

FOOTSTEPS OF MERCY

NO. 905

A SERMON
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*“If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter,
 one among a thousand, to shew unto men his uprightness:
 then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
 ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.’”*
Job 33:23-24

WHEN God has distinct and definite purposes of mercy towards an individual, He often begins with stern discipline, and brings him low by affliction and sorrow. As the good husbandman cuts down the trees and makes a clearance of the soil before he sows the grain and prepares for a harvest, so does our God cut down all our goodly cedars, our pleasures, and our pride in order that the heart may be afterwards ploughed, broken, harrowed, and made ready to receive the good seed of the Word.

Elihu describes this preparatory breaking-up process as being brought about by sickness. It is often so. I doubt not that a sickbed is one of God’s best orators to the sons of men. But God is by no means restricted to any uniform method, nor is the experience of the Redeemed precisely similar in its details, though notwithstanding all its diversities, it leads to one and the same result.

Sometimes a storm at sea has brought men to their senses and awakened their conscience, and so they have cried to the Lord in their trouble. At other times serious losses in business have brought men into such distress of mind that they have been driven to seek riches more enduring than silver and gold, a competence more to be relied on than the profits of trade or the stability of banks, and comfort more genuine and lasting than wealth, though it be the accumulation of years, can afford.

Yea, and without either of these, the Holy Ghost has not infrequently been pleased to convince men of their sin, and reduce them to utter self-despondency and abject self-aborrence. This He has effected in such a way as neither sickness nor poverty could have done of themselves. He has brought the man very low, even to the gates of hell.

In his own apprehension the man has been lost, and then it is that mercy has commenced her work, her blessed work that shall open to him the gates of righteousness and bring the soul up to heaven itself. Now I hope there are some here present whom God has been preparing for His grace—to such there will be good tidings in the sermon.

I shall not delay you, but proceed at once to deal with the text in the natural order it suggests, as the welcome facts are marshaled before us. Does it not tell of *a messenger—a message—a gracious disposition—a great deliverance—and an amazing ransom?*

I. When God has thus, in the way of providence, prepared any human heart for a work of grace, one of the first means of blessing the chosen man is TO SEND HIM A MESSENGER.

I suppose the passage before us may be primarily referred to Christian ministers, who become, through God the Holy Ghost, interpreters to men’s souls. They should be men of a thousand, well-taught. They should have high moral and spiritual qualifications. In fact, they should be the pick and cull of mankind.

When God sends a faithful Gospel messenger to a man, it is a sign of great love to that man’s soul. I ask no honor for ministers as men, but this I do ask, that when they preach to you the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they shall be accepted as God’s messengers and that their message at least shall be treated with the respect which God’s Word demands.

But I prefer to believe, with many expositors, that the full meaning of these words will never be found in ministers of mortal race. We must rather refer it to the Great messenger of the covenant, the Great Interpreter between God and man, whose presence to the sin-sick soul is a sure prophecy of mercy.

Where God the Father sends His beloved Son to a man—where Christ comes to the man's conscience and talks with him, showing the credentials of a Savior and constraining the faith of the sinner—there it is that salvation is obviously intended by the Lord and will be effectually perfected in that man unto everlasting life.

With this view I proceed, regarding our Lord Jesus Christ as the herald of mercy. Mark well the titles, a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand. Is there any other than Jesus to whom they so fitly belong? Let us contemplate Him as a messenger. That is just what Jesus Christ is.

Now, a messenger comes not in his own name, he must be sent, and it is a great comfort to know that Jesus Christ did not come to save men merely on His own account, but He came commissioned by the Father. He was sent of God. God has appointed Christ to be the Savior. Those who accept Christ and trust in Him, accept the very person God Himself has ordained.

Christ is no amateur Savior, who comes without a commission. In His hands He bears the royal stamp of the divine authority. O trembling sinner, trust Him whom God has trusted. Lay hold of Him whom God has appointed.

