

## A SOLEMN EMBASSY

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A SERMON

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*“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us:  
we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”*

*2 Corinthians 5:20*

THERE has long been war between man and his Maker. Our federal head, Adam, threw down the gauntlet in the garden of Eden. The trumpet was heard to ring through the glades of paradise, the trumpet which broke the silence of peace and disturbed the song of praise. From that day forward until now there has been no truce, no treaty between God and man by nature. Man has been at variance with God. His heart has been at enmity towards God. He would not be reconciled to God. Never in the heart of any natural man, unless divine grace has put it there, has a desire to re-establish peace been felt or entertained.

If any of you long to be at peace with your Maker, it is because His spirit has made you long for it. Left to yourselves, you would go from conflict to conflict, from struggle to struggle, and perpetuate the encounter, until it ended in your eternal destruction. But though man will not make terms with God, nor sue for peace at His hands, God shows His unwillingness any longer to be at war with man.

That He anxiously desires man to be reconciled unto Him, He proves by taking the first step. He, Himself, sends His ambassadors. He does not invite them from the other party—that were grace—but He sends ambassadors, and He commands those ambassadors to be very earnest, and to plead with men, to pray them, to beseech them that they would be reconciled to God.

I take this to be a sure pledge that there is love in the heart of God. Why, at the very announcement of these tidings, the rebellious sinner's ears should be opened! It were enough to make him say, “I will hearken diligently, I will hear what God the Lord shall speak, for if it be true that He takes the first step towards me, and that He is willing to make up this deadly quarrel, God forbid that I should turn away, I will even now hear and attend to all that God shall speak to my soul.”

May He bless the message to you, that you may be reconciled to Him without a moment's delay. John Bunyan puts it plainly enough. “If a certain king be besieging a town, and he sends out the herald with a trumpet to threaten the inhabitants that, if they do not give up the town, he will hang every man of them, then straightway they come to the walls and give him back a reviling answer, they swear that they will fight it out, and will never surrender to such a tyrant. But if he sends an embassy with a white flag to tell them that, if they will but surrender and yield to their lawful king, he will pardon every one of them, even the very vilest of them will relent.” Then, saith honest John, “do they not come trembling over the walls, and throw their gates wide open to receive their gracious monarch.”

Would that such a result might be accomplished tonight! While I speak of the great grace of this Prince of Peace, who now sends His ambassadors to the rebellious, may some rebel say, “Then I will be at peace with Him, I will hold out no longer. So irresistible a love as this has dissolved my heart, resolved my choice, and constrained my allegiance.”

Well now, let us speak awhile of *the Ambassadors—the Commission* with which they are entrusted—the *duty* they have to discharge—and close with a question—*What then?* First, then, we have to speak of—

## I. THE AMBASSADORS.

Welcome messengers are they! All nations, with one accord, have agreed to honor ambassadors. Strange, then, that all nations and all people should have conspired to dishonor the ambassadors of God! Which of God's ambassadors in the olden time was not persecuted, rejected, or slain? Were they not stoned, beheaded, sawn asunder? How continually they were maltreated and made to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, though of them the world was not worthy!

But there have been some men to whom the ambassadors of God have always been welcome. The men whom God had ordained to eternal life. Those on whose behalf, from before all worlds, He had made an effectual covenant of peace. From them the ambassadors get a hearty welcome. Standing here to preach as an ambassador, I shall get but little attention from some of my audience. The proclamation of mercy will sound commonplace to many. They will turn on their heel and say, "There is nothing in it."

But mark you, the ambassador of God will be very welcome to some of you, who have bitterly felt your estrangement, to some whose hearts are prepared by a sense of ruin for the good tidings of redemption, to some in whom the secret mystery of predestination begins to work by the overt energy of effectual calling. These shall find their souls greatly but surely drawn to hail the proclamation of mercy that shall be made, and they will say, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of peace, that publish salvation!"

