

SELF LOW, BUT CHRIST HIGH

NO. 2161

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 31, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof:
but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”*
Matthew 8:8.

THIS centurion was a worthy man from the human point of view, but he called himself unworthy when he turned towards our Lord. He was so excellent a man that the elders of the Jews, who were by no means partial to Roman soldiers, pleaded with Jesus that he was worthy. Had he been personally there, he would have repudiated their plea and he did so by the second party of friends whom he sent to our Lord. As one set of friends had said, “He is worthy,” another set of friends was bid to say, in his name, “Lord, I am not worthy.” The worthiest men in the world do not think themselves worthy—while the most unworthy people are generally those who boast of their own worthiness and, possibly, of their own perfection.

We should not have wondered had this man been proud, for he was one of the conquering race and the representative of a tyrannical power. If he were not a very great officer, but only the captain of a hundred men, yet it is not unusual for petty officers to be more haughty than their superiors. If a man is placed in a very high and responsible position, he is frequently sobered by his responsibilities—but a mere jack-in-office is usually greater than the emperor himself! However, this centurion was a man of gentle mold and said of himself, “I am not worthy.” He might have been proud of his popularity among the Jews. Few can bear to be surrounded with an atmosphere of esteem without beginning to esteem themselves much too highly.

He had built a synagogue for the Jews. That is a good thing to do, but it is very possible to build a synagogue and to become a great man in one's own opinion—and stand several courses of bricks higher in pride. Not so, however, this good man who had built a synagogue, but did not presume upon the greatness of his own generosity. He never mentioned it, but said, “I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.” He was a man used to command. He says to this man, “Go, and he goes. And to another, come, and he comes.” They that are known to be obeyed are apt to hold themselves at a high valuation—but this centurion had not fallen into the very common fault. He watched carefully over the sickness of his young servant and was earnest that he might be healed. He was a tender master as well as a liberal neighbor.

If we wished to pick out a truly worthy man, we need not go further than this Roman soldier, or we might fare worse and yet he said, “Lord, I am not worthy.” Further, note that he did not say, “Lord, the room in which my servant sleeps is not worthy of You—and it is not right that You should climb to the attic where the boy lies sick.” He said, “I am not worthy that You should come under *my* roof”—not even into the best parlor, or the drawing room. It is my house and being such, it is the abode of one who has not dared to seek a personal interview with You and I judge it to be altogether unfit for Your entertainment. He was fearful of troubling the Lord and felt that to bring Him through the streets to his door was more than he could think of for a moment, when a word would suffice to work the miracle he sought.

Beloved Friends, my point this morning is this—I would call your attention to the happy blending of this beautiful humbleness with an extraordinary degree of faith. In his confession of sin he is unsparing—“Lord I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.” But in his confession of faith he is equally clear. “Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” It is a kind of vulgar error that a lowly esteem of ourselves must be connected with a very great diffidence towards Christ. I call it a vulgar *error*, for it is an error both common and baseless. The fact is that high thoughts of self go with low thoughts of Christ—and well they may, for they are birds of a feather. But low thoughts of self should always be associated with high thoughts of Christ—for they are *both* products of the Spirit of God and they help each other.

Our unworthiness is a foil to the brightness of our Lord's infinite Grace. We sink deep in humility, but soar high in assurance. As we decrease, Christ increases. To make this point clear, I shall say, first of all, that *a sense of unworthiness is very desirable and commendable*. But secondly, that *a sense of unworthiness can be very wrongly used* and can even be made the occasion of grave sin. Then, thirdly, I shall add that *a sense of unworthiness finds a fit companion in a strong faith in Christ*. Of this the text supplies us with an instance. May the Holy Spirit help our meditations and make them truly profitable!

I. First, then, A SENSE OF UNWORTHINESS IS VERY DESIRABLE AND COMMENDABLE. Some of you are destitute of it. I dare say you think it a mean and miserable thing. You suppose it would injure your manliness, lower your self-respect and dampen your courage. Dear Friends, the manliness which feeds on sin is a poisonous fungus which grows out of the rottenness of a corrupt heart. May it be taken away from us! Any condition of mind which is founded on a falsehood must be an evil one—it is a bubble blown by ignorant conceit. Let us not desire more self-respect, manliness, or courage than will be consistent with the truth of things.

