

CROWDING TO TOUCH THE SAVIOR

NO. 841

A SERMON
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 AT BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL

*“For he had healed many;
 insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him,
 as many as had plagues.”
 Mark 3:10*

OUR Lord had been persecuted, and therefore He put forth many proofs of His power. When opposition attends the Gospel it will be the more triumphant, the warnings of the devil prognosticate the success of the Word.

When our Lord Jesus had done much, He was under a sacred necessity to do more, for every one who was healed busied himself in spreading abroad the fame of the beloved Physician, and others laboring under similar infirmities hastened at once to receive the like cure.

The more we do for Christ the more we may do, and I think usually the more we must do. If we hold back from Christian labor we may think that but little is required of us, but as soon as we once enter heart and soul into the Master's service we shall feel as if we wanted a thousand hands and a hundred lives to overtake the growing demands upon us. I gather from the case before us in the text, that as it was with the Master so will it always be with the servants. Their pace of usefulness will increase in geometrical proportion, like that of a falling stone.

Healed multitudes will act as willing decoys to attract multitudes of their unhealed friends. If there be any here who have received the grace of God, it will be natural for them to induce others to listen to the word of life, that so they also may find salvation in our exalted Savior. Thus it is that more and more the kingdom grows, until the strongholds of sin are overthrown and the gates of hell are shaken.

The little cloud no bigger than a man's hand increases till it darkens all the skies, and at last deluges the earth with blessing. Let us take care that we prove not an exception to this blessed rule, never let us by unholy silence rob our Master of one of His best weapons, and the church of her greatest joy. You who are healed should publish abroad in every place the fame of the Friend of Sinners, it is your privilege and your duty.

In calling your attention to the text, I shall notice *the parallel which actually exists, and the fuller parallel which might be expected between the present times and those of the text*. I shall then briefly notice *the sins which prevent the parallel being carried out*. Thirdly, I shall dwell a little upon *the grace which invites us to complete the likeness*. And then, lastly, utter some *cautions which may be useful*.

I. First, the PARALLEL which exists at this moment between these times and the text, and which might be expected more fully to exist.

Thus it is in the text, Jesus had healed many, these had informed other afflicted ones, these afflicted ones, anxious to obtain the boon, pressed around the Savior in a mighty throng—every one striving to touch Him that he might obtain immediate healing.

At this present time, Jesus Christ has healed many. Spiritual sickness is as rife today as bodily sickness was in the period of our Lord's earthly sojourn, and He is at this hour graciously occupied in healing all kinds of moral deformity and moral disease. To our knowledge some great sinners have been saved. Some who were diseased with drunkenness, with dishonesty, with lasciviousness, have believed in Christ, and have been restored to virtue and to holiness. Surely, this ought to encourage others to hope that better things are possible to them through the Savior's healing power.

The Gospel has had free course in the slums of St. Giles, it has worked graciously in the mansions of Bloomsbury, the Gospel has been found mighty in Bethual Green, and it has been victorious in the West End. A few have been saved of the highest in the land and not some only, but many of the poor in these last days have found Jesus mighty to save. Many who were lost to all spiritual things have been saved of late. During this last week many believed and were changed in heart.

Every Sabbath souls are saved. We may not blazon it in the newspapers, nor parade the work of the Lord in the magazine, but for all that, God is giving us week after week to see evil men made good. We can assure you that those of us who are pastors, and watch for souls, constantly see Jesus at His gracious work with sin-sick souls. He is today healing men of the maladies of their souls.

Those whom Jesus has healed have been most thoroughly and effectually restored. The drunkard has not merely been reclaimed for a time, but he has become throughout life a sober, excellent citizen. The depraved and the debased have not been lifted up into a transient hypocritical profession of a religion which they did not understand, but we confidently testify that they have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus and are now amongst the most honorable members of society.

Looking back upon our own observation during a course of years, those of us who are occupied in preaching the Gospel, earnestly bear witness that in these degenerate times, as men usually call them, Jesus Christ exalted in the highest heavens is still delivering men from spiritual infirmities, saving them from gross vices and inveterate habits.

So far the parallel exists, and it would be natural to expect to see it completed. Since many diseased in soul have been healed, it might be reckoned on that great multitudes of men would desire to be saved too. There are crowds of sick folk in every direction. There are many here this morning who are spiritually sick, with eyes that see not God, hearts that throb not with love to Him, knees that bow not in earnest prayer, hands withered for all holy service, consciences seared, judgments unbalanced, imaginations perverse. All around us spiritual sicknesses of one kind or another meet our eye, even this house of God is crowded with diseased souls like a huge hospital.