Ambassadors are always *especially welcome to a people who are engaged in a war which is beyond their strength*, when their resources are exhausted, and the peril of defeat is imminent. If some tiny little principality has ventured to rebel against a great empire, when it is absolutely certain that its villages will be consumed, its provinces, ravaged, and that all its power will be crushed, ambassadors are pretty sure to receive a cordial welcome.

Ah! man, thou hast bid defiance to the King of heaven, whose power is irresistible, by whom rocks are thrown down, whose voice breaketh the cedars of Lebanon, whose hand controlleth the great deep sea. He it is who bindeth the clouds with a cord, and girdleth the earth with a belt! Angels that excel in strength cannot stand against Him. From the lofty battlements of heaven, He hurled down Satan, the great archangel, and the mighty host of rebellious morning stars! How canst thou stand against Him, shall the stubble contend with the fire? Shall the potter's vessel resist the rod of iron? What art thou but a moth, easily crushed beneath His finger!

The breath is in thy nostrils, and that is not thine own, how then canst thou, poor mortal, contend with Him who only hath immortality? What art thou but a moth, easily crushed beneath His finger! Thy breath broken more rapidly than a sear leaf by the wind! How canst thou venture to be at war with one who has heaven and earth at His command, who holds the keys of hell and of death, and who has Tophet as His source of ammunition against thee? Listen to His thunders, and let thy blood curdle! Let His lightning flash, and how art thou amazed! How, then, canst thou stand against the greatness of His power, or endure the terror of His wrath?

Happy for thee that terms of peace are proclaimed in your ears. God is willing to cease the warfare, He would not have thee be His adversary. Wilt thou not gladly accept what He proposeth to thee? Never, surely, was war more charged with disaster than that into which thou hast madly rushed.

An ambassador is always *welcome when the people have begun to feel the victorious force of the king*. Yonder province has already yielded. Certain cities have been taken by the sword and given up to be sacked. Now the poor miserable inhabitants are glad enough to get peace. They dread the foot of the conqueror now that they have felt its weight.

Doubtless there are some here present who have known the power of God in their conscience. Perhaps He has scared you with visions and frightened you with dreams. Though it be but the voice of a man that you heard, yet the law has been very terrible to you, and now you find no pleasure in your pleasure, no joy in your joys. God has begun to break your bones with conviction, He has made you feel that sin is a bitter thing, He has made you drunken with wormwood, and broken your teeth with gravel

stones. He has brought you down as the fool in the hundred and seventh psalm, by affliction and by labor, and you are crying out in anguish, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Ay, doubtless, you that have once felt the weight of God’s hand upon your conscience, will rejoice to hear that there is an embassy of peace sent to you.

An ambassador is likewise always *welcome to those who are laboring under a fear of total and speedy destruction*. If none of you are in that plight, I remember when I was, when I thought every day it was a marvel of mercies that I was kept alive, and wondered as I woke at morn that I was not lifting up my eyes with Dives in hell. Everything about Christ was precious to me then! I think I would have stood in the most crowded chapel, nor would I have been weary had I sat upon the hardest seat, no length of service would have wearied me, might I but have had an inkling that God would peradventure have mercy upon my soul.

My eyes were full of tears. My soul was faint with watching, and I would have kissed the feet of any man who would have told me the way of salvation. But, alas! it seemed as if no man cared for my soul, till at last God blessed a humble instrument to give light to His poor dark child. Hence, I know that the news of mercy will be exceedingly welcome to you who stand upon the jaws of hell, fearing that the gates will soon be bolted upon you, and that you will be forever lost. You will be ready to cry like our Methodist friends, “Hallelujah! Glory! Hallelujah! Bless the Lord!” whilst you hear that God still sends an embassy of peace to your soul.

Most acceptable too, is a messenger of peace *if the people know that he brings no hard terms*. When a certain king sent to the inhabitants of a town that he would make peace with them, provided he put out their right eyes and cut off their right hands, I am sure the tidings must have caused the utmost consternation, and the ambassador could not be very popular. But there are no hard terms in the Gospel. In fact, there are no terms, no conditions at all.