Another description that belongs to Him, as I believe, is an interpreter. Jesus Christ is indeed a blessed interpreter. An interpreter must understand two languages. Our Lord Jesus understands the language of God. Whatever are the great truths of divine intelligence and infinite wisdom—too high and mysterious for us to comprehend or even to discern, Christ fully understands them all.

He knows how to speak with God as the fellow of God, co-equal and co-eternal with Him. His prayers are in God's language. He speaks to God's heart. He can make out the sighs and cries and tears of a poor sinner, and He can take up the meaning and interpret them all to God. He understands the divine language and thus He can communicate with God.

Moreover, Jesus understands our language, for He is a man like ourselves, touched with a feeling of our infirmities and smarting under our sicknesses. He can read whatever is in the heart of man, and so He can tell to God the language of man, and speak to man in the language of man what God would say to Him.

How happy we ought to be that there is so blessed a Daysman to put His hand upon us both—that He can be equal with God and yet can be brother with poor simple men! The best of it is that our Lord is such an interpreter that He can not only interpret to the ear, but also to the heart, and this is a great point.

I, perhaps, might be enabled to interpret a Scripture to your ears, but O beloved, when you have heard the letter you may miss the right, heavenly, and spiritual meaning. But our Lord can bring the Word home to your soul.

He can tell you of God's mercy, not in words only, but with a sweet sense of His mercy shed abroad in your heart. He can make the sinner feel the way of salvation, as well as know it. He can make him rejoice in it as well as listen to it. He can lead him to accept it as well as to understand it.

Oh, blessed interpreter! mighty with God, so that the heart of God is affected with the woes and griefs of men. You are mighty with men so that the great love of God, which is an ocean without a bottom or a shore, is made intelligible to us, and even our poor stony hearts are softened, and the granite is made to run like wax, while the divine interpreter talks to our inmost souls.

This messenger, then, this interpreter, is He not "*one among a thousand*"? O peerless Jesus! who among the sons of the mighty can be compared with You? Elihu may well be supposed to use a definite number when an indefinite is intended. What is one of a thousand, or one of ten thousand, when surely there is never the like of Christ between heaven and hell? All the range of the universe cannot find His equal—His equal as a Savior, as a messenger, as an interpreter.

Oh! but those who know Him will tell you that no words can ever set forth His worth. Disciples of Jesus who have followed Him and held communion with Him for the space of twenty years and more, will tell you that His preciousness grows upon them by acquaintance. Whereas they thought Him sweet at first, they think Him sweetest and best of all now, the loveliest of all the lovely, the fairest of all the fair, the chief among ten thousand, yea, and the altogether lovely.

I tell you that if there were a thousand Saviors, I would have none but Christ. If the gods of the heathen and the saints of the papists could help them, if the ceremonies of our modern papists could deliver their souls instead of enthralling them, yet would we repudiate them. We would have nothing to do with them in whole or in part.

But we would still cling to Him who is the one Mediator between God and men, for He is the chief among ten thousand to our souls. He is such a Savior that there is no other who can vie with Him. All rivalry must prove abortive, seeing that other foundation can no man lay. He is the door of heaven, all the rest is hard wall and there is no passing through—a light from God and all other lights are darkness—very God come down to us in our flesh to save us, and where shall you find the match of this?

O cherubim and seraphim, what Savior could you devise that should emulate the only-begotten Son of God? O you angels, fairest among the goodly throng that salute JEHOVAH day and night with your ceaseless music, whom will you laud and magnify but Jesus in your jubilant worshipful songs?

As you survey the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of the martyrs, and the radiant fellowship of the church redeemed, will you chant any other name? Is He not in your esteem the chief among a thousand, the sole heritor of all blessing and praise?

Accept Him, sinner. Receive Him joyfully into your spirit, for such a one will never woo you as this precious one, the chosen of God. Who, but Jesus, then, should be chosen and precious to your soul?

