

THE ANXIOUS INQUIRER

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A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

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EARLY IN THE YEAR 1857

“Oh that I knew where I might find him!”

Job 23:3

WE will say nothing at this time concerning Job, we will leave the patriarch out of the question and take these words as the exclamation forced from the aching heart of a sinner when he finds that he is lost on account of sin and can only be saved by Christ. “Oh that I knew where I might find him”—my Savior, “That I might be saved by His love and blood!”

There are some who tell us that a man can, if he pleases, in one moment obtain peace with God and joy in the Holy Spirit. Such persons may know something of religion in their own hearts, but I think they are not competent to be judges of others. God may have given them some peace through believing and brought them immediately into a state of joy. He may have given them some repentance for sin and then made them quickly to rejoice in Jesus, but I believe that in many more cases, God begins by breaking the stony heart in pieces and often makes a delay of days, of weeks, and even of months before He heals the soul which He has wounded and gives life to the spirit which He has killed.

Many of God's people have been even for years seeking peace and finding none. They have known their sins, they have been permitted to feel their guilt, and yet notwithstanding that they have sought the Lord earnestly with tears, they have not attained to a knowledge of their justification by faith in Christ.

Such was the case with John Bunyan. For many a dreary month he walked the earth as one desolate and said he knew himself to be lost without Christ. On his bended knees, with tears pouring like showers from his eyes, he sought mercy, but he found it not. Terrible words haunted him continually. Dreadful passages of Scripture kept ringing in his ears and he found no consolation until, afterwards, God was pleased to appear unto him in all the plentitude of grace and lead him to cast himself on the Savior.

I think there may be some here who have been for a long while under the hand of God—some who have been brought so far toward heaven as to know that they are undone forever unless Christ shall save them. I may be addressing some who have begun to pray—many a time the walls of their chamber have resounded with their supplications.

Not once, nor twice, nor fifty times, but very often have they bent their knees in agonizing prayer and yet, up to this moment, so far as their own feelings are concerned, their prayers are unanswered. Christ has not smiled upon them, they have not received the application of His precious blood, and perhaps each one of them is at this hour saying, “I am ready to give up in despair. Jesus said He would receive all who came to Him, but apparently He has rejected me.” Take heart, O mourner! I have a sweet message for you and I pray the Lord that you may find Christ on the spot where you are now standing or sitting, and rejoice in a pardon bought with blood.

I shall now proceed to consider the case of a man who is awakened and is seeking Christ, but who, at present, has not, to his own apprehension, found Him. First, I shall notice *some hopeful signs in this man's case*. Secondly, I shall try to give *some reasons why it is that a gracious God delays an answer to prayer in the case of penitent sinners*. And then, thirdly, I shall close by giving *some brief and suitable advice to those who have been seeking Christ, but have up to the present time found it a hopeless search*.

I. First, then, observe that THERE ARE SOME VERY HOPEFUL SIGNS IN THE CASE OF THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN SEEKING CHRIST, THOUGH HE MAY NOT HAVE FOUND HIM.

Taking the text as the basis of observation, I notice, as one hopeful sign, that *the man has only one object, and that is that he may find Christ*. “Oh that I knew where I might find him!” The worldling’s cry is, “Who will show us any good—this good, that good, or any other good—fifty kinds of good. Who will show us any of these?”

But the quickened sinner knows of only one good and he cries, “Oh that I knew where I might find HIM!” When the sinner is truly awakened to feel his guilt, if you could pour the gold of India at his feet, he would say, “Take it away. I need to find HIM.” If you could then give him all the joys and delights of the flesh, he would tell you he had tried all these and they but soured his appetite. His only cry is, “Oh that I knew where I might find HIM!”

*“These will never satisfy.
Give me Christ, or else I die.”*

It is a blessed thing for a man when he has brought his desires into a focus. While he has fifty different wishes, his heart resembles a pool of water, which is spread over a marsh, breeding miasma and pestilence. But when all his desires are brought into one channel, his heart becomes like a river of pure water, running along, and fertilizing the fields.

