition—but grace prevailed.

He who wishes for perfumes must grow the flowers. He who desires to promote morality must have men saved. He who wants motion in a corpse should first seek life for it, and he who desires to see a rightly ordered life should first desire an inward renewal by the Holy Spirit.

We are not to be satisfied when we have taught men their duties towards their neighbors, or even their duties towards God—this would suffice for Moses, but not for Christ. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. We teach men what they ought to be, but we do far more—by the power of the Gospel applied by the Holy Ghost, we make them what they ought to be by the power of God's Spirit.

We put not before the blind the things that they ought to see, but we open their eyes in the name of Jesus. We tell not the captive how free he ought to be, but we open the door and take away his fetters. We are not content to tell men what they must be, but we show them how this character can be attained, and how Jesus Christ freely presents all that is essential to eternal life to all those who come and put their trust in Him.

Now observe, brethren, if I, or you, or any of us, or all of us, shall have spent our lives merely in amusing men, or educating men, or moralizing men, when we shall come to give an account at the last great day, we shall be in a very sorry condition, and we shall have but a very sorry record to render.

For of what use will it be to a man to be educated when he comes to be damned? Of what service will it be to him to have been amused when the trumpet sounds, and heaven and earth are shaking, and the pit opens wide her jaws of fire and swallows up the soul unsaved? Of what avail even to have moralized a man if he is still on the left hand of the Judge, and if still, "Depart, ye cursed," shall be his portion?

Blood red with the murder of men's souls will be the skirts of professing Christians, unless the drift, and end, and aim of all their work has been to "save some." Oh! I beseech you, especially you, dear friends, who are working in Sunday and Ragged Schools, and elsewhere, do not think that you have done anything unless the children's souls are saved.

Settle it that this is the top and bottom of the business, and throw your whole strength, in the name of Christ, and by the power of the Eternal Spirit, into this one object—if by any means you may save some, and bring some to Jesus that they may be delivered from the wrath to come.

What did Paul mean by saying that he desired to *save* some? What is it to be saved? Paul meant by that nothing less than *that some should be born again*, for no man is saved until he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. The old nature cannot be saved—it is dead and corrupt. The best thing that can be done with it is to let it be crucified, and buried in the sepulchre of Christ.

There must be a new nature implanted in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, or we cannot be saved. We must be as much new creations as if we had never been—we must come a second time as fresh from the hand of the Eternal God as if we had been today molded by divine wisdom as Adam was in Paradise.

The Great Teacher's words are, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell from whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." "Except a man be born again from above he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This, then, Paul meant, that men must be new creatures in Christ Jesus, and we must never rest till we see such a change wrought upon them. This must be the object of our teaching, and of our praying, indeed, the object of our lives, that "some" may be regenerated.

He meant, beside that, *that some might be cleansed from their past iniquity through the merit of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God*. No man can be saved from his sin except by the atonement. Under the Jewish law it was written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."

That curse has never been reversed, and the only way to escape from it is this—Jesus Christ was made a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Now, he who believes in Jesus, who puts his hand upon the head of Jesus of Nazareth, the scapegoat of His people, has lost his sins. His faith is sure evidence that his iniquities were of old laid upon the head of the great Substitute.

The Lord Jesus Christ was punished in our room, and we are no longer obnoxious to the wrath of God. Behold, the sin-atoning sacrifice is slain and offered on the altar, and the Lord has accepted it, and is so well-pleased that He has declared that whosoever believes in Jesus is fully and eternally forgiven.

Now, we long to see men thus forgiven. We pine to bring the prodigal's head into the Father's bosom, the wandering sheep to the Good Shepherd's shoulder, the lost piece of money into the owner's hands, and until this is done, nothing is done. I mean, brethren, nothing spiritually, nothing eternally, nothing that is worthy of the agony of a Christian's life, nothing that can be looked upon as deserving of an immortal spirit's spending all its fires upon it. O Lord, our soul yearns to see Jesus rewarded by the salvation of the blood-bought. Aid us to lead souls to Him.