As for the great outlying population who fear not God, what a scene of plague meets the spiritual eye, what pestilence stalks in public, what disease festers in private! Soul sickness being thus prevalent, and Jesus being still engaged in healing, how is it that the sick folk do not throng to Him? How is it that every house in which Christ is preached is not crowded to the doors? Why do not men struggle and thrust one another to hear the glad tidings of redemption from their sins? How is it that they are not earnestly engaged in prayer?

One would have thought that every house would have had its sighs, its tears, its groans, until Christ should reveal Himself, and the inhabitants should be healed. One would have expected to find whole families engaged in supplications, even to the neglect of worldly business for a time, until their souls were healed. Men lie by awhile with bodily sickness, why not with soul sickness? We might have imagined that as we walked the streets men would run after us crying, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" The need of healing is great, the Physician is present—how is it that men sleep on and neglect gracious opportunities which concern their eternal destinies?

The parallel is not carried out. Men care nothing about the word of their salvation. If they hear it, they forget it. If some of them remember it, they do not practice it. If for a while they practice it, their goodness is "as the morning cloud and as the early dew." The mass of mankind are content to be spiritually blind, and halt, and maimed, and talk as if their wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, were marks of honor and ensigns of health.

Now, this would not be wondered at if there were reasonable doubts as to whether Jesus did really heal the souls of men. But there is no doubt on the minds of those who have watched the various cases. Some of us have ourselves been healed, and therefore speak from assured experience.

Here standeth a man before you, who by the space of five years was secretly bowed down with despondency and depression of spirits of an unusual sort—one whose life was spent at the very gates of hell through sorrow of heart when but a youth. Yet, in one moment was he lifted into perfect peace, a

peace which he would not change with any man beneath the stars, and all that by a simple looking to Him who was crucified upon the cross. That one form of healing is a type of others, for all other evils are overcome in the same manner.

Jesus can heal you of your pride. He can deliver you from anger. He can cure you of sluggishness. He can purge you from envy, from lasciviousness, from malice, from gluttony, from every form of spiritual malady. And this He can do, not by the torturing processes of penance, or the exhausting labors of superstitious performance, or the fiery ordeals of suffering, but the method is simply a word from Him, and a look from you, and all is done.

You have but to trust in Jesus and you are saved, saved this morning, made a new creature in an instant, set on your feet again to start upon a new life, with a new power within you, which shall conquer sin. We who bear this testimony claim to be believed, we are not liars. Not even for God's honor would we palm a pious fraud upon you. We have felt in ourselves the healing power of Christ. We have seen it, and do see it every day, in the cases of others, in persons of all ranks and of all ages. All who have obeyed the Word of Jesus have been made new creatures by His power.

It is not one or two of us who bear this witness, there are hundreds who certify to the selfsame fact, not of ministers alone, but of other professions and callings. There are tradesmen here, there are gentlemen here, there are working men here, there are persons high and low here, who could, if this were fitting, rise and say, "We too are witnesses that Christ can heal the soul."

Here then, is the marvel, that those who know this do not immediately throng to Christ to obtain the selfsame blessing. "'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful!" The course of those of whom we read in the text was a rational one. They heard that Christ had healed many, and the true practical logic was, "Let us be healed too! Where is He? Let us reach Him. Are there crowds about Him? Let us jostle one another, let us force our way into the mass until we touch Him, and feel the healing virtue flowing forth from Him."

But men seem to have taken leave of their reason now. They know that the blessing is to be had, an eternal blessing not to be weighed with gold, nor compared with diamonds, and yet they turn their backs upon it!

Selfishness usually attracts men to places where good things are to be had, but here is the chief of all good, the possession of a sound soul, the gaining of a new nature which will fit a man to be a partaker with angels of light in glory, to be had, and to be had freely, yet man, untrue to himself, not even letting a right-minded selfishness govern him, turneth away from the fountain of all goodness and goeth his way into the wilderness to perish of eternal thirst.

