

A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED

NO. 174

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1857
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON
 AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK

*“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse:
 for it is written,
 Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”
 Galatians 3:10*

MY hearer, are you a believer, or no? According to your answer to that question must be the style in which I shall address you tonight. I would ask you as a great favor to your own soul this evening to divest yourself of the thought that you are sitting in a chapel and hearing a minister who is preaching to a large congregation.

Imagine you are sitting in your own house, in your own chair, and think that I am standing by you, with your hand in mine, and am speaking personally to you and to you alone. For that is how I desire to preach this night to each of my hearers—one by one. I want you, then, in the sight of God, to answer me this all-important and solemn question before I begin—are you in Christ or are you not?

Have you fled for refuge to Him who is the only hope for sinners? or are you yet a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, ignorant of God and of His holy Gospel? Come—be honest with your own heart and let your conscience say yes or no—for one of these two things you are tonight—you are either under the wrath of God or you are delivered from it. You are tonight either an heir of wrath or an inheritor of the kingdom of grace.

Which of these two? Make no “ifs” or “ahs” in your answer. Answer straight forward to your own soul. And if there be any doubt whatever about it, I beseech you rest not till that doubt is resolved. Do not take advantage of that doubt to yourself, but rather take a disadvantage from it. Depend upon it—you are more likely to be wrong than you are to be right.

And now put yourself in the scale and if you do not kick the beam entirely, but if you hang between the two and you say, “I know not which”—better that you should decide for the worst, though it should grieve yourself, than that you should decide for the better, and be deceived, and so go on presumptuously until the pit of hell shall wake you from your self-deception.

Can you, then, with one hand upon God’s Holy Word and the other upon your own heart, lift your eye to heaven and say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. I know that I have passed from death unto life. I am not now what I once was—‘I the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me.’ And if I am not awfully deceived, I am this night, ‘A sinner saved by blood, a monument of divine grace.’”

My brother, God speed you. The blessing of the Most High be with you. My text has no thunders in it for you. Instead of this verse, turn to the thirteenth verse and there read your inheritance—“Christ hath redeemed *us* from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” So Christ was cursed in the stead of you and you are secure—if you are truly converted and really a regenerated child of God.

But my hearer, I am solemnly convinced that a large proportion of this assembly dare not say so. And you tonight (for I am speaking personally to you), remember you are one of those who dare not say this, for you are a stranger to the grace of God. You dare not lie before God and your own conscience, therefore you do honestly say, “I know I was never regenerated. I am now what I always was and that is the most I can say.”

Now, with you I have to deal and I charge you by Him who shall judge the quick and the dead, before whom you and I must soon appear, listen to the words I speak, for they may be the last warning you shall ever hear, and I charge my own soul also, be you faithful to these dying men, lest haply on your skirts at last should be found the blood of souls and you yourself should be a castaway. O God, make us faithful this night, and give the hearing ear, and the retentive memory, and the conscience touched by the Spirit, for Jesus' sake.

First, tonight we shall *try the prisoner*. Secondly, we shall *declare his sentence*. And thirdly, if we find him confessing and penitent, we shall *proclaim his deliverance*. But not unless we find him so.

I. First, then, we are about to TRY THE PRISONER.

The text says—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Unconverted man, are you guilty or not guilty? Have you continued "in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them?" Methinks you will not dare to plead, "Not guilty." But I will suppose for one moment that you are bold enough to do so.

So then, sir, you mean to assert that you have continued in "all things which are written in the book of the law." Surely the very reading of the law would be enough to convince you that you are in error. Do you know what the law is? Why, I will give you what I may call the outside of it, but remember that within it there is a broader spirit than the mere words.

