

THE PLACE OF PRAYER AND PARDON

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A SERMON
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“Whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be: then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all your people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men).”
2 Chronicles 6:28-30.

THE temple was intended to be the center of prayer for all the children of Israel. Those who could do so went up to it a certain number of times every year. Others, who were too far away to go, prayed with their window open towards Jerusalem, for there was the mercy seat, and beneath the wings of the overshadowing cherubim there dwelt that bright light of the Shekinah which was the index of the presence of God in the midst of His people.

It is not therefore to be wondered at that when Solomon dedicated to the Lord the temple which he had built, his great petition was that God would hear every prayer that should be offered in that place or toward that place. He wished the temple always to be to Israel the token that God's memorial is that He hears prayer. Solomon therefore presented a wonderfully comprehensive series of supplications, in which he appears to have included all the sorrowful conditions of the nation, and all the troubles that were likely to fall upon the chosen people.

But this part of his prayer, which we are now to consider, seems as though it were intended to gather up anything that the suppliant might possibly have left out. We always think that we are among the great things—that we are out upon the deep seas—when we can get among the “whatsoevers.” “Whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be: then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all your people Israel...then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive.”

It is a sort of miscellaneous sentence, taking up all the stragglers—the lots that are out of the catalog—those that could not be placed under any distinct head, and they are here put under the general description of the “whatsoevers,” that every man whatsoever, who should know his own sore and his own grief, and the plague of his own heart, should turn his eye and his prayer toward Jerusalem, and that God should then hear him, and forgive him.

We have no sacred spot now, beloved friends, towards which we turn when we pray. The Ritualists talk a great deal about the importance of “the eastward position,” but I believe that any other position in the world—westward, southward, or northward—is just as good, and that we may pray to God with equal acceptance whichever way we turn. Cowper truly sings—

*“Jesus, where'er Your people meet,
There they behold Your mercy seat:
Where'er they seek You, You are found,
And every place is hallow'd ground.”*

Yet we have a temple into which they cannot enter who think the mere materialistic building is the all-important matter, just as we have an altar to which they have no right to approach so long as they are

content with the visible and the external. Our temple is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” When we pray, we turn our faces toward Him. He said to the Pharisees, “In this place is one greater than the temple,” and so He is. Though He is to us of the same use as the temple was to Israel, yet is He infinitely more precious and far greater than the temple, and whosoever, whatsoever his trouble shall be, shall pray unto God with his face toward Jesus, looking to the matchless wounds by which He has redeemed us, or the glorified person in which He represents us, and makes intercession for us before the throne of God on high, he shall be helped, he shall be forgiven, whatever his trouble or whatever his sin.

I. So, coming to the text, I shall have, first of all, to deal with the fact that EACH MAN HAS, OR WILL HAVE, SOME KIND OF GRIEF AND SORROW.

I may have some, in this congregation, who can say, “We have no grief, we have no trouble.” Well, if that is the case, I am not sure that I can congratulate you, though I am very glad when all God’s children are happy in the Lord, and can joy and rejoice in His name. I pray that they may always do so, for I recollect how Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord alway.” Surely that was enough, yet he added, “and again I say, Rejoice.” You cannot be too happy in the Lord, and whenever you meet others who are of a doubtful or troubled spirit, do not imitate them, though, I pray you, do not despise them. They may be, on the whole, in a better spiritual state than you are, although they are not better than you are as to their present difficulty. “The joy of the LORD is your strength,” and it is an excellent thing for a child of God to be happy and joyful in his Savior.

Yet I should not wonder, dear friend, that the day may come when you, whose eyes are brightest, and whose steps are most elastic, will yet find that you shall have trouble in the flesh, and perhaps trouble in the spirit, too, even as it was with those to whom the apostle Peter wrote, “Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations,” or trials. Not only do we have manifold trials, but we get into heaviness through them. It does happen to many of the best of God’s servants that they have their sorrow and grief. Just lately, I have seen several persons who, I am persuaded, love the Lord, and the Lord loves them, they are very precious to Him—humble, gentle, gracious people, but they have come into deep trouble, or some heavy cloud rests upon them. It is to them especially that I am now speaking.