Happy is the man who has only one desire, if that one desire is set on Christ, even though it may not yet have been realized. If it be his desire, it is a blessed sign of the divine work within him. Such a man will never be content with mere ordinances. Other men will go up to God’s house and when they have heard the sermon, they will be satisfied. But not so this man.

He will say, “Oh that I knew where I might find HIM!” His neighbor, who hears the discourse, will be content, but this man will say, “I want more than that. I want to find Christ in it.” Another man will go to the communion table. He will eat the bread and drink the wine, and that will be enough for him. But the quickened sinner will say, “No bread, no wine, will satisfy me. I want Christ. I must have Him. Mere ordinances are of no use to me. I want not the Savior’s clothes, I want Himself. Do not offer me these things. You are only bringing me the empty pitcher while I am dying of thirst. Give me water, the Water of Life, or I shall die. It is Christ that I want.” This man’s cry is, as we have it here in our text, “Oh that I knew where I might find him!”

Is this your condition, my friend, at this moment? Have you but one desire and is that desire that you may find Christ? Then, as the Lord lives, you are not far from the kingdom of heaven. Have you but one wish in your heart and is that one wish that you may be washed from all your sins in Jesu’s blood? Can you really say, “I would give all I have to be a Christian. I would give up everything I have and hope for, if I might but feel that I have an interest in the person and death of Christ”? Then, poor soul, despite all your fears, be of good cheer—the Lord loves you, and you shall come out into the daylight soon, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free.

There is another hopeful sign about this anxious inquirer. Not only has the man this one desire, but *it is an intense desire*. Hear the text again. “Oh that I knew where I might find him!” There is an “*Oh!*” here. This proves an intensity of desire. There are some men who are apparently very religious, but their religion is never more than skin deep, it does not reach as far as their heart. They can talk of it finely, but they never feel it. It does not well up from the heart and that is a bad spring that only comes from the lip.

But this character whom I am describing is no hypocrite. He means what he says. Other men will say, “Yes, we would like to be Christians. We should like to be pardoned. We should like to be forgiven.” And so they would, but they would like to go on in sin, too.

They would like to be saved, but they would also like to live in sin. They want to hold with the hare and run with the hounds. They have no desire whatever to give up their sins. They would like to be pardoned for all their past transgressions and then go on just the same as before. Their wish is of no use,

because it is so superficial. But when the sinner is really quickened, there is nothing superficial about him then. His cry is, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" and that cry comes from his very heart.

Are you in that condition, my friend? Is your sigh a real one? Is your groan no mere fancy, but a real groan from the heart? Is that tear which steals down your cheek a genuine tear of penitence, which is the evidence of the grief of your spirit? I think I hear you saying, "Sir, if you knew me, you would not ask me that question. My friends say I am miserable day after day and so indeed I am. I go to my chamber at the top of the house and do I often cry to God. Ay, sir, I cry in such a style that I would not have anyone hear me. I cry with groans and tears that I may be brought near to God. I do mean what I say."

Then, beloved, you shall be saved. So surely as it is a real emotion of the heart, God will not let you perish. Never was there a sinner whose inmost spirit cried to the Lord for salvation who was not already loved of God. Never was there one who, with all his might desired to be saved and whose soul groaned out that desire in hearty prayer, who was cast away by God. His mercy may tarry, but it will come. Pray on still—He will hear you at last and you shall yet "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

But notice again that, in the text, *there is an admission of ignorance*, which is another very hopeful sign. "Oh that I *knew!*" Many people think they know everything, and consequently, they know nothing. I think it is Seneca who says, "Many a man would have been wise if he had not thought himself so. If he had but known himself to be a fool, he would have become wise."

The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance. He cannot learn aright who has not first been taught that he knows nothing. A sense of ignorance is a very excellent sign of grace. It is a singular thing that every man seems to think himself qualified to be a Doctor of Divinity—a man who knows nothing of any other science, fancies he perfectly understands this greatest of all sciences.

And alas! alas! for those who think they know so much about God's things and yet have never been taught of God! Man's school is not God's school. A man may go to all the colleges in creation and know as little of theology when he comes out as when he went into them. It is a good thing for a man to feel that he is only beginning to learn and to be willing to open his mind to the teaching of God's Spirit, that he may be guided in everything by Him.