Hear you these words of the law—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." What! have you never loved anything better than God? Have you never made a god of your belly, or of your business, or of your family, or of yourself? Oh! surely you dare not say you are guiltless here.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." What! have you never in your life set up anything in the place of God? If you have not, I have, full many a time. And I know, if conscience would speak truly, it would say, "Man, you have been a mammon worshipper, you have been a belly worshipper, you have bowed down before gold and silver. You have cast yourself down before honor, you have bowed before pleasure, you have made a god of your drunkenness, a god of your lust, a god of your uncleanness, a god of your pleasures!"

Will you dare to say you have never taken the name of *the Lord thy God in vain*? If you have never sworn profanely, yet surely in common conversation you have sometimes made use of God's name when you ought not to have done so. Say, have you always hallowed that most holy name? Have you never called upon God without necessity? Have you never read His book with a trifling spirit? Have you never heard His Gospel without paying reverence to it? Surely you are guilty here.

And as for that fourth commandment which relates to the keeping of the Sabbath—"Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy"—have you never broken it? Oh, shut your mouth and plead guilty, for these four commandments were enough to condemn you!

"Honor thy father and thy mother." What! will you say you have kept that? Have you never been disobedient in your youth? Have you never kicked against a mother's love and striven against a father's rebuke? Turn over a page of your history till you come to your childhood—see if you cannot find it written there. Ay, and your manhood too may confess that you have not always spoken to your parents as you should, or always treated them with that honor they deserved, and which God commanded you to give unto them.

"Thou shalt not kill." You may never have killed any, but have you never been angry? He that is angry with his brother is a murderer—you are guilty here.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." Mayhap you have committed unclean things and are here this very day stained with lust. But if you have been never so chaste, I am sure you have not been quite guiltless, when the Master says, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart." Has no lascivious thought crossed your mind? Has no impurity ever stirred your imagination? Surely if you should dare to say so, you would be brazen-faced with impudence.

And have you never stolen? “*Thou shalt not steal.*” You are here in the crowd tonight with the product of your theft mayhap—you have done the deed—you have committed robbery. But if you have been never so honest, yet surely there have been times in which you have felt an inclination to defraud your neighbor, and there may have been some petty, or mayhap some gross frauds which you have secretly and silently committed, on which the law of the land could not lay its hand, but which, nevertheless, was a breach of this law.

And who dares says he has not borne *false witness against his neighbor*? Have we never repeated a story to our neighbor’s disadvantage which was untrue? Have we never misconstrued his motives? Have we never misinterpreted his designs?

And who among us can dare to say that he is guiltless of the last—“*Thou shalt not covet?*”—for we have all desired to have more than God has given us. And at times our wandering heart has lusted after things which God has not bestowed upon us. Why, to plead not guilty is to plead your own folly. Truly, my brethren, the very reading of the law is enough, when blessed by the Spirit, to make us cry, “Guilty O Lord, guilty.”

But one cries, “I shall not plead guilty, for though I am well-aware that I have not continued ‘in all things which are written in the book of the law,’ yet I have done the best I could.” That is a lie—before God a falsehood. You have not! You have not done the best you could. There have been many occasions upon which you might have done better.

Will that young man dare to tell me that he is doing the best he can *now*? That he cannot refrain from laughter in the house of God? It may be possible that it is hard for him to do so, but it is just possible he could, if he pleased, refrain from insulting his Maker to His face.

Surely we have none of us done the best we could. At every period and at every time, there have been opportunities of escape from temptation. If we had had no freedom to escape from the sin, there might have been some excuse for it—but there have been turning points in our history when we might have decided for right or for wrong—but we have chosen the evil, and have eschewed the good, and have turned into that path which leads unto hell.

“Ah, but” says another, “I declare, sir, that while I have broken that law, without a doubt, I have been no worse than my fellow creatures.” And a sorry argument is that, for what avails it you? To be damned in a crowd is no more comfortable than to be damned alone. It is true, you have been no worse than your fellow creatures, but this will be of very poor service to you.

When the wicked are cast into hell, it will be very little comfort to you that God shall say, “Depart ye cursed” to a thousand with you. Remember, God’s curse, when it shall sweep a nation into hell, shall be as much felt by every individual of the crowd, as if there were but that one man to be punished. God is not like our earthly judges.