Dear troubled friend, you may have *a grief or sorrow that is not known to anybody but yourself*. You would not like to reveal it to anyone, you would not whisper it in the ear of the dearest confidant that you have on earth. You keep it to yourself, and perhaps that is the very reason why it becomes so bitter to you. The communicating of it to some Christian friend might be a real help to you. You know what a relief it is to be able to shed tears when you are in great anguish, if you can have a good cry, you can get over the trouble more easily, but, sometimes, you cannot find expression for the grief, and so the pent-up flame becomes more fierce than otherwise it would have been.

Well, there are children of God of that sort, just like Hannah, the woman of a sorrowful spirit, whose adversary sorely vexed her to make her fret, and even when she went up to the house of the Lord, it was in bitterness of soul that she stood there, and prayed unto the Most High. I do not think that she could have told anybody, except possibly her husband, what the great grief of her heart was, and dear friend, if you have a grief that you cannot tell to any human being, let my text affectionately invite you to look toward Jesus, the temple of this dispensation, and tell the Lord all about your sorrow, and ask Him to give you help in this your time of need.

It may be that *your trouble, though it is known to others, is misunderstood*. It is a very grievous thing when the affliction of God’s people is misread, and misinterpreted, and others say, “Oh, nonsense! There is nothing in it,” or else they say, “You are only making a rod for your own back, you might help yourself if you liked, and get out of that sad state of mind.” You know how the exhortation to “make an effort” is often given when all possibility of effort from within has long since passed away, and it is a very grievous thing when those whom we love utterly misunderstand us. They seem to read our words backwards. So far from having any sympathy with us, they are not able to enter into our secret sorrow.

Alas! for the child of God who is in that sad condition! But if you are thus troubled—if you know the plague of your own heart, but nobody else knows why you are so plagued—if you feel your own sore, but nobody else can see it, go you to Jesus, and tell Him of your inward grief, open the door to your heart, and let Him inspect all your being, and ask Him for the gracious forgiveness which is the sweetest balm for your wounds, and then pray for a visitation of His blessed Spirit as the Comforter, that your heart may rejoice and be glad in Him.

Possibly, dear friend, I may be speaking to you who have a grief which is not only unknown, or if known, is misunderstood, but to you who are *lonesome in your sorrow*. As far as you can tell, nobody ever before went the way which you are now treading. When I have preached, sometimes, to the despondent and the despairing, I have been thankful when afterwards persons have come to me, and said that my sermon was the first ray of comfort they had ever received.

I therefore try to practice Mr. Wesley's plan of firing low. He meant by it, speaking plainly, so as to hit the groundlings, but while I endorse that view of the expression, I mean also another—not to shoot high, where only some soaring professors may be, but to fire low, where the poor and needy are lying on their faces before God. I want to preach so that those who are ready to perish may come to Christ, and that those who never had a hope before may begin to hope in Him.

My dear friend, if you are the only one who ever traveled along that rough road, and if you even think that you have no equal in your misery, but sit alone in your sorrow, yet are you bidden to turn your face towards Christ, your temple, and whatsoever may be your case, to tell it all out before Him, and as Jesus lives, He will hear and answer you, and you shall yet go your way in peace.

I do not know what may be the peculiarities of your case. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." There are depths and there are heights where we must be alone. There are some griefs that we must keep to ourselves, as there are some raptures and experiences of the which, if we were to tell them, men would say that we were fanatical, and suspect that we were out of our mind. Do not be surprised, therefore, if you have sometimes to sail alone, so far as any human beings are concerned. If Christ be in the vessel with you, you cannot want any better company.