II. Secondly, and very solemnly, WHAT ARE THE SINS WHICH PREVENT THE CARRYING OUT OF THIS PARALLEL?

Painful is it to remember that one of the first sins which prevent men from pressing and thronging to touch Christ is *ignorance*, the sin of willful ignorance, not knowing what they might know, not knowing in very truth what they have learned in theory. My dear hearers, many of you this morning are unconverted. You are just what you always were, men diseased by sin.

You know that Christ is healing souls, and yet you have no desire to be healed, or the desire does not lead you practically to press to Him for the blessing. I say one cause of this is your ignorance, you do not know your disease. You do not know the true meaning of these three letters—S, I, N. If I were to put you through a few questions, you would admit the truth that you are sinners, but you do not know the meaning of your own confession. You would confess that you were born in sin, but then the true meaning of sin has never occurred to you, and the confession is therefore, good for nothing.

If I were to read the bottom of your soul, I should discover deeply engraven there the belief that you are not very guilty, and that all your sins put together amount to nothing very serious. If you had indulged in some gross external act of iniquity you might, perhaps, have perceived its vileness, but you do not see any particular heinousness in those commonplace transgressions into which you have fallen and you are quite ignorant of the evil which lies hidden within them.

You are at rest, though God is angry with you. You remain at ease though you bear an unclean disease about you which will shut you out of paradise. If a man were quite sure that he had a cancer in his breast and knew that a medicine was to be found which would heal it, if he did not seek the medicine, you would feel confident that he did not know what a cancer meant.

So is it with you, you do not know what sin means, you do not know that the smallest sin is the beginning of hell, a spark of the infernal fire, the first cause of that unutterable torment, the smoke of which goeth up forever and ever.

O poor souls, to be so ignorant, where not to know is to be forever undone. May God's eternal Spirit shine like the sun into your dark spirit, and reveal yourself to yourself. If I might pray one prevailing prayer for every unconverted one here this morning, it should be this, "Lord, make them to know their present state, and to tremble at it."

Oh! if you did but know your danger, and knew the sweetness and efficacy of the remedy. If you did but know the punishment which is coming, and the blessedness of escaping from it, you would be amongst the first to press and throng about the Savior to obtain healing from Him. But ignorance holds many back.

Akin to ignorance is *insensibility*. Many men know, but do not feel. The mass of our hearers, the unconverted I mean, have but very little feeling, indeed spiritually they have none at all, for they are "dead in trespasses and sins." You may stab a dead man in a thousand places, but he will not cry out. So is it with ungodly men.

You may tell them of the love of Christ, the story of which might surely melt a rock, and make the adamant dissolve, but if they feel any emotion it is but for a moment—a little superficial feeling, no sooner begun than ended, and they go their way to forget it all. The love of the bleeding Immanuel is an idle tale to them. Then the preacher may bid Sinai thunder with all its mighty peals. God Himself may be heard in judgments loud and terrible, but while the forests bow and the rocks are shivered, the obdurate heart remains unmoved.

Defiance is hurled by unbelief against Omnipotence itself. In vain we talk of the terrors of God and the judgment to come! In vain we poor preachers endeavor to convey our warning messages in the most affectionate and pathetic terms! Charm we ever so wisely, the deaf adder will not hear, and we go back to our Master and lament, "Who hath believed our report, to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

An awful insensibility has stolen over the natural heart of man, and therefore it is, that though poisoned through and through with the venom of sin, with Jesus waiting to heal, men crowd not to find the remedy.

In addition to this insensibility, there grows over unrenewed hearers of the Gospel a sad indifference about it all. I do not hear them speak out this indifference openly, but they might as well avow it, for they really feel it.

There is this kind of indifference, "Well, well, why make so much to do about it? If I am to be saved, I shall be saved. These things will happen in due time. Meanwhile, why make so much fuss about the soul? Our souls do not pay as a present investment, and we do very well with them as they are. We are at the desk from Monday to Saturday, we are in the shop or in the exchange all day long, really, a man must look to the main chance and mind his business, or else nowadays he will soon go to the wall."

There is a tacit persuasion among men that the soul does not matter, although few men would have the hardihood to say as much. Yet he who soberly calculates, cannot but know that the soul is of the utmost consequence. For as the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment, so must the soul be more precious than the body, especially viewing it in the light of immortality.

"What can it profit a man if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul?" When that funeral bell begins to toll, what avail shall it be to a man that he was learned and famous? that he made so much money and died, as men say, worth so many thousands?

How can his wealth serve him if his soul, in all its naked deformity, is bound to stand before its God, its wounds un-stanch'd, its filth unwashed, covered from head to foot with the loathsomeness of its sin?