I commend a sense of our unworthiness because *it is a sense of what is true*. When a man thinks himself unworthy before the Lord, his thoughts are right. When he feels that he could not be saved by the merit of his own works, for his works are faulty and defiled, then he judges according to fact. Whatever result a thought may have upon us, whether it makes us happy or makes us sad, this is a secondary matter—the main point with an honest mind must always be—Is it true? If it is a truthful thought, I ought at once to entertain it, cost me what it may. Should the truth create devastation within my soul and destroy all my fair hopes and promising fancies, it must be so, for the most painful effect of truth is better for me than the most flattering results of falsehood.

Better the suffering of truth than the kisses of deceit. The arrow which pierces the heart of self-conceit is a blessing! If you take a very lowly view of yourself, some may call you morbid but they know not of what spirit you are. Humility is healthy—lowliness is no disease. When we think worse and worse of ourselves, we are getting nearer and nearer to the truth. We are by nature depraved, degraded, guilty and worthy of the wrath of God. If any hard thing can be imagined against fallen man, it is assuredly true of him. What worse character can be given to human nature than that which is drawn by the pen of Inspiration in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans? Oh, that God would make us lowly in spirit and fill us with a deep feeling of our own unworthiness—for this will only be revealing to us the truth and delivering us from the way of falsehood.

In the next place, note that *a deep sense of unworthiness is no proof that a man has grossly sinned*. It may be viewed in quite the opposite light—if the man had been heinously wicked his conscience would have lost its sensitiveness—and he would not, in all probability, have felt his unworthiness so keenly. He that has high thoughts of himself is not necessarily a man of clean life and, on the other hand, he that has very depreciatory thoughts of himself is not thereby proven to be worse than others. He that feels himself unworthy has something about him that God esteems. We are sure of this, for when the Lord seeks a lodging among men, though He might have His choice of palaces, He nevertheless deigns to say, “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Do not judge men by their estimates of themselves, or if you do, take this as your guide, that he that humbles himself is to be exalted and he that exalts himself is to be abased. He that is great, is little—let him that is little to himself be all the greater with you. God loves not those who boast—He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty.

I commend this sense of unworthiness because *it has a tendency to make a man kind to others*. He who thinks highly of himself, another man may think a nobody. Pride has no heart and will rather turn a sick servant out of doors than seek a physician for him. If a man is proud he will say, “I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. I am not to be worried by having sick boys to look after.” Sympathy, tenderness and the valuation of others are strangers in the house of the proud—but they take up their abode with those who think themselves unworthy. Beloved, it is well to think little of yourselves, for then you will have more thought to spare for the sorrows of others. If you know yourself to be unworthy, you will cheerfully recognize the claims of others and will feel that it is not beneath you to care for the poorest and most obscure.

There is some trace of a work of Divine Grace in your heart when you have a love to your neighbor because you feel that you are no better than he. This is infinitely better than to be so great that you can trample down the crowd in your

imperial and imperious dignity and look down with contempt upon the many who have not attained to that eminent degree of honor which you suppose yourself to be enjoying. The great man, the very great man, the highly-deserving man, the person who is a right honorable and worshipful personage rides roughshod over his fellows and crushes them without compunction if they lie in his way and may hinder his design. But the consciously unworthy man, the man who feels that he owes everything to the mercy of God and must still depend upon that mercy and that mercy only, will be tender and gentle towards his fellow sinners and speak comfortably unto them.

We commend, again, this sense of unworthiness because *it makes man lowly towards the Savior*. Of all things that are contemptible, a proud bearing towards the Lord Jesus is the most hateful—yet it is by no means unusual. Some seem to fancy that Jesus is a servant at their beck and call. They talk about His salvation as though He *ought* to give it and they could claim it for themselves and all mankind. If we speak about the Sovereign choice of some unto eternal life, they begin chattering about injustice and partiality—as if any guilty man had a right to anything from the Lord of Glory—except the dreadful right to be punished for his sins! I think I hear the Master say, “May I not do as I will with My own?” Many of those who pretend to be the advocates of Divine Grace are the betrayers of it and snatch from its hand the silver scepter of its sovereignty.