He that is foolish enough to fancy that he knows everything need not think himself a Christian. He that boasts that he understands all mysteries, needs to fear as to his true state. But the quickened soul prays to the Lord, "Teach thou me." We become little children when God begins to deal with us. Before that we were big, tall men and women, and oh! so wise, but when He takes us in hand, He cuts us down to the stature of children, and we put on the form of humility, to learn the true lessons of wisdom, and then we are taught the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

Happy are you, O man, if you know yourself to know nothing! If God has emptied you of your carnal wisdom, He will fill you with that which is heavenly. If He has taught you your ignorance, He will teach you His wisdom and bring you to Himself. And if you are taught to reject all your knowings and findings-out, God will certainly reveal Himself to you.

There is one more hopeful sign in my text that I must mention. It is this—the person I have spoken of *is quite careless about where it is he finds Christ, so that he does find him!* Do you know, beloved, that people, when they really feel the weight and the guilt of their sins, are the worst people in the world to stick up for sects? Other men can fight with their fellow-creatures about various minor matters, but a poor awakened sinner says, "Lord, I will be glad to meet You anywhere."

When we have never seen ourselves to be sinners, we are the most respectable religionists in the world. We venerate every nail in the church or chapel door, and we would not have anyone differ from us on any point of doctrine or practice. But when we feel our sins, we say, "Lord, if I could find You anywhere, I would be glad. If I could find you at the Baptist meeting house, if I could find you in the Independent chapel, I should be glad enough to go there. I have always attended a large, handsome church, but if I could find You in that little despised meeting house, I should be glad to go there, though it would be degrading to my rank and respectability, there would I go there to find my Savior." Some are

foolish enough to think that they would rather not have Christ if He goes anywhere except to their own church. They must keep to their own sect and can by no means overstep the line.

It is a marvelous thing, but I believe I only describe the experience of many whom I am now addressing, when I say that there are very few of you who were brought to know the Lord where you were in the habit of attending. You have perhaps worshipped there since you were converted, but it was not your father's church, not the place where you were born and bred, but some other into which you strayed for a time, where the King's arrows stuck fast in your heart. I know it was so with me.

I never thought of going to the chapel where I was first brought to know the Lord, but it snowed so hard that I could not go to my ordinary place of worship, so I was obliged to go to the little Primitive Methodist meeting. And when I got in, the preacher read his text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." It was a blessed text and it was blessedly applied to my soul, but if there had been any stickling as to going into other places, I should not have been there.

So the awakened sinner says, "'Oh that I knew where I might find him!' Only let me know where Christ is to be found. Let the minister be the most despised in the world, I will go and hear him. Let the sect to which he belongs be the most calumniated and slandered, there I will be found seeking Him. If I can but find Christ, I will be content to meet Him anywhere."

If divers can go into the deeps to bring up pearls, we should not be ashamed sometimes to dive deep to bring up precious jewels of grace. Men will do anything to get gold. They will work in the most muddy streams or under the most scorching sun—surely, then, we ought not to mind how much we stoop, if we find that which is more precious than gold and silver, even "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Is this also your feeling? Then, beloved, I have not only a hope of you, but I have a certainty concerning you. If you are brought to cry out, in all the senses I have mentioned, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" then, assuredly, the Lord has begun a good work in you and He will carry it on even unto the end.

II. But now, for my second point, I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO GIVE SOME REASONS WHY IT IS THAT A GRACIOUS GOD DELAYS AN ANSWER TO THE PRAYER OF PENITENT SINNERS.

Methinks I hear someone asking, "How is it that God does not give a man comfort as soon as he repents? Why is it that the Lord makes some of His people wait in bondage when they are longing for liberty?"

In the first place, it is *to display His own sovereignty*. Ah! that is a word that is not often mentioned in pulpits. Divine sovereignty is a very unfashionable doctrine. Few people care to hear of a God who does as He pleases, who is absolute monarch over man, who knows of no law but His own will, which is always the will to do that which is right, to do good to those whom He has ordained unto eternal life, and to scatter mercy lavishly upon all His creatures.