This grief of yours, my dear friend, *may be connected with some sin*, or if not actually so, you may think it is so. You may have lost the light of God's countenance by some omission, or by walking at a distance from Him. It may be that you have been negligent in prayer. Or, possibly, there may have been some sin of commission, perhaps you have yielded to temptation, and therefore it is that you are made to walk in the dark. Well, if it be so, do not let even that sad state prevent your coming to Jesus with your burden, for He has not only come to help us in our troubles, but to save us from our sins. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."

Do not, therefore, think that when you have sinned, you are shut out from the Savior. Nay, but there is "a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness," open on purpose to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

Paul wrote to the Galatians that our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins," upon which passage, Martin Luther observes that Christ never gave Himself for our righteousness. There was never enough of that to be worth His doing so, but He gave Himself for our sins, that He might put them away from us forever. Come, then, though a sense of guilt should put a sting into your sorrow which otherwise it would not possess, and though you may truly say, "I brought all this misery upon myself, I know I did, I played the fool exceedingly, and now the mischief is done, and cannot be undone," yet remember that there is One who can lift the load off your spirit, and say to you, "Go in peace, your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you." Look you toward the temple, even to Christ in whom God dwells, and from whom God shines, tell Him your grief, and you shall yet rejoice in the peace which He delights to bestow.

“Ah!” says one, “I am glad to hear this good news, for the sake of others, but my case is a peculiarly trying one, for I have been in this sad state of mind for many years.” Yes, and how long was that daughter of Abraham bowed down so that she could by no means lift up herself? Was it not eighteen years, yet how long did it take Christ to make her upright? Why, not a moment! He spoke, and she became straight at once, and able to walk like other women. You recollect, also, that the impotent man had been waiting at the pool of Bethesda thirty-eight years, and the high doctrine folk of that day told him to keep on waiting at the pool, but when Jesus Christ came round that way, He did not tell him to wait a minute, but He said, “Rise, take up your bed, and walk,” and he did so in an instant!

You, poor troubled soul, need not continue to lie at the pool, you need not wait there a single moment. Trust you in Christ, who comes to you in all your inability, in all your sinfulness, in all your depression of spirit, and in all your despair, and who says to you, “Live. I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” These are glorious words of grace, may the Lord speak them home to your heart even now!

The devil himself cannot hold a man in captivity when once Christ gives him liberty. Though his feet are made fast in the stocks, and it is the dead hour of midnight, yet shall he begin to sing praises unto God, and his fellow prisoners shall hear him when Jesus of Nazareth passes by, and gives him the gracious word which makes him free. Christ crucified is your only hope, therefore, turn your eyes to Him, by faith, look to those dear wounds of His, from your inmost soul, breathe your penitent prayer to Him, and He will grant you the desire of your heart, even life forevermore.

II. Secondly, IF WE HAVE A GRIEF OR SORROW, IT IS WELL TO KNOW IT, for Solomon here speaks “of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief.”

In visiting the sick, lately, I have been struck with the different ways in which the children of men are afflicted. There is one of our beloved brethren who is covered with sore blains from head to foot. Another is lying in a critical condition through congestion of the lungs. There is another gradually melting away with consumption, while cancer is eating out the very life of yet another friend.

Now, just as it is with the pangs of the body, so is it with the diseases of the mind and the soul. They are of various kinds, and though they may be arranged under different heads, there is no one spiritual sore or sorrow exactly like another, and hence, it is well for every man to know his own sore and his own grief. My faults are not exactly the same as yours, and yours, probably, are not quite like mine, that which greatly grieves me might never trouble you if you had it, while that which worries and troubles you might be a thing which I could laugh at if it came to me. We must never judge one another, nor may we wish to have other people’s sorrows and griefs, but we must try, as far as we can, to know every man his own sore and his own grief.

For, first, *sometimes, to know your grief, is to get rid of it.* It is the unknown that is often the most terrible. Belshazzar, when his knees knocked together, was frightened because he saw the part of the hand that wrote upon the wall, but he did not see the form of the writer, nor could he tell what was written. It was the mystery of the thing that troubled him, and sometimes, when you do not know what your trouble is, it is more of a trial to you than when you can get it into a definite shape. It is a grand thing to be able to look at it, to measure it, to take stock of it, to write down, in black and white, what it is that is worrying you. If you do that, you will probably say to yourself, “How foolish I am to let this be a trouble to me at all!”