It is an unconditional peace which God makes with men. It is a Gospel which asks nothing of men, but gives them everything. The Lord saith, “My oxen and my fatlings are killed; all things are ready, come ye to the supper.” There is nothing for man to get ready, all things are prepared. The terms—if I must use a word I do not like—are simple and easy. “Believe, and live.” With what joy should a rebellious sinner hear the voice of the ambassador who brings no hard conditions from God.

And should not the fame of the King increase the zest with which the embassy is received? Comes it not from Him who cannot lie! No temporary peace is proposed that may presently be broken, but a peace that shall stand fast forever and ever. No temporary armistice, no brief interlude between the deeds of battle do we herald. Peace, eternal, unbroken peace, peace that shall endure in life and outlive death, peace which shall endure throughout eternity, we testify and make known to you.

This peace is proclaimed to all men. It is proclaimed without exception. “Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” None are excluded hence but those who do themselves exclude. Such an ambassador bringing such a message must surely be a welcome messenger from his God. Let us ask now, What is—

## II. THE COMMISSION OF PEACE which God has entrusted us to proclaim?

The words are concise, the sense is transparent. “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespass unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Let us open the commission. It lies in a nutshell. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live.” “Come now, let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow.”

Our commission begins with the announcement that God is love, that He is full of pity and compassion, that He is desirous to receive His creature back, that He willeth to forgive, and that He electeth, if it be consistent with the high attribute of His justice, to accept even the most rebellious, and to put them amongst His children.

Our commission goes on to disclose the manner, as well as the motive, of mercy. Inasmuch as God is love, He, in order to remove all difficulties in the way of pardoning rebels, has been pleased to give His only begotten Son that He might stand in the room, place, and stead of those whom God has chosen, their sins He engaged to take, to carry their sorrows, and to make an atonement on their behalf. Thus the justice of God should be satisfied, and His love flow over to the human race.

We declare, therefore, that God has given Christ, and He has made it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that He came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief. Christ, the Son of God, has become man. Cheerfully and willingly He took upon Himself our nature, veiled the form of Deity in a humble garb of clay, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a life of holiness, and died a death of sacrifice. Through this marvellous death of the Man, the God, Christ Jesus, God is at peace with His people. The peace is made already, for He is our peace.

God is at peace with every man for whom Jesus died. Jesus Christ stood in the room, place, and stead of His chosen people. Christ was punished for their sins. Justice cannot punish twice for one offense. Christ, the substitute, being punished, the sinner cannot be amenable for his own offenses. Those for whom Jesus died go free. The proclamation is that God is willing to be reconciled, that He is reconciled. It is an announcement, not that you may have peace merely, but that peace is made with God by Jesus Christ for you—full peace, without condition, not half-made, but wholly made, the penalty being completely paid to the last doit, and the sacrifice completely slaughtered till the last drop of blood had expiated the last offense.

But the proclamation needs something more to give us any satisfaction. Are there any tidings in it for you and me? Well, our message goes on to announce that whosoever in the wide world will come to Jesus Christ, and commit his cause to Him as Redeemer, Savior, and Friend, shall forthwith be at peace with God, receive full pardon for all offenses, and be welcomed as a favorite of the Most High. He shall know that for him Jesus Christ did die in his stead, and as surety did stand for him when He appeared before God. From condemnation he is, therefore, free, of salvation he is, therefore, sure.

This proclamation, I say, is to be made universally. Though every man will not be blessed by it, the preacher cannot discriminate between those who must and those who will not inherit the blessing. Though only some will accept it, the preacher is not warranted in showing any partiality. It is the Holy Spirit's work to impress the Word on the conscience, and to arouse the conscience by the Word.