If their courts were glutted with prisoners, they might be inclined to pass over many a case lightly, but not so with JEHOVAH. He is so infinite in His mind that the abundance of criminals will not seem to be any difficulty with Him. He will deal with you as severely and as justly as if there were ne’er another sinner in all the world.

And pray, what have you to do with other men’s sins? You are not responsible for them—God made you to stand or fall by yourself. According to your own deeds you shall be judged. The harlot’s sin may be grosser than yours, but you will not be condemned for her iniquities. The murderer’s guilt may far exceed your transgressions, but you will not be damned for the murderer. Religion is a thing between God and your own soul, O man. And therefore, I do beseech you, do not look upon your neighbor’s, but upon your own heart.

“Ay, but” cries another, “I have very many times strived to keep the law and I think I have done so for a little.” Hear you the sentence read again—“Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Oh! sirs. It is not some hectic flush upon the cheek of consumptive irresolution that God counts to be the health of obedience. It is not some slight obedience for an hour that God will accept at the day of judgment.

He says, "*continueth.*" And unless from my early childhood to the day when my grey hairs descend into the tomb, I shall have continued to be obedient to God, I must be condemned. Unless I have from the first dawn of reason, when I first began to be responsible, obediently served God, until, like a shock of corn, I am gathered into my Master's garner—salvation by works must be impossible to me and I must—(standing on my own footing)—be condemned. It is not, I say, some slight obedience that will save the soul. You have not continued "in all things which are written in the book of the law" and therefore you are condemned.

"But" says another, "there are many things I have not done, but still I have been very virtuous" Poor excuse that, also. Suppose you have been virtuous—suppose you have avoided many vices—turn to my text. It is not my word, but God's—turn to it—"all things." It does not say, "*some things.*" "Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Now, have you performed all virtues? Have you shunned all vices? Do you stand up and plead, "I was never a drunkard?"—Yet shall you be damned, if you have been a fornicator. Do you reply, "I never was unclean." Yet you have broken the Sabbath. Do you plead guiltless of that charge? Do you declare you have never broken the Sabbath?

You have taken God's name in vain, have you not? Somewhere or other, God's law can smite you. It is certain (let your conscience now speak and affirm what I assert)—it is certain you have not continued "in *all things* which are written in the book of the law." Nay, more—I do not believe you have even continued in any one commandment of God to the full, for the commandment is exceeding broad.

It is not the overt act, merely, that will damn a man—it is the thought, the imagination, the conception of sin, that is sufficient to ruin a soul. Remember, my dear hearers, I am speaking now God's own Word, not a harsh doctrine of my own. If you had never committed one single act of sin, yet the thought of sin, the imagination of it would be enough to sweep your soul into hell forever.

If you had been born in a cell and had never been able to come out into the world, either to commit acts of lasciviousness, murder, or robbery, yet the thought of evil in that lone cell might be enough to cast your soul forever from the face of God. Oh! there is no man here that can hope to escape. We must every one of us bow our heads before God and cry, "Guilty, Lord, guilty"—every one of us guilty—"Cursed is *every one* that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them."

When I look into your face, O law, my spirit shudders. When I hear your thunders, my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my heart. How can I endure you? If I am to be tried at last for my life, surely I shall need no judge, for I shall be my own swift accuser and my conscience shall be a witness to condemn me.

I think I need not enlarge further on this point. O you that are out of Christ and without God, do you not stand condemned before Him? Off with all your masks and away with all excuses. Let every one of us turn our idle pretences to the wind. Unless we have the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ to cover us, we must every one of us acknowledge that this sentence shuts the gates of heaven against us and only prepares us for the flames of perdition.