And sometimes, on the other hand, you will find yourself foolish in another sense. After Christian and Hopeful had been shut up in the dungeon in Giant Despair’s Castle for several days and nights, Christian said to his companion, “What a fool am I thus to lie in a stinking dungeon when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in

Doubting Castle.” We may find ourselves saying just the same thing, we shall look at our trouble till we shall exclaim, “Why, blessed be God, there is a promise in His Word which exactly meets this difficulty! God the Holy Ghost has left on record the message that is just adapted to this very trial, therefore, why do I lie moaning and groaning in this dungeon, when I might at once walk out into Gospel liberty?” So I say to you, beloved, seek to know what your sore or your grief really is, for it is the unknown that is usually girt with terrors.

It is, too, *the undiscovered, often, that is the most dangerous*. As I have already said, our sorrows are oftentimes connected with our sins. It is a terrible thing to have a sin festering in your soul, and not to know it. If a man tells me that he has no sin, I ask him to look within, or even to look without upon his own life, but if he thinks that he is perfect there, let him keep on looking within, and if he does not discover something evil there, it must be because an awful blindness has fallen upon him. Often there is sin connected with our trouble, and it is most important for us to see it and to know it. I think that it was St. Francis de Sales who said that, among all those who came to him confessing their sins, not one ever confessed to being covetous, and it is a curious thing that, as a rule, no covetous man ever believes that he is covetous. Covetousness is a most deceitful thing, pray God to point it out to you if it is within your heart, lest it should destroy you.

A man may be in such a state of soul that the scarlet fever of pride may be killing him, and yet, all the while, he may be thinking, “What a humble person I am!” For pride is another of the most deceptive sins. Every man should try to know what his own weakness is. Perhaps the very point in which you think you are the strongest is that in which you are really weakest, and the thing which does not trouble you in the least may, after all, be that which ought to cause the greatest searching of heart. Do pray the Lord, each one of you, to cause you to know your own sore and your own grief.

Remember that, if there is sin mixed with our sorrow, *it ought not only to be known, but to be so known as to be confessed*. Oh, what an easement to the soul it is when you can confess your sin to the Lord! I would have you do it distinctly in the plainest words possible. Do not attempt to cloak the matter before God, for you cannot really hide anything from Him.

Recollect how David, at last, prayed God to deliver him from blood-guiltiness. He was on the right road to getting rest in his soul when he could confess his great crime like that. I have heard of one who was a child of God, but he was grievously overtaken when in company, and he drank too much. He could not get any peace of mind for months until he said, “Lord, I was drunk,” and after he had put it in that way, he found forgiveness, and peace, and rest. No doubt, before that, he had said, “I am afraid I was a little imprudent,” or used some of those pretty phrases which people employ as a cloak for their wrong-doing, when they will not confess the evil in all its nakedness and deformity.

Away with the fig leaves! God abhors them. It is He who must clothe you, and He will do so with the righteousness of His Son, but, if He is to accept you, there must be no attempt to palliate your guilt. Let sin be called sin, and in the presence of Christ—

“Sin does like itself appear,”

and the sinner sees its heinousness, and learns to hate it. So, then, each man must know his own sore, and his own grief, and especially his own sin, that he may confess it unto God.

What does all this come to, then, dear brother, dear sister? You have, perhaps, been coming to see me, or to see one of the elders, about your trouble. We cannot help you much, though we will gladly do what we can for you, but, now, do try to make it clear to your own mind what all the trouble is about, get it down in black and white if you can, and then come with it to the Lord.