But we assert that there is such a thing as divine sovereignty and more especially in the work of salvation. God seems to me to argue thus, "If I gave to all men peace so soon as they asked for it, they would begin to think they had a right to it. Now, I will make some of them wait so that they may see that the mercy is absolutely in My hand, and that if I chose to withhold it altogether, I might do so most justly. And so I will make men see that it is a gift of My free grace and not of their own deserving."

In some of our squares, where the owners are anxious to keep the right of way in their own hands, they sometimes shut the gates, not because they would inconvenience us, but because they would have the public see that, although they may let them through, yet they have no right of way and might be excluded if the proprietors pleased.

So is it with God—He says, "Man, if I save you, it is entirely of My own will and pleasure. My grace I give, not because you deserve it, for then it were not grace at all, but I give it to the most undeserving of men that I may maintain My right to dispense it as I please." And I take it that this is the best way of proving God's sovereignty, namely, His making a delay between penitence and faith, or between penitence and that faith which brings peace with God and joy in the Holy Spirit. I think that is one very important reason.

But there is another. God sometimes delays manifesting His forgiving mercy to men *in order that they may find out some secret sin*. There is something hidden in their hearts of which they do not know. They come to God confessing their sins and they think they have made a clean breast of all their transgressions.

“Nay,” says God, “I will not give you pardon yet, or I will not at present apply it to your conscience. There is a secret sin you have not yet discovered.” And He sets the heart to examine itself again—as Jerusalem is searched with candles—and lo! there is some iniquity dragged out from the corner in which it was hidden.

Conscience says, “I never knew of this sin. I never felt it to be a sin. Lord, I repent of it—will You not forgive me?” “Ah!” says the mighty Maker, “now I have proved you, tried you, and cast out this dross, I will speak to you the word of consolation and comfort.” Are you, then, a mourner seeking rest, and not finding it? I beseech you, look into your heart once more. Perhaps there is some hidden lust there, some secret sin. If so, turn the traitor out. Then will the Holy Spirit come and dwell in your soul and give unto you “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

Another reason why God delays His mercy is *that He may make us more useful in after life*. A man is never made thoroughly useful until he has passed through suffering. I do not think there is much good done by a man who has never been afflicted. We must first prove in our own hearts and lives the truths we are afterwards to preach or we shall never preach them with effect.

And if we are private Christians, we can never be of much use to our fellow men unless we have passed through trials similar to those which they have had to endure. So God makes some of His people wait a long time before He gives them the manifestation of their pardon, in order that, in after days, they may comfort others.

The Lord is saying to many a tried soul, “I need you to be a consolation to others. Therefore I will make you full of grief, and drunken with wormwood, so that when you shall, in after years, meet with the mourner, you may say to him, ‘I have suffered and endured the same trial that you are passing through.’” There are none so fit to comfort others as those who have once needed comfort themselves.

Then take heart, poor afflicted one, perhaps the Lord designs you for a great work. He is keeping you low in bondage, and doubt and fear, that He may bring you out more clearly and make your light like the light of seven days, and bring forth your righteousness “fair as the moor, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Wait, then, with patience, for God intends good to you and good to others through you, by this delay.

But the delay often arises not so much from God, as from ourselves. It is *ignorance of the way of salvation* which keeps many a man longer in doubt than he would be if he knew more about it. I do not hesitate to affirm that one of the hardest things for a sinner to understand is the way of salvation. It seems the plainest thing in all the world—nothing appears more simple than, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

But when the sinner is led to feel himself a sinner, he finds it not so easy to understand as he thought. We tell a man that with all their blackness, sinners may be pardoned. That with all their sins, they can be forgiven freely for Christ’s sake. “But,” says the man when he feels himself to be black, “do you mean to tell me that I am to be made whiter than snow? Do you really mean that I, who am lost, am to be saved, not through anything I do or hope to do, but purely through what Another did?”

He can hardly believe it possible. He will have it that he must do something—he must do this or that, or the other, to help Christ, and the hardest thing in the world is to bring a man to see that salvation is of the Lord alone, and not at all of himself. That it is God’s free and perfect gift, which leaves nothing of ours to be added to it, but is given to us to cover us completely, from head to foot, without anything of our own.