II. Thus have I singled out the character and he is found guilty. Now I have to DECLARE THE SENTENCE.

God's ministers love not such work as this. I would rather stand in this pulpit and preach twenty sermons on the love of Jesus, than one like this. It is very seldom that I meddle with the theme, because I do not know that it is often necessary. But I feel that if these things were kept altogether in the background, and the law were not preached, the Master would not own the Gospel, for He will have both preached in their measure and each must have its proper prominence.

Now, therefore, hear me whilst I sorrowfully tell you what is the sentence passed upon all of you who this night are out of Christ. Sinner, tonight you are cursed. *You are cursed*, not by some wizard whose fancied spell can only frighten the ignorant. You are cursed—not cursed by some earthly monarch who could turn his troops against you, and swallow up your house and your patrimony quick.

Cursed! Oh! what a thing a curse is anyhow! What an awful thing is the curse of a father. We have heard of fathers, driven to madness by the undutiful and ungracious conduct of their children, who have lifted their hands to heaven and have implored a curse, a withering curse upon their children. We cannot excuse the parent's mad and rash act. God forbid we should exempt him from sin, but oh, a father's curse must be awful. I cannot think what it must be to be cursed by him that did beget me. Surely, it would put out the sunlight of my history forever, if it were deserved.

But to be cursed of God—I have no words with which to tell what that must be. “Oh, no,” you say, “that is a thing of the future. We do not care about the curse of God—it does not fall upon us now.” Nay, soul, but it does. The wrath of God *abides* on you even now. You have not yet come to know the fullness of that curse, but you are cursed this very hour.

You are not yet in hell—not yet has God been pleased to shut up the heart of His compassion and cast you forever from His presence—but notwithstanding all that, you are cursed. Turn to the passage in the book of Deuteronomy and see how the curse is a present thing upon the sinner. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, at the fifteenth verse, we read all this as the sentence of the sinner—“Cursed shalt thou be in the city”—where you carry on your business, God will curse you.

“Cursed shalt thou be in the fields”—where you take your recreation—where you walk abroad, there shall the curse reach you. “Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when you comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.”

There are some men upon whom this curse is very visible. Whatever they do is cursed. They get riches, but there is God's curse with the riches. I would not have some men's gold for all the stars, though they were gold. And if I might have all the wealth of the world, if I must have the miser's greed with it, I would rather be poor than have it. There are some men who are visibly cursed.

Don't you see the drunkard? He is cursed, let him go where he may. When he goes into his house, his little children run upstairs to bed, for they are afraid to see their own father. And when they grow a little older, they begin to drink just as he did, and they will stand and imitate him—and they too will begin to swear, so that he is cursed in the fruit of his body.

He thought it was not so bad for him to be drunk and to swear. But oh, what a pang shoots through the father's conscience, if he has a conscience at all, when he sees his child following in his footsteps. Drunkenness brings such a curse upon a man that he cannot enjoy what he eats. He is cursed in his basket, cursed in his store.

And truly, though one vice may seem to develop the curse more than others, all sin brings the curse, though we cannot always see it. Oh! you that are out of God, and out of Christ, and a stranger to Jesus, you are cursed where you sit, cursed where you stand. Cursed is the bed you lie on. Cursed is the bread you eat. Cursed is the air you breathe. All is cursed to you. Go where you may, you are a cursed man.

Ah! that is a fearful thought. Oh! there are some of you that are cursed tonight. Oh, that a man should say that of his brethren! But we must say it, or be unfaithful to your poor dying souls. Oh, would to God that some poor soul in this place would say, “Then I am cursed tonight. I am cursed of God and cursed of His holy angels—cursed! Cursed! Cursed!—For I am under the law.”

I do think, God the Spirit blessing it, it wants nothing more to slay our carelessness than that one word—“cursed!” “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

But now, my hearer, you who are in this state—impenitent and unbelieving—I have more work to do before I close. Remember, the curse that men have in this life is as nothing compared with the curse that is to come upon them hereafter. In a few short years, you and I must die. Come, friend, I will again talk personally to you—young man, we shall soon grow old, or perhaps, we shall die before that time and we shall lie upon our bed—the last bed upon which we shall ever sleep—we shall wake from our last slumber to hear the doleful tidings that there is no hope.