There is, often, far too much indistinctness in our prayers. We really do not know what we are aiming at, and, consequently, we miss the mark. We have not a clear idea what it is that we are seeking of the Lord, and therefore we do not get it. But if we really know our grief, and know our sore, and know our sin, and know the plague of our own heart, and then go before the Lord with it all, and say,

“That is my trouble, Lord, I confess it before You with a broken heart and a contrite spirit,” it will not be long before the Lord in mercy shall give us peace.

III. Now, thirdly, and briefly, while it is well to know our grief, **IT IS BETTER STILL TO PRAY ABOUT IT.**

I have been hammering away at this truth, but now I want to give a few blows right upon the head of the nail.

Dear troubled friend, *there is no relief for you like prayer*, and if you are almost in despair, permit me to put the matter to you very gently, I will try to push in the thin end of the wedge first. Perhaps, if you go to God, and pray about your trouble, you will get deliverance from it. I say, “Perhaps.” Put it so, to begin with. You cannot lose anything can you, by praying to God? Suppose you go to the Lord with your grief, you cannot be any worse off than you are already, can you? You are now in such a sad condition, so much bowed down that if you confess your sin and your sorrow at His dear feet, and leave them there, you cannot be in a sadder plight than you are now, can you? Well, then, say, with the poet—

*“I’ll to the gracious King approach,
Whose scepter pardon gives;
Perhaps He may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.*

*Perhaps He will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.*

*I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.”*

It may be that the Lord will deliver you. There is many a man who has gone to God on the strength of a “may be,” and yet that “may be” has been enough to land him in heaven at last. You remember how the whole of the people of Nineveh had nothing to rely upon except that question of their king, “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” That was a very tiny thread, “Who can tell?” But, relying on it, they went and humbled themselves before God, and we know what followed, “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not.”

Sister, I would like to whisper that question in your ear, “Who can tell?” Brother, I would like to take your hand, and say to you, “Come now, do not despair. Who can tell? It may be that the Lord will be gracious also unto you. Go and cast yourself at His feet, and determine to lie there, and to perish there, if you must perish. But you shall not perish if you go to Him.”

Recollect, again, that *there is One who is quite ready to give you a full hearing, whatever your trouble and your sin may be*, for the Lord Jesus Christ already knows all about your trouble—

*“Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains,
And still remembers in the skies,
His tears, and agonies, and cries.*

*In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of Sorrows had a part;
He sympathizes in our grief,*

And to the sufferer sends relief."

If you come to me, I shall try to sympathize with you as fully as I can, but, peradventure, I shall fail, for you may be so deep in the bog that I may never have gone quite as low down as that, but if you go to the Lord Jesus Christ, you can never be as deep in sorrow as He was when His agony forced from Him great drops of blood, and His soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And, as for your sin, black as it is, it is not too black for Him to remove. Bring out the sin that is more than a match for Christ, if you can. Remember His great declaration, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

Oh, it is you, poor woman, is it? Are you like the one of whom we were reading just now? Do you feel yourself as great a sinner as she was, or are you actually a woman of the very vilest class? And are your accusers near, who, if you were to deny your guilt, would stand up and witness against you? Jesus says to you, "Go, and sin no more." O poor sinful soul, go you to Jesus even if you have all the sins that are unmentionable piled upon you! And if you are a man who has committed as much sin as all the rest of the world put together, yet come along, my Lord, who bore upon His shoulders the sin of the world, is fully able to put your sin away—

*"If all the sins that men have done,
In thought, or word, or deed,
Since worlds were made, or time began,
Were heaped on one poor sinner's head,"*

yet could the blood of Jesus Christ blot them all out in a single moment, so that though they were sought for, they should never be found again. Oh, that you would but come, and trust the Lord Jesus Christ!

"Ah!" says one, "that is just my difficulty, I cannot trust Him." If you talk like that, you and I will fall out directly. If you tell me that you cannot trust my father, I shall say, "My father is a man of truth and honor, He pays his debts, and he never lies, and I will not have you say, 'I cannot trust him.'"