It is a great sign of mercy whenever Christ comes to any sinner. But how, say you, can He come to a sinner? I will tell you. He has come to you now, to every one of you. Jesus comes in the preaching of the Gospel. There is never a Gospel sermon preached but it is, in fact, Jesus coming with open arms of love to receive the sinner.

He comes to you in these Bibles and New Testaments of yours. Every one of those volumes that lie in your house is a standing token of Christ's mission, whispering to him that has ears to hear that He is still ready to receive the sinner. And I trust He comes to some of you now, in the motions of the Holy Ghost upon your heart, saying to you, "Close in with Him. Reject Him no longer, bow down your ear and listen to Him. Lift up your eye and look to Him," concerning whom we sang so truly just now—

***"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee."***

This is the first stage.

II. Now, secondly, wherever this divine messenger comes, according to the text, HE REVEALS GOD'S UPRIGHTNESS.

A lesson, let me assure you, of deep interest and paramount importance. The occasion on which it is taught is peculiarly impressive. You remember Elihu has been describing a man greatly afflicted, chastened with pain, wasted with disease, reduced to a skeleton, and brought near to death. We have shown you that ere the Lord Jesus Christ comes in mercy to deal with a soul, such tribulation is dealt out by God to break up the fallow ground of the heart.

No marvel that the sufferer is appalled with tokens of judgment. What message, then, can the divine messenger bring more suitable or more refreshing than that which reveals to man the uprightness of God in having afflicted him?

You think, perhaps, that God has been very hard with you. In your distraction you say, “How long I have been ill! how long I have been out of work! how long my wife has been afflicted! How many of my dear children have died! What strokes God has laid upon me without intermission!”

Now shall new views spring up and comfortable thoughts arise. But who shall bridge the interval? When Christ comes to you as an interpreter, He will make you discern the wisdom and the love, and cause you to feel the pity and the tenderness of Him, who as a Father rebukes you, not in anger, but in His dear covenant love.

Instead of kicking against the pricks, you will say, “Ah! Lord, it is of Your mercy I am not consumed. I can see there is a hand of love in this. You would not let me go on in sin and wander into endless woe. He are blocking up my road, He is putting massive chains across the broad way to stop me. He is digging pits in my path, that I may come to a pause and so I will turn back from this.”

Depend upon it, there is nothing more dreadful than a life that is happy in the commission of sin. If you have prosperity and all that your heart can wish, while pursuing an evil course, tremble, for it is likely enough that God will give you up—you are having your portion in this life.

O you unconverted! Are any of you tried and troubled, vexed and disquieted? While I am sorry for your troubles, I hope God has designs of love towards you. If you look to Christ, He will explain to you the heavenly moral of these earthly trials and show you the uprightness of God in dealing thus severely with His rebellious child.

Further than this, the Gospel of Christ explains to the sinner the uprightness of God in the doom of the impenitent, *even if He sends him down to hell*. Oh! a man may find fault with hell, and say, “Will God consign men to the devouring fire? Will He destroy their souls? Will He damn men for their offenses?”

But if once the Great interpreter comes to you, you will wonder not that God should destroy men for sin, but that He has not destroyed you long ago. Oh! I could have argued with a bold front against eternal punishment till I knew what sin meant and then I gave in at once, and I wish that some of my brethren, who seem to speak dubiously about the wrath of God, could feel as some of us have felt, the horror of great darkness that sin brings across a soul when it is made to feel the righteous ire that encompasses and impends it.

There is no caviling then, the only cry is, “O my God, deliver me, for I deserve all Your wrath can bring upon me, and if You should smite me to destruction You will be justified when You judge and clear when you condemn.” Mark you, it is a blessed thing when Christ brings a sinner to plead guilty, when he is quite willing to plead guilty, and when, instead of railing at the justice of the sentence, he stands dumb with silence, feeling that God is upright and would not be upright if He did not thus condemn.

There is hope, there is more than hope, there is confidence in our heart towards any sinner who is convinced of the uprightness of God in his present affliction or in any other that God may please to send upon him, either in this life or in the life to come. Ah! but this is learning to some profit for a man to see the uprightness of God in everything, and then by contrast to bewail his own ignorance and foolishness.