The physician will feel our pulse and solemnly assure our relatives that it is all over! And we shall lie in that still room, where all is hushed except the ticking of the clock, and the weeping of our wife and children. And we must die. Oh! how solemn will be that hour when we must struggle with that enemy, Death!

The death rattle is in our throat—we can scarcely articulate—we try to speak, the death-gaze is on the eye. Death has put his fingers on those windows of the body and shut out the light forever. The hands well-nigh refuse to lift themselves, and there we are, close on the borders of the grave! Ah! that moment, when the spirit sees its destiny. That moment, of all moments the most solemn, when the soul looks through the bars of its cage upon the world to come!

No, I cannot tell you how the spirit feels, if it is an ungodly spirit, when it sees a fiery throne of judgment and hears the thunders of Almighty wrath, while there is but a moment between it and hell. I cannot picture to you what must be the fright which men will feel when they realize what they often heard of!

Ah! it is a fine thing for you to laugh at me tonight. When you go away, it will be a very fine thing to crack a joke concerning what the preacher said—to talk to one another and make merry with all this. But when you are lying on your deathbed, you will not laugh. Now, the curtain drawn, you cannot see the things of the future, it is a very fine thing to be merry.

When God has removed that curtain and you learn the solemn reality, you will not find it in your hearts to trifle. Ahab, on his throne laughed at Micaiah. You never read that Ahab laughed at Micaiah when the arrow was sticking between the joints of his harness. In Noah's time, they laughed at the old man. They called him a grey-headed fool, I doubt not, because he told them that God was about to destroy the earth with a flood. But ah! you scorners, you did not laugh in that day when the cataracts were falling from heaven, and when God had unloosed the doors of the great deep, and bidden all the hidden waters leap upon the surface. Then you knew that Noah was right.

And when you come to die, mayhap you will not laugh at me. You will say, when you lie there, "I remember such and such a night. I strolled into Park Street. I heard a man talk very solemnly. I thought at the time I did not like it, but I knew he was in earnest. I am quite certain that he meant good for me. Oh, that I had hearkened to his advice. Oh, that I had regarded his words! What I would give to hear him again!"

Ah! it was not long ago that a man who had laughed and mocked at me full many a time, went down one Sabbath to Brighton, to spend his day in the excursion—he came back that night to die! On Monday morning, when he was dying, who do you suppose he wanted? He wanted Mr. Spurgeon! the man he had laughed at always. He wanted him to come and tell him the way to heaven and point Him to the Savior.

And although I was glad enough to go, it was doleful work to talk to a man who had just been Sabbath-breaking, spending his time in the service of Satan, and had come home to die. And die he did, without a Bible in his house, without having one prayer offered for him except that prayer which I alone did offer at his bedside.

Ah! it is strange how the sight of a deathbed may be blessed to the stimulating of our zeal. I stood some year or so ago by the bedside of a poor boy, about sixteen years of age, who had been drinking himself to death in a drinking bout about a week before. And when I talked to him about sin and righteousness and judgment to come, I knew he trembled and I thought that he had laid hold on Jesus.

When I came down from those stairs, after praying for him many a time, and trying to point him to Jesus, and having but a faint hope of his ultimate salvation, I thought to myself, O God! I would that I might preach every hour and every moment of the day, the unsearchable riches of Christ—for what an awful thing it is to die without a Savior.

And then I thought how many a time I had stood in the pulpit and had not preached in earnest as I ought to have done. How I have coldly told out the tale of the Savior—when I ought to have wept very showers of tears in overwhelming emotion. I have gone to my bed full many a season and have wept

myself to sleep because I have not preached as I have desired and it will be even so tonight. But oh, the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to come!