To hear the Judge say, "Get thee hence, thou hast no portion with the blessed, thou art sick unto death, get thee to the abode of the unclean for ever," will be the everlasting death-knell of all hope.

O sirs, you will then wish that you had given up all the world to have found Christ. You will then curse yourselves that you spent your lives in gaining an infinite loss, and hoarded and scraped up mere smoke and ashes. How you will mourn that you gave your minds to things which are not bread, and your labor for that which profiteth not, while you suffered your soul's weightiest affairs to go by default!

Indifferent we may be now, it will be hard to be so indifferent on a dying bed, it will be impossible to be so before the bar of God. *Here* we may place earth first, but when we come to die, we shall find all mortal things recede. After death what a speck will earth appear! Time's fleeting concerns will have vanished from our thoughts, except as they linger in our regrets and add fiercer pangs to our pains.

Oh, I pray you give your thoughts to heaven, for your immortal natures demand this of you. Pause awhile! Be sober! Give scope and room to sound judgment! Trifle not with eternity. If you must forget any part of your manhood, let it be the part which shall so soon be worm's meat, and melt back to mother earth. But O, rob not your souls, defraud not your spirits, be not indifferent to your own best welfare.

Men press not to Christ as we should expect they would because they *procrastinate* so inveterately. Delay is the devil's great net. All men mean to repent. Alas! they will regret one day that they did not repent at once! Most men intend to believe in Jesus, but they put off believing till there will be no Savior in whom to trust. It is always tomorrow with men.

Archias, the Grecian ruler, was met one night by a friendly messenger, who brought a communication informing him that he was to be assassinated at a feast. Archias, being in a merry mood, would not read the letter just then. Why should he, as he was going to a banquet? "But," said the messenger, "it contains serious things." "Well, well," said he, "serious things tomorrow." He died, bearing about him the message which would have saved his life if he had read it.

Thousands are saying, "Serious things tomorrow!" and so they die, and what is more, they are damned bearing the warning about them which was meant to arouse them. Why will men thus go blindfolded to destruction? God forgive some of you for having delayed so long, and may you be moved by His eternal love to persevere no longer in such a course! Hear, I beseech you, the Word which saith, "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," "Today is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation!"

There is another reason. Men come not to Christ to seek healing for their souls because they really *love the disease*. It is a part of the madness of sin and the folly of iniquity that it fascinates men into a love of itself. If men did not love unrighteousness they would not be unrighteous. If men did not love in their hearts disobedience to God, and the pleasures of the flesh, they would no longer be disobedient, but would yield to God at once.

When we have to deal with sinners about their souls, there is this difficulty that instead of desiring to be saved, with many of them, this is the last thing they would wish for. If to be saved meant to be delivered from going down to hell, they would like that well enough, but since it means something more, namely, being saved from their sins, saved from being any longer slaves to their lusts, they care not for such a salvation.

They would rather be spiritually crooked, and blind, and lame, they do not desire the holy sanity of spiritual manhood. They would rather bear about them the deformity of sin because their perverted minds have gathered a taste for that which destroys them, and they perceive, or think they do, light in that which is darkness, and sweetness in that which is bitter.

Will not the drunkard take the cup at all hazards? Ah! have I not seen him poison himself willfully with his excess? When year after year he has undermined his constitution, and is at death's door, will he not grieve, and even shed tears if from poverty, sent in mercy to him, he is unable to get that drink which is ruining him? And will not men who have given way to their passions, when they know that mischief

will follow, when they have already smarted from it, go on in sin like the sheep which follows the butcher into the very slaughter? Oh! the madness, the raving madness of men.

The basilisk eyes of the old serpent enchant poor foolish humanity, so that it sits still to be devoured and has no will to escape. Men hug their chains and kiss their fetters, they talk of happiness when they are standing over the mouth of hell, and in a few short months or days will fall into the devouring fire. Madness reigns in the human heart. O God, remove it, remove it from each one of my hearers this morning, that not one may choose his own delusions, and select for himself a course which must inevitably end in unmeasured misery.

Thus I have tried, as best I could, to point out the sins which prevent men from thronging to Christ. But I feel that I speak too coldly upon a theme which charms my heart, and I fear you listen to this matter, you unconverted ones, as though it were of no great concern to you—when oh! within the next hour or two, it may receive an importance which you have not dreamed of yet.