Men will conceive what God would not have them imagine and they will not receive that which God would have them embrace. It may be very easy to talk of certain cures and to read of them. We may say, “Such and such a medicine is very effective and will work such and such a cure.” But when we

ourselves are sick, we are often very dubious about the medicine. And if, having taken draught after draught of it, we find that it does not help us, perhaps we are brought to think that, though it may cure others, it cannot cure us, because there has been such delay in its operation.

So the poor soul thinks of the Gospel, "Certainly it cannot heal me," and then he misunderstands the nature of the sacred medicine altogether and begins to take the law instead of the Gospel. Now the law never saved anyone yet, though it has condemned full many in its time and will condemn us all unless we receive the Gospel.

If any man here should be in doubt on account of ignorance, let me, as plainly as I can, state the Gospel. I believe it to be wrapped up in one word—*Substitution*. I have always considered, with Luther and Calvin, that the sum and substance of the Gospel lies in that word, Substitution—Christ standing in the stead of man. If I understand the Gospel, it is this—I deserve to be lost and ruined. The only reason why I should not be damned is that Christ was punished in my stead and there is no need to execute a sentence twice for the same sin.

On the other hand, I know that I cannot enter heaven unless I have a perfect righteousness. I am absolutely certain I shall never have one of my own, for I find that I sin every day, but then Christ had a perfect righteousness and He said, "There, take My garment, put it on—you shall stand before God as if you were Christ and I will stand before God as if I had been the sinner. I will suffer in the sinner's stead and you shall be rewarded for works which you did not do, but which I did for you."

I think the whole substance of salvation lies in the thought that Christ stood in the place of man. The prisoner is in the dock, he is about to be taken away to death. He deserves to die, for he has been a great criminal. But before he is removed, the judge asks whether there is any possible plan whereby the prisoner's life can be spared.

Up rises One who is Himself pure and perfect, and has known no sin, and by the allowance of the judge, for that is necessary, He steps into the dock and says, "Consider Me to be the prisoner. Pass the sentence on Me and let Me die. Reckon the prisoner to be Myself. I have fought for My country. I have deserved a reward for what I have done—reward him as if he had done good and punish Me as if I had committed the sin."

You say, "Such a thing could not occur in an earthly court of law." No, but it has happened in God's court of law, in the great court of King's Bench where God is the Judge of all, it has happened. The Savior said, "The sinner deserves to die. Let Me die in his stead and let him be clothed in My righteousness."

To illustrate this, I will give you two instances. One is that of an ancient king who enacted a law against a certain crime and the punishment of anyone who committed the crime was that he should have both his eyes put out. His own son committed the crime. The king, as a strict judge, said, "I cannot alter the law. I have said that the loss of two eyes shall be the penalty—take out one of mine and one of his."

So, you see, he strictly carried out the law, but at the same time, he was able to have mercy in part upon his son. But the case of Christ goes further than that. He did not say, "Exact half the penalty on Me and half on the sinner." He said, "Put both My eyes out; nail Me to the tree; let Me die; let Me take all the guilt away and then the sinner may go free."

We have heard of another case, that of two brothers, one of whom had been a great criminal and was about to die, when his brother, coming into the court, decorated with medals and having many wounds upon him, rose up to plead with the judge that he would have mercy on the criminal for his sake. Then he began to strip himself and show his scars—how here and there on his big broad chest he had received saber cuts in defense of his country.

"By these wounds," he said, and he lifted up one arm, the other having been cut away, "by these my wounds, and the sufferings I have endured for my country, I beseech you, have mercy on him." For his brother's sake, the criminal was allowed to escape the punishment that was hanging over his head. It was even so with Christ.

“The sinner,” He said, “deserves to die. Then I will die in his stead. He deserves not to enter heaven, for he has not kept the law, but I have kept the law for him—he shall have My righteousness and I will take his sin—and so the Just shall die for the unjust, to bring him to God.”