Mercy is surely come to you when you can think of God’s holiness with reverence and upbraid yourself with bitter reproach for what an unholy creature you have been. It is a rough wind, that north wind, but, O my brethren, what a healthy wind it is! It sweeps away the fevers of our pride and drives away the mists of our self-righteousness.

Self-righteous, indeed! such wretches as we are, such offenders against God and truth as we have been—for us to talk of goodness when we are altogether vile, for us to boast of something hopeful in us when the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint—this is sheer insanity.

When the blessed interpreter comes and deals graciously with the spirit, we confess that God is upright, but as for ourselves we have gone astray like lost sheep. We have done the things which we ought not to have done, we have left undone the things which we ought to have done and there is no health in us.

Oh, those visions of God, how humiliating they are! So Job himself made confession, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” This supplies us with the second stage in the experience of divine mercy—Christ is recognized, the uprightness of God is revealed and understood.

III. The third stage is this—“THEN HE IS GRACIOUS UNTO HIM.”

God deals with convinced sinners in a way of grace. Every word here is weighty. “Then he is gracious unto him.” *Mark the time—then!* God is gracious to a man *when* Christ, having come to him as a messenger and an interpreter, he is led to discern his own sin and God’s uprightness. When he is humble, then God shows Himself to be gracious.

No debts are pronounced forgiven by the Great Master of all till they are owned and no release from the pains of bankruptcy are granted until we feel that we have nought with which to pay. When a soul pleads total insolvency and is truly penniless, then there is free forgiveness. When men admit the justice of God if He should punish them, *then*, and not till then, mercy comes in and the punishment is put away.

It is not consistent with the holiness of God to pardon a sinner while he denies his guilt or invents excuses to palliate his crimes. Nor is it reasonable for a sinner to expect remission while he vaunts his self-righteousness. How shall the hardness of a man’s heart move the compassion of his judge? Come, poor soul, fall on your knees, confess that God is upright, and then He will be gracious to you.

The *way* as well as the *time* demands your notice. It is through the messenger that God is gracious. *Then*—that is when the messenger comes. When Jesus interposes then God is gracious. You shall never taste of grace except out of the golden cup of Christ’s atonement. It is into that golden cup that God has poured the infinity of His grace.

Drink of it, sinner, by simply trusting in Christ. Drink of it in any other way you never can. Narrowly observe what the text says, “Then *he is gracious* unto him.” All salvation comes by way of grace. The word “grace” as used by us in its Latin form explains its own meaning. We speak of “gratis”—a thing free from cost—like the prescription of a physician if given without fee or the medicine supplied at the dispensary without charge.

All God’s mercy to a sinner is gratis. He never sells, He always gives. He asks no payment. He acts from no motives raised or suggested by anything in us, but because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.

Dear heart, it is a blessing for you when you can see that nothing but Christ can serve your turn, when you have done with appealing to justice and all your knocks are at mercy’s door. O sinner, you cannot be saved except by grace in the beginning, grace in the middle, and grace in the end.

What but grace can pardon sins such as yours and mine? What but grace could take such as we are and make us God’s children? What but grace could snatch us from hell and lift us up to heaven? When the man is humbled and Christ is revealed to him, then it is that God deals graciously with the man and then it is that the man knows he has found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And I like the thought, that it does not say God ever leaves off being gracious to that man. Where we do not read that God ceases, we may believe that He continues. Does He once deal graciously with a sinner? He will always be gracious to that sinner. Never will He change. That sinner once blessed shall be blessed through life, and blessed in death, and blessed in eternity through the sovereign, overflowing, immutable grace which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Well, we have come a long way. We have found the sinner sick and near to die. The interpreter has come. He has shown him the uprightness of God and given him an assurance of God’s gracious disposition—now the sinner knows that Christ alone can save him.