Beloved, it is well in prayer to come to our Lord, not as creditors seeking a debt but as condemned criminals, begging for a free pardon. We have no claim on God. If He chooses to save us, it must be of His own Free Grace. Let us come humbly, saying, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. That You should die for me remains the greatest of all miracles in my esteem. That You should choose me and call me—and pardon me and save me—is a world of wonders at which my soul stands gratefully amazed! Why me? How could You look on such a dead dog as I am!” Our right state of heart, when dealing with our Lord Jesus, is that of the penitent washing His feet with tears, or of the leper who fell at His feet and worshipped Him. If we would come to the Savior of sinners, we must come *as* sinners. We must come as humble petitioners and not as those who proudly fancy that they have a claim upon the Grace of God.

A sense of unworthiness is exceedingly useful because *it puts a man where God can bless him*. “Oh,” you ask, “where is that?” The Lord will only act in conformity with His own attributes. God will always be God and as He will be God alone in Creation, so He will certainly be God alone in the *new* Creation. Our only right position before God is to know that we are undeserving and unworthy while He is holy and glorious. We must hear Him say, “I am God and beside Me there is none else,” or we shall never look unto Him to be saved. If I am somebody and I stand up with my rights and my claims, God cannot bless me without conceding to me that which He never will concede! How dare I *claim* that which He calls a free gift!

How often have I made this place ring with that voice of the Lord, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”! Depend upon it, God will be God! And if you will not be saved without His leaving the throne of His Sovereignty, then you will perish without hope! He will be King and Lord in the work of salvation—you must take it as His free gift or die without it! If it is of Divine Grace it cannot be of *right*—the things are contradictory! Unutterably great is His pity! Immeasurable is His mercy—but He will have no pity for those whose proud self-will stands out against His Sovereign Grace! O Sinner, if you would be pardoned, you must confess that the Lord is King! Your touch of Jesus Himself must be like that of Thomas when he put his finger in the wound, and cried, “My Lord, and my God”!

You must have Jesus to be Lord and God to you or He will be nothing to you. Beloved, no man will yield to this till he has a thorough conviction of his own unworthiness. We are not worthy to be saved—if we were, it would be of *debt* and not of Grace. We are not worthy to receive any good from the hand of an offended God—if we were, we should make our appeal to justice, and mercy would not be needed! Come, dear Hearers, let us bow before the Lord and admit that He alone is King! Let us confess that we deserve nothing but His wrath—

*“If sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce You just in death.
And if my soul were sent to Hell,
Your righteous Law approves it well.”*

It is assuredly so and therefore we put in no claim, but simply cry, “O God, be merciful to me.”

This state of mind, once more, *makes a man in love with the simple Word of God*. This man, because he was not worthy, did not ask of Christ any mystic words or imposing ceremonies, nor even so much as a visit to his house. No, he

was content that the Lord should speak the word! It is our proud human nature that so much sighs for finery and pomp—we would gladly go to Heaven by some royal road or glittering way—we want to be saved to music and perfected by paraphernalia! We would like to be forgiven, but we must have a visible priest in full canonicals—and we must have a decorated altar and a show of candles in the daylight! Gewgaws are needed to conceal the humiliation of being saved by pure Grace! But a soul that feels its own unworthiness cries, “Lord, save me in Your own way. Your Word is enough for me. Speak the word of command and it suffices me.”

We read, “He sent His word, and healed them” (Psa. 107:20), and a sense of unworthiness will make us content to be saved in that most simple manner. Humble souls love a plain Gospel. I know what some are—they read a book which contains the Gospel and because it is very simple, they say, “This will do for my servant girl, or for the laborer in my field.” But for themselves they seek something more difficult to understand and consequently more flattering to their pride. Many people like a preacher who can confuse the Gospel for them—plain speech offends them. We are overdone with such folk in this generation. Certain people, when they hear what they cannot comprehend, say fervently, “What a wonderful discourse! I delight in a man of culture who raises the tone of preaching above what the lower classes can understand.” They are fools that talk so!