III. I have thus turned aside from the subject somewhat in order to clear away any ignorance that might exist in the minds of certain of my hearers as to this essential point of the Gospel plan. And now I am, in closing my discourse, to give **SOME ADVICE TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SEEKING CHRIST, BUT WHO HAVE NEVER FOUND HIM, AS TO HOW THEY MIGHT FIND HIM.**

In the first place, let me say, *Go wherever Christ goes.* If Christ were to walk this earth again and heal the sick, as He did when He was here before, many sick people would inquire, “Where will Christ be tomorrow?” And as soon as they found out where He would take His walks abroad, there they would be lying on the pavement in the hope that, as He passed by, He would heal them.

Go up, then, sick soul, to Christ’s house. It is there that He meets with His people. Read His Word. It is there that He blesses them by applying sweet promises to them. Observe His ordinances. Do not neglect them. Christ comes to Bethesda pool, so lie by the water and wait till He arrives. If you cannot put in your foot, be where Christ comes.

Thomas did not get the blessing, for He was not with the other disciples when the Master came to them. Stay not away from the house of God, poor seeking soul—be there whenever the doors are opened, so that, when Jesus passes by, He may haply look on you and say, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

And whatever else you do, when Christ passes by, *cry after Him with all your might.* Never be satisfied until you make Him stop, and if He should frown on you, seemingly for the moment, do not be silenced or stayed. If you are a little stirred by a sermon, pray over it—do not lose the auspicious moment.

If you hear anything read which gives you some hope, lift up your heart in prayer at once. When the wind blows, then should the sails be set, and it may happen that God will give you grace to reach the harbor’s mouth and you may find the haven of perpetual rest.

There was a man who was born blind and who longed to have his sight. As he sat by the roadway, one day, he was told that Jesus was passing by. And when he heard that, he cried after Him, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” The people wanted to hear Christ preach, so they tried to hush the poor man, but he cried again, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”

The Son of David turned not His head. He did not look upon the man, but continued His discourse, yet still the man shouted, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” And then Jesus stopped. The disciples ran to the poor man and said, “Be still, trouble not the Master.” But he cried so much the more, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”

And Jesus at last asked him, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” He answered, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” He received it “and followed Jesus in the way.” Perhaps your doubts say to you, “Hush! Do not pray any more.” Or Satan says, “Be still. Do not cry to Christ any more.” Tell your doubts and fears, and the devil, too, that you will give Christ no rest till He turns His eyes upon you in love and heals your diseases. Cry aloud to Him, O you awakened sinner, when He is passing by!

The next piece of advice I would give you is this—*think very much of Christ.* No way that I know of will bring you faith in Christ so well as thinking of Him. I would advise you, conscience-stricken sinner, to spend an hour in meditation on Christ. You do not need to devote that time to meditation on yourself—you will get very little good from that—you may know beforehand that there is no hope for you in yourself. But spend an hour in meditation on Christ.

Go, beloved, to your most private place of seclusion. Sit down and picture Christ in the garden—think you see Him there, sweating as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. Then view Him standing in Pilate’s Hall. Behold Him with His hands bound, His back streaming with blood. Then follow Him till you see Him coming to the hill called Calvary. Think you see Him hurled backwards and nailed to the tree.

Then let your imagination, or rather your faith, bring before you the cross lifted up and dashed into its socket, when every bone of Christ was put out of joint. Look at Him. Look at His thorn-crown and watch the beaded drops of blood trickling down His cheek.

*“See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown!*

*“His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o’er His body on the tree,
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.”*

I know of no means, under God, so profitable for producing faith as thinking of Christ, for whilst you are looking at Him, you will say, “Blessed Jesus, did You die for sinners? Then, surely, my soul, His death is sufficient for you.” He is able to save unto the uttermost all those who trust in Him.

You may think of a doctrine forever and get no good from it, if you are not already saved, but think of the person of Christ and specially of His death, for that will bring you faith. Think of Him everywhere, wherever you go. Try to meditate on Him in all your leisure moments and then He will reveal Himself to you and give you peace.

None of us, not even the best of Christians, think and say enough of Christ. I went into a friend’s house, one day, and he said to me, as a sort of hint, I suppose, “I have known So-and-so these thirty years, without hearing anything of his religion.” I said, “You will not know me thirty minutes without hearing something of mine.”