As for us, we are willing enough to turn our face to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west. Gladly would we proclaim it to the red man who hunts the savannahs of America, to the swarthy man who never heard the name of Christ before, or to the white man who has often heard, but never heeded it. The same message, that God has accepted Christ as a substitute for every man that will believe in Christ, and that whosoever trusts Christ to save him is in that moment saved, will suffice for all. Yea, we would tell them that before the sinner does trust Christ he is reconciled unto God by His death, because the atonement which He offered had been accepted, and there was peace forestalled between God and that sinner.

What a message I have to present! What a proclamation I have to make! Nothing is necessary on your part. God expects nothing of you to merit His esteem, or to enhance the value of His gift. If repentance be indispensable, He is prepared to give it to you. If a tender heart be needed, He is ready to give you a heart of flesh. If you feel that you have a heart of stone, He has engaged to take it away. Does your guilt oppress you, He says, "I will sprinkle clean water, water of pure fountains upon them, and they shall be cleansed from all their filthiness, and from all their uncleanness will I save them."

Know, all men, that there is no exception made. When Charles II came back to England there was an amnesty, except for certain persons, and these were mentioned by name—Hugh Peters and others were proscribed, but there is no exception here. I find not any traitors singled out and denounced by name. I have to proclaim an indemnity of such universal import that it is indiscriminate, "Whosoever believeth on him shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life."

Moreover, there is no exception made in my commission to any form of sin—unless it be the sin against the Holy Ghost—which carries its own evidence as well as its consequence. Those to whom I now speak, if they feel any drawings of heart towards God have not committed that mortal crime. Murder, theft, forgery, felony, fornication, adultery, and covetousness, which is idolatry—black and hideous as is the catalogue—here is pardon for the whole.

Ransack the kennels, however filthy, rake the slums, however odious, drag out the abominations of the age, however degrading, here is pardon not only possible, probable, but positive. Bring a man here who has stained himself crimson all over with every sort of infamy, though it be not the lapse of an hour, but the habit of a life, yet God is still able to forgive. Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

I do not know whether you find it very good to hear the proclamation, but I do know that I feel it most gratifying to utter it. Thrice happy am I to have such an announcement to make to rebels. Unwonted hearers, listen to my voice. By what strange chance have you reckless, heedless, unconverted souls mingled with this throng of worshippers? Not often do you darken the floor of a place of worship. You hardly know how you were led to come in hither. To what depths of sin you have run, to what extremities of iniquity you have gone! You marvel to find yourself in the company of God's people.

But since you are here, give heed to the message, "Thus saith the LORD, I have blotted out like a cloud thine iniquities, and like a thick cloud thy sins. Return unto me, for I am married unto thee. I have given my blood to redeem thee. Return, O wandering child of man; return, return, and I will have mercy upon thee, for I am God, and not man." Having thus opened my commission, I will endeavor to perform—

### III. A VERY SOLEMN DUTY.

My text supplies me with a warrant. It says, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." Then it seems we have not merely to read our commission, but we have to beseech you to accept it. Why should we beseech you? Is it not because you are rational creatures, not automata, men not machines. A machine might be compelled to perform functions without persuasion, but the Spirit of God often acts upon the heart of man by the sound arguments and affectionate entreaties of His servants whom He commissions.

We are to beseech you because your hearts are so hard that you are prone to defy God's power and resist His grace. Therefore, we pray you to put down your weapons. We are to beseech you because you are unbelieving and will not credit the tidings. You say it is too good to be true that God will have mercy on such as you are. Therefore, we are to put our hand on you, to go down on our knees to you, and to beseech you not to put away this blessed embassy.

We are to beseech you because you are so proud and self-satisfied that you will sooner follow your own righteousness and cling to your own works, than accept a peace already and freely proffered to you. We are to beseech you because you are careless. You give little heed to what is spoken, you will go your way and forget all our proclamations, therefore, are we to press you urgently, instantly, importunately, and to beseech you as when a mother pleadeth for her child's life, as when a condemned criminal beseeches the judge to have pity on him, so are we to beseech you.