Once more. When the apostle wished that he might save some he meant that, being regenerated and being pardoned, *they might also be purified and made holy.* For a man is not saved while he lives in sin. Let a man say what he will, he cannot be saved from sin while he is the slave of it. How is a drunkard saved from drunkenness whilst he still riots as before? How can you say that the swearer is saved from blasphemy while he is still profane? Words must be used in their true meaning.

Now, the great object of the Christian's work should be that some might be saved from their sins, purified, and made white, and made examples of integrity, chastity, honesty, and righteousness as the fruit of the Spirit of God, and where this is not the case, we have labored in vain and spent our strength for naught.

Now, I do protest before you all that I have in this house of prayer never sought anything but the conversion of souls, and I call heaven and earth to witness, and your consciences, too, that I have never labored for anything except the bringing of you to Christ, that I might present you at last unto God accepted in the Beloved. I have not sought to gratify depraved appetites either by novelty of doctrine or ceremonial, but I have kept to the simplicity of the Gospel.

I have kept back no part of the price of God's Word from you, but I have endeavored to give you the whole counsel of God. I have sought out no fineries of speech, but have spoken plainly, and right straight at your hearts and consciences, and if you are not saved, I mourn and lament before God that up to this day, though I have preached hundreds of times to you, yet I have preached in vain.

If you have not closed in with Christ, if you have not been washed in the fountain filled with blood, you are waste pieces of soil from which no harvest has yet come. You tell me, perhaps, that you have been kept from a great many sins, that you have learned a great many truths by coming here. So far so good.

But can I afford to live for this, merely to teach you certain truths or keep you back from open sins? How could this content me if I knew all the while that you were still unsaved, and must, therefore, after death, be cast into the flames of hell? Nay, beloved, before the Lord I count nothing to be worthy of your pastor's life, and soul, and energy but the winning of you to Christ. Nothing but your salvation can ever make me feel that my heart's desire is granted.

I ask every worker here to see to this, that he never turns aside from shooting at this target, and at the center of this target, too, namely, that he may win souls for Christ, and see them born to God, and washed in the fountain filled with blood. Let the workers' hearts ache, and yearn, and their voices cry till their throats are hoarse, but let them judge that they have accomplished nothing whatever until, at least, in some cases, men are really saved.

As the fisherman longs to take fish in his net, as the hunter pants to bear home his spoil, as the mother pines to clasp her lost child to her bosom, so do we faint for the salvation of souls, and we must have them, or we are ready to die. Save them, O Lord, save them for Christ's sake.

But now we must leave that point for another.

II. THE APOSTLE HAD GREAT REASONS FOR SELECTING SUCH AN OBJECT IN LIFE.

Were he here I think he would tell you that his reasons were something of this kind. To save souls! *If they are not saved, how God is dishonored*! Did you ever think over the amount of dishonor that is done to the Lord our God in London in any one hour of the day. Take, if you will, this prayer hour, when we

are gathered here ostensibly to pray. If the thoughts of this great assembly could all be read, how many of them would be dishonoring to the Most High!

But outside of every house of prayer, outside of every place of worship of every kind, think of the thousands and tens of thousands, the hundreds of thousands, who have all this day neglected the very semblance of the worship of the God who has made them, and who keeps them in being!

Think of how many times the door of the gin-palace has swung on its hinges during this holy hour. Think how many times God's name has been blasphemed at the drinking bar! There are worse things than these, if worse can be, but I shall not lift the veil.

Transfer your thoughts to an hour or so later, when the veil of darkness has descended. Shame will not permit us even to think of how God's name is dishonored in the persons of those whose first father was made after the image of God, but who pollute themselves to be the slaves of Satan and the prey of bestial lusts! Alas! Alas! for this city, it is full of abominations of which the apostle said, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which were done of them in secret."