The more plain the word, the more likely it is to be the Word of God. Did not Paul say, “Seeing we have received this ministry, we use great plainness of speech”? The Gospel is not sent into the world for the *elite*, for the few choice souls that read the reviews. The Gospel is sent into the world for “every creature” and if it is meant for “every creature,” it must be made so plain that even non-readers may be able to comprehend it and persons with the least education, or none at all, may be able to grasp it. You, learned Sir, may like a highly-finished Gospel which only a half-dozen gentlemen like yourself can comprehend, but I like the common salvation, the good news for the crowd, the writing which he that runs can read. Does not your candor and humanity admit that it is well that the Gospel should be simple enough for the poor and the illiterate, since they need salvation as well as the educated? I would to God that a sense of unworthiness brought us all down from those pinnacles of the temple of vanity where we stand in mutual admiration, but in awful danger of a fall. Oh, that the heavenly Wisdom would make us willing to be saved like commonplace sinners—willing for Christ not to come to our house, but to give the word of command by which the miracle of Grace would be worked!

Now, Beloved Friends, I leave that point, only putting it thus—Do you know your own unworthiness? I do not ask you whether you have been racked with terrors, nor whether you have been tormented with doubts, nor whether you have been drowned in despair—that may be, or may not be. But are you willing to subscribe to this—that you are not worthy? That a sentence of condemnation may fitly be passed upon you and if you are saved it must be of Free Grace alone?

II. But now, secondly, I have to show you that THIS SENSE OF UNWORTHINESS CAN BE WRONGLY USED and is often perverted to ruinous ends. Yonder is a person who cries, “I hear the Gospel, but *I cannot believe that it is intended for me*. I cannot think I am aimed at in the proclamation of free forgiveness and gracious acceptance.” Friend, why not? “Well, I am unworthy.” Listen! Is there a man on earth who is not unworthy? Hear the words of Jesus—“Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.”

We are not sent to every *worthy* creature, but to “every creature,” worthy or unworthy! Are you not a creature? Well, then, the Gospel is to be preached to *you*. And do you think God means it to be preached to you as a mere form or a grim farce? Has it no relation to *you*? Do you believe after believing and being baptized according to the Divine command, God will say, “I never meant that promise for you”? It is atrocious that you should think so! It is a new and grievous sin to imagine that the Lord would run back from His Word! You are unworthy. We grant it—but does that make God false? You are unworthy, more unworthy than you know—but does that prove the Lord to be untrue? Will He tantalize men by sending them a Gospel which is not intended for them? Will He put salvation before them and bid them believe in Jesus for salvation when He never means to give it to them even if they do comply with the conditions He has laid down?

Come, come! I will go with you as far as you like in your confession of your own unworthiness, but I cannot tolerate your making God unworthy because *you* are unworthy! He will keep His Word, however false *you* may be! Every soul

that believes in Christ Jesus has everlasting life. I have seen this same evil come up in the form of *doubt as to the mercy of God*. When a man's sin appears very great, he is apt to say, "God cannot have mercy upon *me*." Now, Sir, you shall be allowed to be the chief of sinners if you feel yourself to be so—but you cannot be allowed to deny the Omnipotence of God! You are sadly unworthy—but it is in the unworthy that Divine Grace finds its sphere of operation—and you must not limit the power of that Grace which comes to men through Christ Jesus. The Lord delights in mercy and do you doubt it? Do you dare say that He cannot have mercy on whom He will have mercy?

Why, that denies the whole body of Scripture throughout which He declares to us that, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." He testifies that, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Do you deny this? He puts it expressly, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." You know these promises! Will you call them lies and so make *God* a liar? Your unworthiness must not be allowed to be used as an argument for the denial of God's glorious attribute of mercy. Does He not say—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon"? Which is true, you or God? Depend upon it the lie is not with Him! Oh, let it not be with you—but now, even now, believe that His mercy endures forever and that where sin abounded Grace did much more abound.

Poor creatures have even gone the length of *doubting the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse them*. If you talk so, I must put my hand on your mouth—you must not say another word of that sort! Is it not enough that you have bespattered yourself with sin? Must you now asperse your Savior? Will you trample on the blood of Christ? Will you deny its cleansing power? As He is God as well as Man, our Lord's sacrifice has an infinite virtue in it and we cannot endure that you, guilty as you are, should add to all your former crimes this highest and most ungenerous iniquity of charging the blood of Christ with a lack of cleansing power! Will you call God a liar in regard to his own Son? O Sirs, if you perish it will not be because the blood has too little efficacy—it will be because you have not believed on the name of the Son of God—and will not come unto Him that you might have life!