My hearers, the matters I now talk of are no dreams, no frauds, no whims, no old wives' stories. These are realities and you will soon know them. O sinner, you who have not continued in all things written in the book of the law. You that have no Christ. The day is coming when these things will stand before you, as dread, solemn, real things.

And then—ah! then. Ah! then. Ah! then—what will you do?—“And after death *the judgment.*”—Oh, can you picture—

*“The pomp of that tremendous day,
When Christ with clouds shall come?”*

I think I see that terrible day. The bell of time has tolled the last day. Now comes the funeral of damned souls. Your body has just started up from the grave, and you unwind your cerements, and you look up. What is that I see? Oh! what is that I hear? I hear one dread, tremendous blast that shakes the pillars of heaven and makes the firmament reel with fright. The trump, the trump, the trump of the archangel shakes Creation's utmost bound.

You look and wonder. Suddenly a voice is heard with shrieks from some and songs from others—He comes—He comes—He comes. And every eye must see Him. There He is, the throne is set upon a cloud which is white as alabaster. There He sits. 'Tis He, the Man that died on Calvary—I see His pierced hands—but ah, how changed! No thorn-crown now. He stood at Pilate's bar, but now the whole earth must stand at His bar.

But hark! the trumpet sounds again. The Judge opens the book. There is silence in heaven, a solemn silence—the universe is still. “Gather mine elect together, and my redeemed from the four winds of heaven.” Swiftly they are gathered. As with a lightning flash, the angel's wing divides the crowd. Here are the righteous all in-gathered. And sinner, there you are, on the left hand, left out, left to abide the burning sentence of eternal wrath.

Hark! the harps of heaven play sweet melodies. But to you they bring no joy, though the angels are repeating the Savior's welcome to His saints, “Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world.”

You have had that moment's respite, but now His face is gathering clouds of wrath, the thunder is on His brow. He looks on you that have despised Him, you that scoffed His grace, that scorned His mercy, you that broke His Sabbath, you that mocked His cross, you that would not have Him to reign over you. And with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, He cries, “Depart, ye cursed.”

And then—No, I will not follow you. I will not tell of quenchless flames. I will not talk of miseries for the body and tortures for the spirit. But hell is terrible. Damnation is doleful. Oh, escape! Escape! Escape, lest haply, being where you are, you should have to learn what the horrors of eternity must mean in the gulf of everlasting hell. “Cursed is the man that has not continued in *all things* that are written in the book of the law to do them.”

III. DELIVERANCE PROCLAIMED.

“You have condemned us all,” cries one. Yes, but not I—God has done it. Are you condemned? Do you feel you are tonight? Come, again, let me take you by the hand my brother. Yes, I can look round upon the whole of this assembly and I can say there is not one now in this place whom I do not love as a brother.

If I speak severely unto any of you, it is that you may know right. My heart and my whole spirit are stirred for you. My harshest words are far more full of love than the smooth words of soft-speaking ministers who say, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace. Do you think it is any pleasure to me to preach like this? Oh! I had far rather be preaching of Jesus—His sweet, His glorious person, and His all-sufficient righteousness.

Now come, we will have a sweet word before we have done. Do you feel you are condemned? Do you say, “O God, I confess You would be just if You should do all this to me”? Do you feel you can never be saved by your own works, but that you are utterly condemned through sin? Do you hate sin? Do you sincerely repent? Then, let me tell you how you may escape.

Men and brethren, Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was crucified, dead, and buried. He is now risen and He sits on the right hand of God, where He also makes intercession for us. He came into this world to save sinners by His death. He saw that poor sinners were cursed—He took the curse on His own shoulders and He delivered us from it.

Now, if God has cursed Christ for any man, He will not curse that man again. You ask me then, “Was Christ cursed for me?” Answer me this question and I will tell you—Has God the Spirit taught you that you are accursed? Has He made you feel the bitterness of sin? Has He made you cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner?”