Christian men and women, nothing can sweep away the social evil but the Gospel. Vices are like vipers, and only the voice of Jesus can drive them out of the land. The Gospel is the great besom with which to cleanse the filthiness of this city, and nothing else will avail.

Will you not, for God's sake, whose name is every day profaned, seek to save some? If you will enlarge your thoughts and take in all the great cities of the Continent—ay, further still—take all the idolaters of China and India, the worshippers of the false prophet and the antichrist, what a mass of provocation have we here!

What a smoke in JEHOVAH'S nose must this false worship be! How He must often put His hand to the hilt of His sword as though He would say, "Ah! I will ease Myself of My adversaries." But He bears it patiently. Let us not become indifferent to His long-suffering, but day and night let us cry unto Him, and daily let us labor for Him if by any means we may save some for His glory's sake.

Think, dear friends, also, of *the extreme misery of this our human race*. It would be a very dreadful thing tonight if you could get any idea of the aggregate of the misery of London at the present moment in the hospital and the workhouse.

Now, I would not say half a word against poverty—wherever it comes, it is a bitter ill, but you will mark as you notice carefully that, while a few are poor because of unavoidable circumstances, a very large mass of the poverty of London is the sheer and clear result of profuseness, lack of forethought, idleness, and worst of all, of drunkenness.

Ah, that drunkenness! That is the master evil. If drink could be got rid of, we might be sure of conquering the very devil himself. The drunkenness created by the infernal liquor dens which plague-spot the whole of this huge city is appalling. No, I did not speak in haste, or let slip a hasty word. Many of the drink-houses are nothing less than *infernal*—in some respects they are worse, for hell has its uses as the divine protest against sin, but as for the gin-palace there is nothing to be said in its favor.

The vices of the age cause three-fourths of all the poverty. If you could look at the homes tonight, the wretched homes where women will tremble at the sound of their husband's foot as he comes home, where little children will crouch down with fear upon their little heap of straw because the human brute, who calls himself "a man," will come reeling home from the place where he has been indulging his appetites—if you could look at such a sight, and remember that it will be seen ten thousand times over tonight, I think you would say, "God help us by all means, to save some."

Since the great axe to lay at the root of the deadly upas tree is the Gospel of Christ, may God help us to hold that axe there, and to work constantly with it till the huge trunk of the poison tree begins to rock to and fro, and we get it down, and London is saved, and the world is saved from the wretchedness and the misery which now drips from every bough.

Again, dear friends, the Christian has other reasons for seeking to save some, and chiefly because *of the terrible future of impenitent souls*. That veil which hangs before me is not penetrated by every glance, but he who has his eye touched with heavenly eye-salve sees through it, and what does he see?

Myriads upon myriads of spirits in dread procession passing from their bodies, and passing—*where?* Unsaved, unregenerate, unwashed in precious blood, we see them go up to the solemn bar whence in silence the sentence comes forth, and they are banished from the presence of God—banished to horrors which are not to be described nor even to be imagined.

This alone were enough to cause us distress day and night. This decision of destiny has about it a terrible solemnity. But the resurrection trumpet sounds. Those spirits come forth from their prison-house. I see them returning to earth, rising from the pit to the bodies in which they lived. And now I see them stand—multitudes, multitudes, multitudes. Multitudes—in the Valley of Decision.

And HE comes, with the crown upon His head and the books before Him, sitting on a great white throne. And there they stand as prisoners at the bar. My vision now perceives them—how they tremble! How they quiver like aspen leaves in the gale! Whither can they flee? Rocks cannot hide them! Mountains will not open their bowels to conceal them! What shall become of them?

The dread angel takes the sickle, reaps them as the reaper cuts up the tares for the oven, and as he gathers, he casts them down where despair shall be their everlasting torment! Woe is me, my heart sinks as I see their doom, and hear the terrible cries of their too-late awaking.

Save some, O Christians! By all means save some. By yonder flames, and outer darkness, and the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth, seek to save some. Let this, as in the case of the apostle, be your great, your ruling object in life, that by all means you may save some.