I think I never feel so conscious of my own weakness as when I have to ply you thus with exhortations. Oh! there have been a few times in my ministry when I could with flowing eyes beseech you to be reconciled to God, but these dry eyes of mine are not so often fountains of tears as I could wish. We need such a one as Richard Baxter to dilate upon this last part of the text. Perhaps we could handle the former part better than he, but he could handle this last far better than we can.

Oh! how he would have summoned you by the terrible reality of things to come! With what glaring eyes and seething words he would say, "Oh! men, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? By the need of a Savior you will feel in the pangs of parting life, when the pulsings shall be few and feeble, till with a gasp you shall expire, by the resurrection when you will wake up, if not in His likeness, to everlasting shame and contempt, by the judgment seat, where your sins shall be published, and you shall be called

to account for the deeds done in the body, by the dread decree which casteth into the pit forever those that repent not, by the heaven you will lose, and by the hell into which you will fall, by eternity, that dread eternity whose years never waste, by the wrath to come, the burning indignation of which shall never cool, by the immortality of your own souls, by the perils you now run, by the promises you despise, by the provocations you multiply, by the penalties you accumulate, we do beseech you to be reconciled to God.”

Fly to Jesus. Call upon His name. Trust Him, His word, His work, His goodness and His grace. This is the way of reconciliation. Bow the knee and kiss the Son. We do conjure you to do so. Acquaint yourselves now with God and be at peace with Him. My text hangs like a crushing weight upon my soul at this moment. It is awful in its grandeur, and it is majestically full of divine love. I must read the words again in your hearing. Oh! that the sense might break in on your understanding!

We are to beseech you as though God did beseech you, and we to do it in Christ’s stead. You see God speaks when His ambassadors speak. I wonder, oh! I wonder, whether I have brain enough to compass the thought of how God would beseech you to be reconciled! ’Tis the Father’s own self-pleading with His prodigal son.

Can you imagine the father in the parable going after his son, and finding him, in rags feeding swine? Can you conceive him saying, “My son, my dear son, come back! come back and I will forgive you all!” You think you hear that son saying to his father “Get you gone, I will not hear of it,” till his father says, “My dear son, why will you prefer the company of swine to your father’s house? Why will you wear rags when you might be clothed in the best robe? Why will you starve in a far-off country when my house shall be full of feasting on your return?”

What if that son should utter some indignant word and tell his father to his face he never would go back! Oh! I think I see the venerable, loving man falling on his son’s neck and kissing him, in his filth just as he is (for “the great love wherewith he loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins!”)—and he says to the rebel that insults him and resents his tenderness, “My dear son, you must come back, I must have you, I cannot be without you. I must have you, come back!”

In such a style we ought to plead with men. Ah! then, I cannot plead with you as I would. As though God Himself, your offended Maker, came to you now as He did to Adam in the cool of the day, and said to you, “Oh! return to me, for I have loved thee with an everlasting love,” even so, as though God spoke, would I woo you, ye chiefest sinners, to return to Him.

You know, dear friends, that the great God did send another ambassador, and that great ambassador was Christ. Now the apostle says that we, the ministers, are ambassadors for Christ in Christ’s stead. Christ is no more an ambassador, He has gone to heaven, we stand in His stead to the sons of men, not to make peace, but to proclaim it. What! am I then to speak in Christ’s stead! But how can I picture my Lord Jesus standing here? Alas, my imagination is not equal to the task. Would that I had sympathy enough with Him to put myself in His case so as to use His words.

Methinks I see Him looking at this great throng as once He looked at the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He turns His head round to these galleries, and about on yonder aisles, and at last He bursts into a flood of tears, saying, “How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.” He is choked with tears, and when He has paused a moment, He cries, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; a bruised reed I will not break, nor quench the smoking flax.”