Then, my dear friend, Christ was cursed for you and you are not cursed. You are not cursed now. Christ was cursed for you. Be of good cheer. If Christ was cursed for you, you cannot be cursed again. “Oh,” says one, “if I could but think He was cursed for me.” Do you see Him bleeding on the tree? Do you see His hands and feet all dripping gore? Look unto Him, poor sinner. Look no longer at yourself, nor at your sin—look unto Him and be saved. All He asks you to do is to look and even that He will help you do.

Come to Him, trust Him, believe on Him. God the Holy Spirit has taught you that you are a condemned sinner. Now, I beseech you, hear this word and believe it—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Oh, can you say, “I believe this Word—it is true—blessed be His dear name. It is true to me, for whatever I may not be, I know I am a sinner. The sermon of this night convinces me of that, if there were nothing else. And good Lord, You know when I say I am a sinner, I do not mean what I used to mean by that word.

“I mean that I am a real sinner. I mean that if You should damn me, I deserve it. If You should cast me from Your presence forever, it is only what I have merited richly. O my Lord I am a sinner. I am a hopeless sinner, unless You save me. I am a helpless sinner, unless You do deliver me. I have no hope in my self-righteousness. And Lord, I bless Your name—there is one thing else—I am a sorrowful sinner, for sin grieves me. I cannot rest, I am troubled. Oh, if I could get rid of sin, I would be holy even as God is holy. Lord I believe.”

But I hear an objector cry out, “What, sir, believe that Christ died for me simply because I am a sinner!” Yes, even so. “No, sir, but if I had a little righteousness, if I could pray well, I should then think Christ died for me.” No, that would not be faith at all, that would be self-confidence. Faith believes in Christ when it sees sin to be black and trusts in Him to remove it all.

Now, poor sinner, with all your sin about you, take this promise in your hands, go home tonight, or if you can, do it before you get home—go home, I say, upstairs, alone, down by the bedside, and pour out your heart, “O Lord, it is all true what that man said. I am condemned, and Lord, I deserve it. O Lord, I have tried to be better and I have done nothing with it at all, but have only grown worse. O Lord, I have slighted Your grace, I have despised Your Gospel. I wonder that You have not damned me years ago.

“Lord, I marvel at myself, that You allow such a base wretch as I am to live at all. I have despised a mother’s teaching, I have forgotten a father’s prayers. Lord, I have forgotten You. I have broken Your Sabbath, taken Your name in vain. I have done everything that is wrong, and if You condemn me, what can I say?

“Lord, I am dumb before Your presence. I have nothing to plead. But Lord, I come to tell You tonight, You have said in the Word of God, ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ Lord, I come. My only plea is that You have said, ‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ Lord, I am a sinner. He came to save *me*. I trust in Him—sink or swim—Lord, this is my only hope. I cast away every other and hate myself to think I ever should have had any other.

“Lord, I rely on Jesus only. Do but save me and though I cannot hope by my future life to blot out my past sin, O Lord, I will ask of You to give me a new heart and a right spirit, that from this time forth even forever, I may run in the way of Your commandments. For, Lord, I desire nothing so much as to be Your child.

“You know, O Lord, I would give all, if You would but love me. And I am encouraged to think that You do love me, for my heart feels so. I am guilty, but I should never have known that I was guilty, if You had not taught it to me. I am vile, but I never should have known my vileness, unless You had revealed it. Surely, You will not destroy me, O God, after having taught me this. If You do, You are just, but,

*“Save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hopes still hovering round Thy Word,
Would light on some sweet promise there;
Some sure support against despair.”*

If you cannot pray such a long prayer as that, I tell you what to go home and say. Say this, “Lord Jesus, I know I am nothing at all. Be You my precious all in all”

Oh, I trust in God there will be some tonight who will be able to pray like that, and if it be so, ring the bells of heaven. Sing, you seraphim. Shout, you redeemed, for the Lord has done it and glory be unto His name, forever and ever.

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.