For, oh, if they are saved, *observe the contrast*. Their spirits mount to heaven, and after the resurrection their bodies ascend also, and there they praise redeeming love. No fingers more nimble on the harp strings than theirs! No notes more sweet than theirs, as they sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, be glory for ever and ever."

What bliss to see the once rebellious brought home to God, and heirs of wrath made possessors of heaven. All this is involved in salvation. O that myriads may come to this blessed state. "Save some"—oh! some at least. Seek that *some* may be there in glory.

Behold your Master. He is your pattern. He left heaven to save some. He went to the cross, to the grave, to "save some." This was the great object of His life, to lay down His life for His sheep. He loved His church and gave Himself for it, that He might redeem her unto Himself. Imitate your Master. Learn His self-denial and His blessed consecration, if by any means you may save some.

My soul yearns that I personally may "save some," but broader is my desire than that. I would have *every one of you*, my beloved friends, associated here in church fellowship to become spiritual parents of children for God. Oh, that each of you might "save some."

Yes, my venerable brethren, you are not too old for service. Yes, my young friends, you young men and maidens, you are not too young to be recruits in the King's service. If the kingdom is ever to come to our Lord, and come it will, it never will come through a few ministers, missionaries, or evangelists preaching the Gospel. It must come through every one of you preaching it—in the shop and by the fireside—when walking abroad, and when sitting in the chamber.

You must all of you be always endeavoring to "save some." I would enlist you all afresh tonight, and bind anew the King's colors upon you. I would that you would fall in love with my Master over anew, and enter a second time upon the love of your espousals.

There is a hymn of Cowper's which we sometimes sing—

"O for a closer walk with God!"

May we get to have a closer walk with Him, and if we do so we shall also feel a more vehement desire to magnify Christ in the salvation of sinners.

I would like to press the inquiry upon my hearers tonight, you who are saved—How many others have you brought to Christ? You cannot do it by yourself, I know, but I mean how many has the Spirit

of God brought by you? How many, did I say? Is it quite certain that you have led any to Jesus? Can you recollect one? I pity you, then! "Write," said Jeremiah, "Write that man childless."

That was considered to be a fearful curse. Shall I write you childless, my beloved friends? Your children are not saved, your wife is not saved, and you are spiritually childless. Can you bear this thought? I pray you wake from your slumbering, and ask the Master to make you useful.

"I wish the saints cared for us sinners," said a young man. "They do care for you," answered one, "care very much for you." "Why don't they show it, then?" said he, "I have often wished to have a talk about good things, but my friend, who is a member of the church, never broaches the subject, and seems to study how to keep clear of it when I am with him."

Do not let them say so. Tell them about Christ and things divine, and make this your resolve, every one of you, that if men perish they shall not perish for want of your prayers, nor for want of your earnest and loving instructions. God give you grace, each one of you, to resolve by all means to save some, and then to carry out your intention.

III. But my time is almost gone, and therefore I have to mention, in the last place, THE GREAT METHODS WHICH THE APOSTLE USED.

How did he, who so longed to "save some," set about it? Why, first of all, *by simply preaching the Gospel of Christ*. He did not attempt to create a sensation by startling statements. Neither did he preach erroneous doctrine in order to obtain the assent of the multitude.

I fear that some evangelists preach what in their own minds they must know to be untrue. They keep back certain doctrines, not because they are untrue but because they do not give scope enough for their ravings, and they make loose statements because they hope to reach more minds. However earnest a man may be for the salvation of sinners, I do not believe that he has any right to make any statement which his sober judgment will not justify.

I think I have heard at revival meetings of things said and done which were not according to sound doctrine, but which were always excused by "the excitement of the occasion." I hold that I have no right to state false doctrine, even if I knew it would save a soul. The supposition is, of course, absurd, but it makes you see what I mean.