Again, I think I see Him, as He looks at you again, and when He observes some hearts so obdurate and hard that they will not melt, He unwraps His mantle, and exclaims, “See here.” Do you mark the gash in His side? As He lifts His hands and shows the nail-prints, and points downward to His pierced feet, He says, “By these, my wounds, which I endured when suffering for you, O My people, return unto Me, come, bow at My feet, and take the peace which I have wrought out for you. Oh! be not faithless, but believing! Doubt no longer! God is reconciled! Tremble no more! Peace is established. Toil no more

at the works of the law, cling not to your own doings. Cease to consult your feelings. It is finished. When I bowed My head upon the tree, I finished all for you. Take salvation, take it now! Come to Me, come now to Me just as you are.”

Alas! this is but a poor representation of my Lord and Master. I could wish myself laid among the clods of the valley, sleeping in my grave, rather than that I should be so poor an ambassador. But, Lord, wherefore didst Thou choose Thy servant, and why givest Thou this people still to hear his voice, if Thou wilt not more mightily enable him to plead with men. I have no more words, oh! let these tears plead with you. I feel that I could freely give my life if it would avail for the saving of your souls. Fain would I meet a martyr’s death, if you would be persuaded thereby to come to Christ for life.

But oh! sinners, no pleading of mine will ever prevail if the pleading of Christ prove ineffectual with you. To each one of you, a distinct proclamation of salvation is addressed. Whosoever among you will believe that Christ died, and that He is able to save you, and will trust your soul upon what He did, shall be saved. Oh! why reject Him? He will not hurt nor harm you. Do lay hold of this good hope, for your time is short! Death is hastening on, eternity is near! Do lay hold of it, for hell is hot, the flames thereof are terrible! Lay hold of it, for heaven is bright, and the harps of angels are sweet beyond compare! Lay hold of it. It shall make your heart glad on earth, it shall charm away your fears and remove your griefs! Lay hold of it! It shall bear you through Jordan’s billows, and land you safe on Canaan’s side.

Oh! by the love of the Father, by the, blood of Jesus, by the love of the Spirit, I beseech you, sinner, believe and live! By the cross and the five wounds, by the agony and bloody sweat, by the resurrection, and by the ascension, sinner, believe and live! By every argument that would touch your nature, by every motive that can sway your reason or stir your passions, in the name of God that sent me, by the Almighty that made you, by the Eternal Son that redeemed you, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, sinner, I command you, with divine authority to sanction my vehemence, that ye be reconciled to God through the death of His Son! And—

#### IV. WHAT THEN?

When we have answered this question we shall have done. What then? Are there not some of you with whom this peace is made at this good hour? I will go back and tell my Master so. Then there shall be fresh ratifications between you and Him. The angels will hear of it, and they will strike their harps anew to sweeter lays than they have known before.

Others there are of you that will not be reconciled. I must have an answer from you. Do you hesitate? Do you delay? Do you refuse? You shall never have another warning, some of you! No tears of pity shall be wept for you again, no loving heart shall ever bid you come to Christ again—I must have your answer now. Yes or no. Wilt thou be damned or not? Wilt thou be saved or not? I will not have thee say, “When I have a more convenient season I will send for thee.” Sinner, it cannot be a more convenient one than this. This is a convenient place, it is God’s house. It is a convenient time, it is the Lord’s day.

Now, sinner, wilt thou be reconciled, restored, forgiven? “Wilt thou be made whole?” said Jesus, and I say the same to thee, “Wilt thou be made whole?” Do you say, “No”? Must I take that for an answer? Mark you, sinner, I have to tell my Master. I must tell Him when I seek the closet of the King tonight, I must tell Him your reply that you would not. What then remains for an ambassador to do when he has spoken to you in the name of the Sovereign?

If you will not turn, we must shake off the dust of our feet against you. I am clear, I am clear, of the blood of you all, I am clear. If you perish, being warned, you perish wantonly. The wrath cometh upon you, not on him who, to the best of his power, has told his Master’s message. Yet again, I beg you to accept it. Do you still say no? The white flag will be pulled down. It has been up long enough. Shall I pull it down, and run up the red flag now? Shall I hurl threatenings at you because you heed not entreaties?