We have known persons, under deep distress, *doubt the promise of God*. A great and sure promise, which obviously belonged to them, they have set aside, saying, "It is too good to be true. I cannot believe it because I am so unworthy." Again I follow the same mode of reply—*you* may be a liar, but do not make God one! *You* may have made many promises which you have broken, but do not charge God with doing so! You have vowed that you would do this and that and you have forgotten your pledges and thrown your promises into forgetfulness—but dream not that God will do so! He is not a man that He should lie!

O Man, I pray you, if you feel as if you were on the brink of Hell, yet do not doubt God's faithfulness to His promise! Do not cast a doubt upon His truthfulness—that would be a superfluity of naughtiness! I feel, sometimes, that even if I were lost, I must still believe God to be true. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Here, put the killing sword to my bare neck and let me die the death I deserve—but I will still believe that God is good and true! O Jehovah, You do keep Your Word! Such faith is not one jot greater than the Lord deserves of us, for He has never deceived us and He never will. Dear Heart, do take the promise of God to mean what it says and believe it.

Suppose somebody were to trust himself with Christ for salvation and were to believe God would, therefore, save him and yet he should not be saved—what then? I will not suppose such a case! But I will wait till you find me an actual instance and then I will consider how to answer you. Why, if a soul that trusted in the promise of God and fled to Christ for refuge could be sent down to Hell, the legions of the infernal Pit would exhibit him as a trophy of their victory over God! They would carry him on their shoulders and shout, "Here is a proof that God can lie! Here is a proof that Christ's blood has failed to save a Believer! Here is a sinner that trusted God and, after all, was lost in the teeth of God's Covenant and Oath!" Do you think that such a thing will ever happen? Let not such a blasphemous idea be tolerated in your mind for a moment! Take the promise as coming from God and, therefore, as assuredly true. Simply believe it, and be happy.

Some, because they are unworthy, *would deny the Lord Jesus the pleasure of saving them*. When Cato committed suicide, Caesar was sad that Cato should envy him the glory of saving his life. Perhaps if Cato had known what Caesar would have said, he had not been so swift with his sword. Beloved, will you deny Christ the pleasure of forgiving you? Will you go to Hell that you may spite the Savior by not suffering Him to save you? Will you look the eternal Father in

the face and express a hate so malignant that you venture to say, “I would rather be condemned forever than be saved by the Grace of God?” I cannot believe it! Surely you are not such a madman! Come, come, Man! I will let you use the blackest language about yourself—you may paint yourself as almost a fiend and little better than the devil if this will please you! You shall sweep up Hell, itself, for epithets, if you will, to set forth your own sin and misery! But, I pray you, touch not God! Deny not His mercy! Doubt not His faithfulness! Refuse not His love but submit yourself to His Saving Grace!

Remember how the Syrian messengers diligently observed whether anything would come from the King of Israel and when Ahab said, “He is my brother,” they did, “hastily catch at it,” and they said, “Your brother Benhadad.” Oh, that you would hastily catch at the Word of Grace, for one word may be enough to bring you consolation! Remember how the Ninevites, when Jonah preached to them, repented on the bare hope of, “Who can tell?” They had not a word of promise to back them up in their confidence, but they ventured upon, “Who can tell but God may turn from His fierce anger, that we perish not?” Come, dear Heart, catch at the smallest hopeful thing. Have a trap for sunbeams as well as for hailstones. Take fast hold upon the sweet Words which God has said. Believe them to be true and risk all upon them. You will never believe better of God than you shall find Him to be.

Alas, there are some whose sense of unworthiness *turns to sullen rebellion*. I will not speak harshly of them, but I do know some few who frequent these courts, of whom I must say that they are their own jailors and tormenters. Like one of old, they must confess, “My soul refused to be comforted.” There is another passage in the Psalms which says, “Their soul abhors all manner of meat.” Who were these? David says they were fools. I do not say so much as that, dear Friends, of any of you—but I am solemnly afraid it would be true if I did say it. He that refuses all manner of meat is likely to starve and who is to be blamed for it? If you refuse the Bread of Life can we pity you if you die of hunger? To put from you the one and only salvation out of sullen hopelessness is as suicidal as if you stabbed yourself. Will you do so? Will you cry out, “I shall be lost. I know I shall! It is of no use preaching to me! It is of no use praying for me!”?