IV. Let us proceed to the next stage—GOD DELIVERS THE SINNER.

“He saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit.” What shall we understand by this? Does it refer to “*the grave*” which is dug like a pit? Well, such an interpretation may harmonize with Elihu’s discourse as he describes the man whose soul draws near to the grave and his life to the destroyers.

But when delivered from going down into the pit, his flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth. So the psalmist celebrates the loving-kindness of the Lord—"O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; thou hast kept me that I should not go down into the pit."

What more shall we understand by the pit from which the soul is delivered? The pit is often used in Scripture as the emblem of great distress and misery. Captives in the East were frequently shut up in pits all night. So Isaiah says, "They shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison" (Isa 24:22).

And again in another place, "The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail" (Isa 51:14). There is a bondage of soul, which involves depression of spirits and failing of heart that may well be likened to confinement in a pit from which there appears no way of escape.

But may we not understand still more by the pit? Alas! then, dear friends, we sometimes read of the pit, when the word is pregnant with deeper meaning, even of the pit that is bottomless, that place of torment prepared for devils and lost souls.

Oh, if there were time, what a picture we have before us! The pit, the bottomless pit—an awful representation, a horrible vision of the future wrath of God! The pit—black, dark, descending, adown which the soul slips and slides, and falls headlong! Going down into the pit—what a dreadful expression!

Not going down as miners do to seek for ore, but being hurled by the strong hand of the avenging angel downwards into the abyss! There, on the verge of the precipice you are. Though not falling down that abyss yet, your feet have almost gone, your steps have well-nigh slipped. At such a crisis the mercy of God comes to the sinner's aid and cries in thrilling tones, "Deliver him!"

It is not a mere shout of warning. It is a voice that has power in it. It is the clear silvery note of rescue and the man is delivered just as he is about to sink to rise no more.

Kings and emperors, when they have condemned men to die, can exercise the prerogative of mercy. Let the royal mandate issue concerning a prisoner, "Deliver him," then the prison doors are opened, for the king's pardon has been given.

Just such a thing does God with condemned sinners, when they bow down before Him and confess the righteousness of the sentence. Through Jesus Christ, the heavenly messenger, He says, "Deliver him! deliver him!" There is a legal pardon. The man is set free from the bonds of the jailer, instead of being given over to the hands of the executioner. Henceforth he shall live in peace and joy. "Deliver him!"

Perhaps the three significations of the pit I have alluded to may be combined in one dark picture. Sickness brings the sinner to the immediate prospect, not of death only, but of his endless doom. The sorrows and remorse of his soul produce, as it were, a foretaste of that anguish which knows no abatement.

And soon! Hell does yawn at his feet "a universe of death"—"worse than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived." How many witnesses we might call to speak to the truth of all this! Why, Elihu said, "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man." The anguish is real and the joy of rescue is real likewise.

Did not Hezekiah feel them both? The message came to him, "Thus saith the LORD, set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Then he prayed vehemently and he wept sore. Afterwards the Word of the Lord came to him that his prayer was heard, that his tears were seen, and that his life should be spared. And this is what he said, "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it from the pit of corruption*; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."

What a shout of joy is that of David when he says, "He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings"! In like manner Jonah speaks, "Thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God."

Very memorable too is the sweet promise of God to the daughter of Zion, by the mouth of the prophet Zechariah, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of

the pit wherein is no water.” Yes, my dear friends, and I feel bound to say for myself, to the praise of my God—

*“Thy love was great, thy mercy free,
Which from the pit delivered me.”*

Well do I remember when the sentence went forth to my soul, “Deliver him!” The time did indeed seem long at first. I was years and years upon the brink of hell—I mean in my own feeling. I was unhappy, I was desponding, I was despairing. I dreamed of hell, my life was full of sorrow and wretchedness, believing that I was lost.