Poor dying creatures that we are, at our very longest so short-lived and so apt to be caught away in a moment, how is it that we can sport and trifle with the things which more concern us than all else beside?

For what are houses and lands, what are stocks and exchanges, what are all our belongings, what even the body itself, and these eyes, and hands, and this tongue, compared with the soul, which is our essential self, our very being? If our souls be unsound, if our spirit be rotting with the disease of sin, if we be therefore as lepers shut out from heaven and God forever, oh! misery of miseries—what can make up for this, if it were but for an hour? But when it is for eternity, and the soul is lost forever, what can compensate? Ah! dear hearers, run not the risk, but crowd to the Savior today who is so willing to receive you right now.

III. This brings me, in the third place, to notice THE GRACE WHICH INVITES us this morning to complete the parallel of the text.

Christ is healing souls. Grace invites us to do as the text saith, namely, to press upon Him to touch Him, as many of us as have plagues. Think now what facts invite you to come to Christ!

In the first place, dear hearers, *you are spared in this world*, and with some of you this is no small wonder. You have passed, it may be, through great perils. You were sick of the fever, you were laid low with cholera, you have been in shipwreck, you have escaped from a calamitous fire, you have been in eminent peril many and many a time. It is a wonder to all who know you that you are alive, and it is most of all a wonder to yourself.

Account that the longsuffering of God is salvation, and is meant to lead you to repentance. He has spared you that you might not die until you had found His mercy. Thus His eternal mandate ran, “Spare that man till he hath yielded Me his heart, for I have loved him with an everlasting love, and I will not suffer death and hell to take him, he is Mine and he shall live till he repent.” Is it not so? May not God have sent me here this morning to tell you that it is so? You have been suffered to live where others have perished, because God has a special regard for you.

I talked with one some years ago who rode in the charge of Balaclava, when the shots were emptying the saddles all around; as in obedience to orders, the troops galloping on to death’s mouth. I could not but look upon him with awe, hoping that he was one for whom God had a peculiar regard. Now, you aged men who have been spared till now, your companions have fallen on the right hand and on the left. How death has emptied the saddles of those around you!

Those who kept shop in the same street, those who went to school with you, your playmates, your relatives, your brothers, your cousins, they are nearly all gone, and you are here! What are you here for? Why, I think, to say this morning, “I will arise, and go unto my Father; I will tell him I have sinned against him; I will ask his mercy.” Let the fact of your being spared induce you to seek Christ.

There is another encouragement for you in the fact that you are spared *to hear the Gospel*. You did not always hear it, and you do not, even now, always hear it. But you are brought this morning to listen to one who would fain, by the Holy Spirit’s power, bring you to Christ, and who, speak as he may,

desires to speak out of love to your soul. It is a great mercy that you have been permitted to hear the Gospel after having so many times repelled its warnings and forgotten its admonitions.

*“Still doth His good Spirit strive,
With the chief of sinners dwell.”*

I do not believe that the Gospel has been sent into this place this morning, to be preached for nothing. I will not believe that my Master directed me to stand in this pulpit and address you without intending that some of you should, by His Spirit's power, comply with the divine request which is so much for your own profit. The Gospel is preached unto you, and God has not sent it with the intention that after you have heard it, you should seek mercy and not find it.

Oh! no, God does not tantalize, He does not mock the sons of men. He bids you come to Him. Repent and believe, and you shall be saved. If you come with a broken heart, trusting in Christ, there is no fear that He will reject you, else He would not have sent the Gospel to you.

Beloved, there is nothing that so delights Jesus Christ as to save sinners. I never find that He was in a huff because they pressed about Him to touch Him. Nay, but it gave Him divine pleasure to give forth His healing power. You who are in trade are never happier than when business is brisk, and my Lord Jesus, who follows the trade of soul-winning, is never happier than when His great business is moving on rapidly.

What pleasure it gives a physician when at last he brings a person through a severe illness into health! I think the medical profession must be one of the happiest engagements in the world when a man is skillful in it. Our Lord Jesus feels a most divine pleasure as He bends over a broken heart and binds it up. It is the very heaven of Christ's soul to be doing good to the sons of men. You misjudge Him if you think He wants to be argued with and persuaded to have mercy. He gives it as freely as the sun pours forth light, as the heavens drop with dew, and as clouds yield their rain. It is His honor to bless sinners, it makes Him a name, and an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

I know I once belied Him, when I felt my sins to be a great burden, I said within myself, “I will go to Jesus, but perhaps He will reject me,” I thought I had much to feel and to do to make myself ready for Him, and I therefore did this and that, but the more I did the worse I became. I was like the woman who spent her money on physicians, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse.