My business is to bring to bear upon men, not falsehood, but truth, and I shall not be excused if under any pretense I palm a lie upon the people. Rest assured that to keep back any part of the Gospel is not the right, nor the true method for saving men.

Tell the sinner all the doctrines. If you hold Calvinistic doctrine, as I hope you do, do not stutter about it, nor stammer over it, but speak it out. Depend upon it, many revivals have been evanescent because a full-orbed Gospel was not proclaimed. Give the people every truth, every truth baptized in holy fire, and each truth will have its own useful effect upon the mind.

But the great truth is the cross, the truth that, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Brethren, keep to that. That is the bell for you to ring. Ring it, man! Ring it! Keep on ringing it. Sound forth that note upon your silver trumpet, or if you are only a ram's horn, sound it forth, and the walls of Jericho will come down.

Alas for the fineries of our "cultured" modern divines. I hear them crying out, and denouncing my old-fashioned advice. This talking about Christ crucified is said to be archaic, conventional, and antique—and not at all suitable to the refinement of this wonderful age. It is astonishing how learned we have all grown lately. We are getting so very wise, I am afraid we shall ripen into fools before long, even if we have not arrived at it already.

People want "*thinking*" nowadays, so it is said, and the working men will go where science is deified and profound "thought" is enshrined. I have noticed that as a general rule wherever the new "thinking" drives out the old Gospel there are more spiders than people, but where there is the simple preaching of Jesus Christ, the place is crowded to the doors. Nothing else will crowd a meeting house, after all, for any length of time, but the preaching of Christ crucified.

But as to this matter, whether it be popular or unpopular, our mind is made up and our foot is put down. Question we have none as to our own course. If it be foolish to preach up atonement by blood, we will be fools.

And if it be madness to stick to the old truth, just as Paul delivered it, in all its simplicity, without any refinement or improvement, we mean to stick to it, even if we be pilloried as being incapable of progressing with the age, for we are persuaded that this "foolishness of preaching" is a divine ordinance, and that the cross of Christ which stumbles so many, and is ridiculed by so many more, is still the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Yes, just the old-fashioned truth—if you believe, you shall be saved—that will we stick to, and may God send His blessing upon it according to His own eternal purpose. We do not expect this preaching to be popular, but we know that God will justify it ere long. Meanwhile, we are not staggered because—

"The truths we love a sightless world blasphemes
As childish dotage, and delirious dreams;
The danger they discern not they deny;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die."

Next to this, *Paul used much prayer*. The Gospel alone will not be blessed. We must pray over our preaching. A great painter was asked what he mixed his colors with, and he replied he mixed them with brains. 'Twas well for a painter, but if anyone should ask a preacher what he mixes truth with, he ought to be able to answer—with prayer, much prayer.

When a poor man was breaking granite by the roadside, he was down on his knees while he gave his blows, and a minister passing by said, "Ah, my friend, here you are at your hard work. Your work is just like mine—you have to break stones, and so do I." "Yes," said the man, "and if you manage to break stony hearts, you will have to do it as I do—go down on your knees."

The man was right. No one can use the Gospel hammer well except he is much on his knees, but the Gospel hammer soon splits flinty hearts when a man knows how to pray. Prevail with God, and you will prevail with men. Fresh from the closet to the pulpit let us come, with the anointing oil of God's Spirit fresh upon us. What we receive in secrecy, we are cheerfully to dispense in public.

Let us never venture to speak for God to men, until we have spoken for men to God. Yes, dear hearers, if you want a blessing on your Sunday school teaching, or any other form of Christian labor, mix it up with fervent intercession.

And then observe one other thing. *Paul went to his work always with an intense sympathy for those he dealt with—a sympathy which made him adapt himself to each case*. If he talked to a Jew, he did not begin at once blurting out that he was the apostle to the Gentiles, but he said he was a Jew, as Jew he was. He raised no questions about nationalities or ceremonies.