But oh! the blessed Gospel of the God of grace came to me at length with that soft voice, “Look unto me, and be you saved, all ye ends of the earth!” With it came a sovereign word, “Deliver him!” and I who was but a minute before as wretched as a soul could be, could have danced for very merriment of heart.

And as the snow fell on my road home from the little house of prayer I thought every snowflake talked with me and told of the pardon I had found. I was white as the driven snow through the grace of God. Oh! that word, “Deliver him!” It so restrains the temptations of Satan, and quells the strivings of conscience, that the poor soul has instantaneous liberty and rejoices with joy unspeakable.

Mark you, my dear friend, if ever you should look to Christ by simple faith and God should say, “Deliver him,” that, “Deliver him” will last forever. God does not play fast and loose with sinners. If He pardons today, He will not condemn tomorrow. He does not loose and then bind again. He opens and no man shuts. Once He says, “Deliver him,” you may walk through all the earth and who shall lay anything to your charge. For who is he that can arrest you, and cast you into prison against this, “Deliver him”?

There may have come into this place some great offender. It is impossible for me to discriminate among you, or single out any one of these thousands, but there may be here one of the very blackest class of sinners. To you Christ’s Gospel has come. I hope you have been led to feel that you are guilty, to confess your sin, and to own that you can only be saved through God’s grace and mercy.

Well now, if you will but trust my Savior, the Lord Jesus, who once died on Calvary’s cross and now lives enthroned in glory—if you will but trust Him now, the sentence shall come from the throne, “Deliver him,” or “Deliver her, from going down into the pit.”

Oh! there have been many outcasts in these very aisles who have found grace and obtained remission of their sins. The harlot has heard the word, “Deliver her from going down to the pit.” The thief and the drunkard, too, though in their own conscience on the very brink of hell and all but sliding in, have heard it and they are here among the happy worshippers who praise God.

Some of us who never fell into those fouler vices, though as depraved in our hearts as they, have heard that blessed sound, and we are here to express our soul’s desire that you all knew it. O that you all trusted Christ. O that you were all saved by that blessed mandate, “Deliver him from going down into the pit”.

V. The last thing is that GOD EXPLAINS TO THE SINNER WHOM HE DELIVERS THE REASON OF HIS DELIVERANCE.

“Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.” “I have found a ransom”—a covering. Catch the thought. There are your sins like a putrid slough, reeking with corruption. They are black. Like a huge pool of blood, they are scarlet. It is abhorrent to the pure eyes of God to look upon the heart that is a very reservoir of pollution. He must smite you if He look at it.

Listen—“I have found a covering”. Christ comes in and covers it all. “Blessed is that man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” As the mercy seat covered the law and was called a covering, so does the atonement of Christ cover the perfect law of God—and it puts out of God’s sight every sin of all those who trust in Christ.

But let us take the word as we get it in the English version—a ransom—that means a price. When a man was in debt, he used to be, according to the old law, put into prison. Well, how did he get his discharge? He came out if the debt was paid, of course, at once. So God says, “Deliver him: I have found a price, I have found a recompense, I have found a substitute, I have found a ransom.”

The Lord Jesus Christ has suffered for us what God’s wrath demanded of us.

*“He bore, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

Christ stood in our stead that we might go free. I have told you this grand old tale so many times in this house that sometimes as I am coming here I think to myself—“I can find no new metaphor to illustrate it and no new words to rouse the languid attention. They will tell me that I am always harping on the same string.”

Still, still, I must continue to expound and enforce this substitutionary suffering of Christ. I cannot help it. It is as much as my soul is worth to keep it back, for I am persuaded that it is the very essence of the Gospel—the vicarious suffering of Christ. At any rate, I have no Gospel to preach to you but this—that God has punished Christ instead of you that will believe on Christ and therefore He cannot punish you—you are clear.