At last I found it was of no use, and when I fully understood that there was life in a look at Christ, that all which was wanted was for me simply to trust, to come as I was and put my case into His dear pierced hands, and leave it there—I could not think it *could* be so, it seemed so simple—how could it be true? Was that all?

I thought when I came to Him He would say to me, “Sinner, you have rejected Me so long, you have mocked Me by saying prayers which you did not feel. You have been a hypocrite and joined with God's people in singing My praises when you did not praise Me in your heart.” I thought He would chide me, and bring ten thousand sins to my remembrance. Instead of that, it was but a word, and it was all done. I looked to Him, and the burden was gone. I could have sung, “Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, with pardon in his right hand and acceptance in his left, with abundant blessings to the least deserving of the sons of men.”

Now, my dear hearers, I have to tell you that Jesus Christ abides in the same ability to save as He had in the days of His flesh. He ever liveth to make intercession for sinners, and is therefore able to save to the uttermost them that come unto Him, and it is still true that him that cometh He will in no wise cast out. There has never been an instance of a man that trusted Christ and perished, and there never shall be an instance.

Murderers have tried it, and blood-red murder has been washed out by the crimson blood of Jesus. Harlots have tried it, and have sat at the feet of Jesus and washed them with their tears for very joy. Thieves have tried it, the adulterer, the whoremonger, the most debauched and depraved have come to

the cross, and have obtained mercy through the precious blood. None are excluded who desire to come and who sincerely trust in Christ to save them. I pray you, therefore, listen to our tearful invitation, and stand not back through shame or fear, for Jesus still is able and willing to save all who trust Him.

Do I need to enlarge upon this? Perhaps so, but our time fails. I know if you are insensible to your need of Jesus, and do not care about being made whole, you are not likely to come for any drawings of mine. But if you are awakened in any degree by the Holy Spirit, let me take hold of your hand and say, My dear friend, do not delay trusting Christ, do not entertain a hope that it will ever be easier to trust Jesus than it is now. Do not think that you will ever be in a better state for coming than you are in now.

The best state in all the world for washing is to be filthy. The best state in all the world to obtain help from a physician is to be sore sick. The best state for asking alms is to be a beggar. Do not try to patch up those rags, nor improve your character, nor make yourself better before you come to Christ.

Come in all your poverty and vileness, just as you are, and say to Him, “My Lord, and my God, Thou hast suffered as a man for all the sins of all those who trust Thee, I trust Thee. Accept me, give me peace and joy.” And tell the world, I pray you, whether He accepts you or no. If He casts you away you will be the very first—then let us know of it. But if He receives you, you will be but one among ten thousand who have been thus accepted—then publish it to the confirming of our faith.

IV. Lastly, I have one or two CAUTIONS to mention, which seem to me to be needful in such a case. “He had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him to touch him as many as had plagues”

Our first caution is—*never be content with merely pressing upon Christ*. When there is a gracious season in a church, and persons are converted, many rest satisfied because they have been in the congregation where works of mercy have been performed. It is dreadful to reflect that we have in all our assemblies men and women who are perfectly satisfied with having spent the Sunday in a place of worship.

Now, suppose the case of a man having the leprosy, who goes to the place where Jesus is. He sees the people thronging to get near, and he joins in the press. He pushes on for a certain length of time, and then he comes back perfectly content because he has joined with the crowd. The next day the great Master is dispensing healing virtue right and left, and this same man joins in the throng, and once more elbows himself tolerably near to the Savior and then retires.

“Well,” he says, “I got into the crowd, I pressed and squeezed, and made my way, and so I was in the way, perhaps I might have got a blessing.”

Now that would be precisely similar to the condition of hundreds and thousands of people who go to a place of worship on Sunday. There is the Gospel, they come to hear it, they come next Sunday, there is the Gospel again. They listen to it, and they go their way each time.

“Fool!” you say to the man with the leprosy, “why, you did nothing, getting into the crowd was nothing. If you did not touch the Lord who dispensed the healing you lost all your time, and besides, you incurred responsibility because you got near to Him, and yet for want of putting out your hand to touch Him, you lost the opportunity.”