But whatever you call my father, I shall not be half so indignant as when you tell me that you cannot trust my Savior. When did He lie, pray? When was He ever false? When did He ever fail? You say you cannot trust Him? Why, I feel that if I had all your souls in one, I could trust Him with the whole of them, ay, if I could get into this body of mine all the souls that God ever made, I would trust Him with the whole bulk, for I am persuaded that He was never trusted too much. You never yet could believe of Christ a thing so good that it was not true.

Suppose that you believe that He can forgive you, He will do it. He will never let your belief go beyond what He will do. If you believe that He will wash you so that you shall be whiter than snow, He will do it. Faith and Christ often run a race, but Christ always wins, for, if faith flies like the wind, Christ flashes like the lightning, and He outstrips it. You cannot possibly believe too good a thing of Him, just try now whether you can do so. Should not that truth tend to cheer you, poor downcast one?

The best thing that you can do is to remember that there is an open door to every soul who lives. Then, draw near to God, there is no barrier in the way, and there is a blessed text, at the end of this Book, which says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

I saw a man once, in a court of justice, who was called up to the witness box, but he could not press through the crowd. So the judge spoke to the usher, and the usher said to the people, "Let him come, let him come, let him come," and after he had said that, there began to be a little narrow lane made for him, and so he squeezed his way up.

Now there is a poor sinner over there, and there are a thousand devils between him and Christ, but when Christ says to them, "Let him come, let him come, let him come," they must make a lane for him. When our Lord Jesus Christ was upon the earth, on the great day of the feast, He stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Who will say to Him, "Lord, I am that man, I am thirsting, and You say, 'Let him come'"? If you say that, who is there to stop you from coming to Him? Why, if

the arch-fiend should set himself right in your way, yet, if Jesus Christ says, “Let him come,” you shall come.

Did not He say, long ago, “Let there be light”? and the primeval darkness, which had lasted throughout many an age, was gone in an instant. So, if the Lord says, “Let him come,” then all that oppose you, and try to keep you back, must be overthrown, for you shall come. Trust Jesus, dear friend, trust in the name of the Lord of love and mercy, who is looking upon you, a poor, bruised, broken, manacled mass of misery. I beseech you, turn your eye towards Christ.

O you poor smoking flax, if you have not anything about you but just a smoke, and that smoke is not very sweet, yet Jesus Christ says that He will not quench you! O you poor bruised reed, out of which there can come no music as you are, I tell you that He will yet get music out of you yet! Only look to Him, poor troubled one, for He knows how to bind up the broken in heart, and to heal their wounds, and thereby to glorify Himself.

Oh, for another prayer, even though it were your last! Do breathe it. I know that Satan will try hard to stop you, he will say, “It is no use, you have been praying for months, you have been praying for years.” Ay, but, this time pray as you never prayed before. Perhaps you have been lifting up your eyes to a priest, or to a man, or to a doctrine, or to a creed, now just look right away to Jesus Christ. That is the way that prayer was heard in the olden days, when they looked toward the temple, and your prayer shall be heard when you look to the Savior.

“Oh, but just look at me!” you say. No, I do not want to look at you, I want you to look to Christ. “Oh, but, sir, I am dreadfully wicked! I confess it with shame.” Yes, and you are probably a hundred times worse than you think you are, you are a good-for-nothing sort of person, you are an out-of-the-way sinner, but that is the very reason why I want you to believe in Him “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

I want you to look to Him who came to earth on purpose that He might wash these blackamoors white, and take the spots out of these leopards, and make them to become like lambs. My Lord did not come into the world to be a doctor who only cures finger-aches and small complaints, He came to cleanse the lepers, to cast out demons, to raise the dead—even Lazarus, who had begun to putrefy.

Oh, He is such a glorious Savior that I cannot speak His praises loudly enough, though speaking of Him warms my own heart! My voice was hoarse when I began my sermon, and I thought I could hardly get through the discourse, but, with such a theme as this, I forget all weakness and pain. Yea, raise me even when I am dying, that I may sit up in bed, and begin to praise Him.