Christ has paid your debts. The receipt is given. You are liberated. God has no claims upon you from His justice now—they are all discharged. Christ has discharged all your liabilities. “By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Never listen, I entreat you, my dear hearers, to the derisive sneer of the scorner, as he attempts to cast discredit upon the righteousness of God in the imputation of our sins to the great Redeemer. I know that it is not in the power of skeptic, rationalist, Socinian, or infidel to bring forth one argument that can refute the plain testimony which abounds in the Scriptures. But they can and they do ask if our moral sense of rectitude is not shocked at inflicting punishment on the innocent and bestowing rewards as well as pardon on the guilty.

Do they object to you that it were unjust on the part of God to make one man suffer personally for another man’s sin? Tell them, if they better understood the doctrine, they would see that instead of outraging the morality of men, it manifests the righteousness of God. Tell them, as one of our most famous Puritans did, that the Redeemer and redeemed have such an intimate relation that what one does or suffers, the other may be accounted to do or suffer.

It is no unrighteousness if the hand offend, for the head to be smitten. Christ is our Head and we are His members. Tell them that He who suffered, the Just for the unjust, had power to lay down His life and power to take it again. His submission therefore was voluntary. Tell them that He who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, agreed and stipulated to bear our iniquities—the whole matter was settled in covenant between the Father and the Son.

Tell them once more that our Lord Jesus Christ counted the cost and estimated the recompense, when He for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. For with honor and glory shall He be crowned. Because He humbled Himself, therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and because He made Himself of no reputation, to Him is given a name which is above every name.

Tell them His mediatorial glory surpasses thought. Bid them cease their pitiless clamor and leave us to our joys. It is the sweetest music out of heaven and it is the source of the music of heaven. “I have found a ransom.” Christ’s ransom for enslaved sinners is the world’s good news. Tell it, then, and as you hear it, let your hearts rejoice.

You notice these words, “I have found a ransom.” You did not find it for yourselves. You could not ever have discovered it, much less have brought it into the world. But God found it out. The infinite wisdom of God was needed to find the way of salvation by a substitute. “I have found a ransom.” Now,

since God has found it, and God is satisfied with it, let me, chief of sinners though I be, find rest in this divine satisfaction.

Conscience says to me, “Well, but how can your sins be forgiven?” Again conscience thunders, “Recollect such a day, such a night, such an act, such a blasphemy. Do you think Christ can wash such a devil as you are?” I answer, “Well, if God is satisfied, I am sure I will be.”

If you owe a debt and your creditor takes the money of another, and he is quite easy about it, why, man, do not you be uneasy about it. If he is satisfied, you may be, and if God is content with Christ, so, poor sinner, let you and I be satisfied, and let us begin to sing—

*“I will praise Thee every day!
Now Thine anger’s turn’d away,
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding sacrifice.
Jesus is become at length
My salvation and my strength:
And His praises shall prolong,
While I live, my pleasant song.”*

O bless the dear name of Him who suffered in your stead. O take His ransom-price. Look at it. Turn over every sacred drop of it in your memory and your gratitude. Be satisfied and more than satisfied. Rejoice and be exceeding glad to be delivered from going down into the pit. God has found an all-sufficient, and a most blessed ransom for your souls, and therefore you are delivered.

What more can I say to you, my dear hearers. I have told you the way of mercy and I have described to you the footsteps of mercy in the experience of those who have proved its saving efficacy. But I cannot bring Christ to your souls, or when Christ comes nigh unto you, as He does now in the ministry of His Gospel, I cannot make you open the doors of your hearts to receive Him.

O you who do not believe and are yet in your sins, what more can I do for you than thus to cry aloud in your ears and proclaim to you the path of life? This one thing I can do—I can stand here and break my heart to think that you refuse Him. But no, I cannot take leave of you thus. I must again beseech and entreat, and implore you as you love your souls, turn not away from the divine messenger, from Jesus Christ the friend of sinners.

He asks no great thing of you. He bids you not pass through ceremonies that will take you days and months, but now, one believing glance at yonder cross, one glance at Him who died there for sinners, and it is done. Christ is honored. God is satisfied. You are saved.

Go your way and tell your friends what great things He has done for you, and God bless you. Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.