He wanted to tell the Jew of Him of whom Isaiah said, "'He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," in order that he might believe in Jesus and so be saved. If he met a Gentile, the apostle to the Gentiles never showed any of the squeamishness which might have been expected to cling to him on account of his Jewish education.

He ate as the Gentile ate, and drank as he did, sat with him, and talked with him—was, as it were, a Gentile with him, never raising any question about circumcision or uncircumcision, but solely wishing to tell him of Christ, who came into the world to save both Jew and Gentile, and to make them one.

If Paul met with a Scythian, he spoke to him in the barbarian tongue, and not in classic Greek. If he met a Greek, he spoke to him as he did at the Areopagus, with language that was fitted for the polished Athenian. He was all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.

So with you, Christian people—your one business in life is to lead men to believe in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and every other thing should be made subservient to this one object. If you can but get them saved, everything else will come right in due time.

Mr. Hudson Taylor, a dear man of God, who has labored much in Inland China, finds it helpful to dress as a Chinaman and wear a pigtail. He always mingles with the people, and as far as possible lives as they do.

This seems to me to be a truly wise policy. I can understand that we shall win upon a congregation of Chinese by becoming as Chinese as possible, and if this be the case, we are bound to be Chinese to the Chinese to save the Chinese. It would not be amiss to become a Zulu to save the Zulus, though we must mind that we do it in another sense than Colenso did.

If we can put ourselves on a level with those whose good we seek, we shall be more likely to effect our purpose than if we remain aliens and foreigners, and then talk of love and unity. To sink myself to save others is the idea of the apostle. To throw overboard all peculiarities, and yield a thousand indifferent points, in order to bring men to Jesus, is our wisdom if we would extend our Master's kingdom.

Never may any whim or conventionality of ours keep a soul from considering the Gospel—that were horrible indeed. Better far to be personally inconvenienced by compliance with things indifferent, than to retard a sinner's coming by quarrelling about trifles. If Jesus Christ were here today, I am sure He would not put on any of those gaudy rags in which the Puseyite delights himself. I cannot imagine our Lord Jesus Christ dressed out in that style.

Why, the apostle tells our women that they are to dress themselves modestly, and I do not think Christ would have His ministers set an example of tomfoolery. But yet even in dress something may be done on the principle of our text.

When Jesus Christ was here, what dress did he wear? To put it in plain English, He wore a smock frock. He wore the common dress of His countrymen—a garment woven from the top throughout, without seam. And I think He would have His ministers wear that costume which is most like the dress which their hearers wear in common, and so even in dress associate with their hearers, and be one among them.

He would have you teachers, if you want to save your children, talk to them like children, and make yourselves children if you can. You who want to get at young peoples' hearts must try to be young. You who wish to visit the sick must sympathize with them in their sickness. Get to speak as you would like to be spoken to if you were sick.

Come down to those who cannot come up to you. You cannot pull people out of the water without stooping down and getting hold of them. If you have to deal with bad characters, you must come down to them, not in their sin, but in their roughness, and in their style of language, so as to get a hold of them. I pray God that we may learn the sacred art of soul-winning by adaptation.

They called Mr. Whitefield's chapel at Moorfields, "The Soul Trap." Whitefield was delighted, and said he hoped it always would be a soul trap. Oh that all our places of worship were soul traps, and every Christian a fisher of men, each one doing his best, as the fisherman does, by every art and artifice to catch those they fish for.

Well may we use all means to win so great a prize as a spirit destined for eternal weal or woe. The diver plunges deep to find pearls, and we may accept any labor or hazard to win a soul. Rouse yourselves, my brethren, for this God-like work, and may the Lord bless you in it.

I commend these wandering thoughts to your earnest attention. I pray the ungodly to bethink themselves of what their ruin will be except they come to Jesus and trust in Him. And I ask believers to be doubly earnest from this time forth in laboring to save the souls of men, and may God send us such a blessing that we shall not have room to receive it.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
I CORINTHIANS 1

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—972, 483, 365

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.