There never was a sinner half as big as Christ is as a Savior. Come and measure the sinner, if you like, from head to foot, and all round, make him out to be an elephantine sinner, yet there is room for him in the ark Christ Jesus. There is room in the heart of Jesus for the vilest of the vile. Oh, that you would turn your eyes to Him, and pray to Him from your very heart, and trust in Him with your whole soul!

I finish up by saying that *those who do this shall find rest unto their souls*. Solomon’s petition was, that they should be forgiven, “Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive.” Yes, and everything else that a sinner needs is ready for him when he comes to Christ. I do not know—I cannot tell—all that you need, but I do know that all you ever can want between here and heaven is laid up for you in Christ Jesus.

I have before used this illustration. Here is a poor little babe that we have picked up in the streets, what shall we do with it? What does this child want? Well, it wants washing, see how filthy it is, for it has been lying in the gutter. It wants food, poor little creature, see how emaciated it is. It wants proper clothes, look at its rags. I would have to keep on a long time, and you mothers who are listening to me might say, “He does not know much about what the babe wants.”

But I will show you that I do, because in one single sentence I will tell you what that child wants, *it wants its MOTHER*, and when it gets its mother, it has got everything. When its mother finds it, then it

is provided for, and what you want, dear soul, is pardon, cleansing, clothing, training, sanctifying, but I will not go over it all, *what you want is, your SAVIOR.*

You need Jesus, and if you get Jesus, you never shall have a want that is outside of Christ, you shall never have a necessity that is not comprised within the matchless circle of His unspeakable all-sufficiency. Oh, take Christ to your heart, and your fortune is made! You have all you need for time and for eternity, when once the Lord Jesus Christ is yours. Oh, that you would make a dash for this great blessing!

“I am afraid to come,” says one. Well come all trembling and fearing, only come. “But I am afraid I shall be cast out if I come.” Oh, but you must not indulge that fear, for He has said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” “But suppose I should not happen to be one of the right sort?”

Come all the same, whether you are or not, for Christ will not cast you out if you do but come to Him. When a man is very hungry, if he takes bread that is not his own, and eats it, no one will ever take it away from him, for he has it too securely. So, if you come and take the Lord Jesus Christ into your very soul, there is no one who can take Him away from you.

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good,” and he that really feeds upon Him has so received Him that he shall never lose Him. Oh, that all who are strangers to Him might do so even now! The Lord bless you all, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 978, 981

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 7:53, 8:1-11

Chapter 7, Verse 53; Chapter 8, Verse 1: *And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

That is, as every man went to his own house to rest, so Jesus found rest in secret prayer on the Mount of Olives. There is a very striking contrast here, it is a pity to have brought the dividing saw right through the middle of such charming consecutive sentences.

2. *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*

That is always the posture in the East, the teachers sit, and the hearers stand. We may have to try that plan one of these days, it might be better for me, and also for you. There might be less drowsiness, perhaps, if the congregation had to stand to listen to the preacher’s message.

3-4. *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

They did this only to entangle the Savior—not because they wanted to learn anything of Him, or to do this woman any good, or even to vindicate morality, but it was simply an effort to entrap Him.

5-6. *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.*

They could accuse Him either way. If He sanctioned their stoning the woman, they would charge Him with violating the Roman law, but if He said that she should not be stoned, then they would say that He differed from Moses, and set aside the law of God.

6-7. *But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

That sentence must have flashed like a drawn sword, keen as a razor, through the very midst of them. Here were men who had probably been living in abominable sin, yet they had brought this poor sinful woman to Jesus, and laid this accusation against her.

8. *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*

After He had fired that one red-hot shot, He waited until it had produced its due effect.

9. *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

They left her alone with Jesus in the midst of the place that the guilty crowd had forsaken in silent shame.

10-11. *When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

He condemned the sin, His own pure and holy life was the best condemnation of that, but, as for the sinner, He had not come to condemn, but to forgive. His own declaration was, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

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