It is a fact that many Christian people spend their Sunday afternoons in talking about other subjects and Jesus Christ is scarcely ever mentioned. As for poor ungodly worldlings, of course they neither say nor think anything of Him. But oh, you that know yourself to be a sinner, despise not the Man of sorrows! Let His bleeding hands drop on you. Look you at His pierced side and looking, you shall live, for remember, it is only by looking to Christ that we shall be saved, not by doing anything ourselves.

This brings me to close by saying to every awakened sinner—If you would have peace with God, and have it now, *venture on Christ*. We must venture on Christ and venture wholly, or else we can never be saved. Yet it is hardly right to say venture, for it is no venture—there is not a grain of haphazard in it. He that trusts himself to Christ need never fear.

“But” someone asks, “how am I to trust Christ? What do you mean by trusting in Christ?” Why, I mean just what I say—fully rely on what Christ did for the salvation of sinners. A Negro slave, when he was asked how he believed, said, “Massa, dis is how I believe—I fall flat down on de promise, I can’t fall no lower.”

He had just the right idea about believing in Jesus. Believing is falling down on Christ and looking to Him to hold you up. I will illustrate it by an anecdote which I have often told. A boy at sea, who was very fond of mounting to the masthead, one day climbed to the maintop and could not get down. The sea was very rough and it was seen that, in a little while, the boy would fall on the deck and be dashed to pieces.

His father saw but one way of saving his life. Seizing a speaking-trumpet, he shouted, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, drop into the sea.” The next time the ship lurches, the boy looked down and not at all liking the idea of throwing himself into the sea, still clung to the mast. The father, who saw that the boy’s strength would soon fail him, took a gun in his hand and cried out, “Boy, if you don’t drop into the sea the next time the ship lurches, I’ll shoot you!”

The boy knew his father meant it and the next time the ship lurches, he leaped into the sea. It seemed liked certain destruction, but out went a dozen brawny arms and he was saved. The sinner, in the midst

of the storm, thinks he must cling to the mast of his good works and so be saved. Says the Gospel, "Let go your own works and drop into the ocean of God's grace." "No," says the sinner, "it is a long way between me and God's grace. I must perish if I trust to that. I must have some other reliance."

"If you have any other reliance than that, you are lost." Up comes the thundering law and declares to the sinner that unless he gives up every dependence, he will be lost. Then follows the happy moment when the sinner says, "Dear Lord, I give up all my dependence and cast myself on You. I take You, Jesus, to be my one object in life, my only trust, the refuge of my soul."

Can any of you say that in your hearts? I know there are some of you who can, but are there any who could not say it when they came here, but who can say it now? Oh, I would rejoice if one such were brought to God! I am conscious that I have not preached to you as I could desire, but if one such has been brought to believe and trust in the Savior, I rejoice, for thereby God will be glorified.

But alas! for such of you as will go away and say, "The man has talked about salvation, but what matters it to us?" You think you can afford to laugh today at God and His Gospel, but remember, men cannot afford to despise boats when their vessel is going down in a storm, although they may do so on land.

Death is after you and will soon seize you—your pulse must soon cease to beat. Strong as you are now, your bones are not made of brass, nor are your ribs of steel. Sooner or later you must lie on your lowly pallet and there breathe out your last. Or if you are ever so rich, you must die on your curtained beds and must depart from all your enjoyment into everlasting punishment.

You will find it hard work to laugh at Christ then. You will find it dreadful work to scoff at religion then, in that day when death gets hold of you, and asks, "Will you laugh now, scoffer?" "Ah!" you will say, "I find it different from what I supposed. I cannot laugh now death is near me."

Take warning, then, before death comes. Take warning! He must be a poor ignorant man who does not insure his house before it is on fire and he must be the greatest of fools who thinks it unnecessary to seek the salvation of his soul till he comes to the last moment and is in peril of his life. May God give you thought and consideration, so that you may be led to flee from sin and fly to Jesus. And may God, the everlasting Father, give you what I cannot—His grace, which saves the soul, and makes sinners into saints, and lands them in heaven!

I can only close by repeating the words of the Gospel, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Having said this, if I had said no more, I should have preached Christ's Gospel to you. The Lord give you understanding in all things and help you to believe, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

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.