My dear Friend, are you really going to give yourself up in such an absurd way while you are yet in the land of hope? Here you sit in the dungeon and I stand before you with a free pardon—will you not take it? It is to be had for the asking—will you not ask for it? It is to be had by the willing receiver—will you not receive it? Then I solemnly tell you that if you remain obstinate there will soon be the rope about your neck and you will reap the due reward of your sin and folly. What? You still cry you are so unworthy? We *know* you are—yet a free pardon is granted you if you will accept it! “Oh, but I feel my unworthiness so terribly!” Would a man be hanged out of spite to the clemency of our gracious Queen? Would he choose to be executed because he felt unworthy to be pardoned? Will *you* be lost because you do not feel worthy to be saved?

Man alive, if I were you, I would say nothing against the Grace which would save me, but I would gratefully accept the loving pardon and the tender mercy of my Lord! I feel that it is no business of mine to plead for my own damnation! The devil and I have had many a skirmish and if there is anything to be said against my being saved, I have no doubt whatever that he will be particularly sure to say it. Therefore I do not go into that line of business—there is no room for me—Satan will do all that can be done in that direction. I find it far more profitable to be picking up all the crumbs of comfort I can find in the form of reasons why I should be saved! In reading the Word of God I find these reasons are as plentiful as blackberries in autumn! God has said it, and I believe it—“He that believes on Him has everlasting life.” I believe in Jesus and I have everlasting life!

[Here came a shout of “Hallelujah!” “Bless the Lord!”] Yes, we can all of us join in that shout and bless God for His free love which has abounded towards us—which love we have seen and known, and tasted and handled. Well might we all join in one long hallelujah and make the streets ring with—“Blessed be the name of the Lord.” But the poor folk I am thinking of sit down and bite their nails and chew their lips and weep their eyes away—and never move an inch towards the one blessing which they need above all things! Let me warn such. Remember, a man may commit suicide as truly by refusing to eat as by taking poison—and you may destroy your own souls by refusing Christ quite as surely and guiltily as if you plunged into open rebellion against the Lord God and ran to an excess of riot. Think of this, I pray you.

III. But now, thirdly—and I am glad to proceed to this much more pleasing subject—A SENSE OF UNWORTHINESS FINDS A FIT COMPANION IN STRONG FAITH IN CHRIST. For, remember first, *when you have no faith in yourself there is more room in the soul for faith in Jesus*. If you have confidence in yourself, that bit of self is

filled. But if you have no confidence in yourself, your soul is one great vacuum and you can hold more of Christ. The greater the emptiness, the more room for that which is to be the fullness! If you have no reason whatever why you should be saved except the Free Grace of God in Christ, then take that Free Grace here and now! God help you to do so and may nothing hinder you! Believe the more in Christ because you cannot, in any degree, believe in yourself.

Again, he that has low thoughts of himself *is on a vantage ground as to receiving saving Truth*. He who has true views of himself is likely also to discover the Truth with regard to the Lord Jesus and the Covenant blessings which come to us in Him. Everything depends, you know, upon the measure with which we calculate. If your yard is too short, or too long, everything will be inaccurate in proportion to the faultiness of your standard of measurement. When you have the right measure as to your own lost, ruined and undone condition, you will soon receive the right measure as to the Grace and ability of the Son of God who is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him! Jesus is an almighty Savior—there is no horrible crime, no unmentionable offense—no damnable sin which He cannot forgive. There is no criminality or baseness of character which He cannot overcome and remove. “All power is given unto Him,” and in the salvation realm He is King of kings and Lord of lords—and nothing can resist His sway. Do you believe this? If so, trust yourself to Him, now, and the moment you do you will pass from death unto life!