So you, good people, who come to this chapel, or go to any other place of worship where Jesus Christ is faithfully preached, you come and go, and come and go continually, and what fools you are, what gross fools, to get into the throng and to be satisfied with that, and never touch Christ!

Tell me of your church goings and your chapel goings! They are not a morsel of use to you unless you touch the Savior through them. Your occupying of that pew for a space of twenty years, your going to a place of worship twice every Sunday, your attendance on the weeknight, all this is only so much responsibility, but not a grain of blessing to you unless you really come to Jesus Christ.

You are right to come to the services, just as they were right to press into the crowd. But you are wrong if you stop there, just as that leprous man would have been had he been foolishly content to have pressed into the throng without getting near to Christ. And yet, is not this the conduct of a great many of you?

It is getting serious too. You have been chapel goers perhaps for thirty or forty years, and are you a bit the better? Your mother took you in her arms to the sanctuary, you went to Sunday school, you have been always in the way of the means of grace. And yet, for the lack of one thing, a real trusting in Christ, you are perishing in your sin.

Living water flows at your feet, but you do not drink. Living bread is upon the table, but you have not eaten. Divine pardon is before you and you will not put out your hand to take it. Heaven's gate is set wide open and you are content to turn your back upon it.

I must caution you again, *not to be content with touching those who are healed*. There were many in the crowd, who, having touched the Master, clapped their hands and said, "Glory be to God, my withered arm is restored." "My eyes are opened." "My dropsy has vanished." "My palsy is gone." One after another they praised God for His great wonders. And sometimes their friends who were sick would go away with them and say, "What a mercy! Let us go home together." They would hear all about it, and talk about it, and tell it to others, but all the while, though they rejoiced in the good that was done to others, and sympathized in it, they never touched Jesus for themselves.

It is very dangerous work for some of you Sunday school teachers, when you are the means of bringing dear children to Christ, and yet do not come yourselves. Noah's carpenters built the ark, but were all drowned. Oh, I pray you, be not satisfied with talking about revivals, and hearing about conversions, get an interest in them.

Let nothing content any one of us but actual spiritual contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us never give sleep to our eyes or slumber to our eyelids, till we have really looked to that great sacrifice which God has lifted up for the sins of men. Let us not think of Christ as another man's Savior, but be passionately in earnest till we get Him for our own. If He be not ours today, today let us lay hold on Him. I cannot endure the thought of your going out of this house of prayer before you are saved.

Remember, salvation work does not require months and years. If you look to Christ at this very moment, you shall have your sins as much forgiven as if you were seventy years a Christian, for there is no difference here between the newborn babe in Christ and the most advanced veteran in the Christian army. If you only look now, your sins are forgiven you, and you shall this day begin the new life, and God shall be glorified in that new life until He takes you up to dwell with Himself forever.

Do you know what it is to trust Christ? I do not know how to explain it better than by dwelling on the word itself—*trust*. It is a reliance, a dependence. The old divines used to call it a recumbency. It is a leaning all your weight on Christ, giving up your own power and depending on Him. Dr. Watts puts it thus—

*"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall;
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all."*

But still, people will not understand us. A young man once said to me, "I want to know what I must do to be saved." I reminded him of that verse. He said, "Sir, I cannot fall." "Oh," said I, "you do not understand me. I do not mean a fall which needs any strength in you. I mean a fall caused by the absence of all strength." It is to tumble down into Christ's arms because you cannot stand upright. Faint into the arms of Christ, that is faith. Just give up doing, give up depending upon anything that you are, or do, or ever hope to be, and depend upon the complete merits, and finished work, and precious blood of Jesus Christ. If you do this you are saved.

Anything of your own doing spoils it all. You must not have a jot or a tittle of your own. You must give up relying upon your prayers, your tears, your baptism, your repentance, and even your faith itself. Your reliance is to be on nothing but that which is in Christ Jesus. Those dear hands, those blessed feet, are ensigns of His love—look to them. That bleeding, martyred, murdered person is the grand display of the heart of the ever blessed God. Look to it. Look to the Savior's pangs, griefs, and groans. These are

punishments for human sin. This is God's wrath spending itself on Christ instead of spending itself on the believer.

Believe in Jesus, and it is certain that He thus suffered for you. Trust in Him to save you, and you are saved. God grant you the privilege of faith, and the boon of salvation. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MARK 3

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.