*“If your ears refuse  
The language of His grace,  
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews,  
That unbelieving race,  
The Lord in anger drest,  
Shall lift His hand and swear,  
Ye that despised My promised rest  
Shall have no portion there.”*

But no, I cannot pull it down, that white flag! My heart will not let me do so, it shall fly there still, it shall fly there as a sign and a symbol of the day of grace. Mercy is still held out to you. But there is one coming—I can hear his footsteps—who will pull down that white flag. The vision haunts my eyes. That grim, heartless skeleton whom men call Death will rend the white flag from its place, and up will go the blood-red flag, with the black escutcheon of the thunderbolts.

Where are you then, sinners? Where will you be then? You shudder at the thought. He lays his hand on you. There is no escape. Oh! turn ye, turn ye, turn ye! Come and welcome, sinner, come now while you are welcome. 'Tis love invites you. Jesus stretches out His hand to you all the day long. He has stretched out His hands to a rebellious, and a gainsaying generation. Do not say, “I will think of it,” but yield to His love who around you now the bands of a man doth cast. Do not make a resolution, but commit yourself to the good confession.

Now, even now, may sovereign grace constrain, and irresistible love draw you. May you believe with your heart, may you record your profession at once. Before you close your eyes in sleep, just as you would wish before your eyes are closed in death, may you be at peace with God. I pray God, as I entreat you, that this may come to pass, for His Son, Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

### EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

#### LUKE 18:31-43

**Luke Chapter 18. Verses 31-34.** *Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

It would be hard to imagine our Lord speaking more plainly. He tells them of His sufferings in detail—describes exactly what happened. But their thoughts did not run that way, and when you are not expecting a thing, it little matters how very plainly you may be told of it. You are doting upon something else, and therefore, you do not readily perceive the meaning.

You know how, when you are expecting to hear a thing said, you can hear it even at a great distance, or think you hear it, from the very motion of the man’s lips. But if he should say something clean contrary to what you expect, then you do not so readily hear. And these disciples of our Lord were looking to see Him made a king, and they could not comprehend that the only crown He was to have would be one of thorns, and that the homage paid to Him would be to be scourged and to be spat upon. They did not understand.

And do not you think that the run of our thoughts sometimes may be so contrary to divine truth that we may not be able to understand some very plain things in the Bible, which are only difficult to us because our thoughts are not yet running that way? And when one day we shall be more completely cleansed from the grossness of this world, many a riddle will become plain enough to us.

**35-39.** *And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

Only to think that there should be some who think that when results are to be seen they can ever be regarded as hindrances. For is it not a result of ministry—a result of Jesus passing by—that men cry out, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”? And yet, when the wave-sheaf is before them, they seem to put it aside as though it were an impediment in the Savior’s way. “Let Him go on sowing.” Well, but, sir, it will not hinder Him to let Him also reap a little, for evidently there has been good seed sown in this heart, and here is the outcome of it, for the man is crying, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”

We do not get our sermons interrupted in this way, but what a mercy it will be when they are! And I suppose that in some better times when God’s Spirit more mightily blesses the word, we shall have to stop in our sermons every now and then to deal with anxious souls, or get them to step aside where those that are skillful in heaven’s surgery may bind up their wounds. They will be crying ever and anon, “Sirs, what must we do to be saved? Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”

**40-41.** *And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?*

If Christ were to come near to every unconverted person here, and say to him, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” do you know what it is you want? No. The unhappy circumstance is that the mass of mankind do not know what mercy they should ask for, even if they believed that they had only to ask and have. But, dear friend, you want deliverance from the power of sin. You want a new heart and a right spirit. You want to give up the sins you love, and to follow after the virtues which now you despise. May God give you grace to know that you want this. But this blind man knew what he wanted.

**41-43.** *And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

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