This man, again, through his being so lowly, *had not the conceit to question and doubt*. Doubt is, in most cases, the daughter of pride. Think of a man criticizing God! Job might possibly have done that while he heard of God by the hearing of the ear—but when his eyes saw Him he abhorred himself in dust and ashes. How dare we quibble at God’s way of saving the guilty! It is impertinence! It is insanity! Let us have none of it. This lowly estimate of himself brought the centurion *away from dictating to Jesus how the blessing should come*. A great many persons we meet with are always mapping out courses for the Holy Spirit. They are willing to be saved if they can be saved by a certain mode. They will believe if they see signs and wonders, but no way else. Their peace must come in the way they have selected and in no other—their mind is made up as to how it ought to be.

The centurion might have said, “Lord, come under my roof and then I will believe. The token of Your Presence shall make me sure.” He did not ask for signs, or wonders, or comforts. Lots of you here are waiting till you *feel* some singular feeling, or *see* some strange vision, or undergo a special *experience*. You cannot believe Christ’s bare Word—you are too proud to be saved by that, only. O my Hearers, if the Lord shows you your utter unworthiness you will be willing to be saved in the simplest manner! You will then ask nothing but this one thing, “Lord, save, or I perish.” If Christ had come to the centurion’s house, he would have had a very remarkable experience. It would be strange for a Roman soldier to entertain the Savior of the world! But he did not ask for that remarkable experience and peculiar honor. You read biographies, or you hear Christian people tell how they were saved and you put your finger on certain memorable points and you say, “If ever I feel *that*, or see *that*, I will believe in Christ—but no way else.”

Thus it seems that the Lord must bow to *your* will and not do as He thinks fit. Truly, the wind blows where it will and none of our dictation will have weight with the free Spirit or with the Sovereign Savior. If Christ had come to the man’s house there would have been great joy in it—but he did not ask for that joy. Some will not believe in the Lord Jesus unless they feel great joy. But, dear Friend, is it right to resolve that if you feel no joy you will not believe in Him? No, rather, if you walk in darkness and see no light, trust in the Lord! If all within seems to be contrary to the fact of your salvation, believe in Christ and you are saved—and if every power and passion of your nature should vote you lost, you are *not* lost if you are simply hanging to the bare Word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This man was so brought down that *he was content with just a word*. “Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” This is the point to come to. Are you content to believe God’s bare Word and to be saved by God’s Word alone? You would believe at once if I could work you a miracle, would you not? What would you believe? You would believe in me! And as I do not want you to believe in me, but in Christ, I will not work any miracle! Oh, but if you could feel some very singular emotion you would believe. What would you believe in? Why, in the singular emotion, that is all! You would not believe in God’s Word. He that cannot believe God’s Word without wonders really fixes his belief in the wonders and not in God’s Word! Take the naked Word of God, which is this—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” What though you neither sigh nor sing, though you neither have dreams nor doubt, though you have neither great comfort nor sharp conviction, believe in Jesus! Sinful, unworthy as you are, say, “This is all my salvation and all my desire. I accept the Lord Jesus as my All in All!”

And after all, *such faith is the greatest of faith*, for the Lord Jesus said, “I have not found such faith, no not in Israel.” One man stands up and tells you the ground of his confidence and you learn that at such a time he heard a voice, or in such a night he dreamed such a dream, or during certain months he had an awful experience of fear of Hell, or at another period he felt such joy that he was carried clean away. Do not think less of the Believer who says—

*“My experience is only this—
I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All in All”?*

This last man’s experience has the least of dross about it. I find written in the Infallible Book that if I trust the Lord Jesus He will perform His office of Savior upon me. I have trusted Him and He has saved me! “Is that all the witness you have?” asks one. What more witness do I need? I may be able to mention certain incidents which attended my conversion, but *these* are not my hope! I place no reliance upon what I have thought, or seen, or felt! If anybody could prove that I never saw and never felt and never heard anything of the kind, I should not be troubled about it, for one thing I know—I know that I heard that text, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” and I did look and I was saved!

What is more, if I did not then look and was not then saved, I do not care two pence to contest the point, for I am looking *now* and therefore I am saved! That is the comfort—we have not to rely on a past faith, but still to go on believing! Looking unto Jesus always! Coming to Him always—that is the true position for peace. If I rest in Christ every day, the fruit of that believing will be seen every day. I must not only believe in Jesus, but keep right on believing. God help you to do so! Set side by side with a deep sense of unworthiness, a high appreciation of the power of Christ to cleanse you from sin and to make you holy, even as God is holy! Make progress in these two things. They will not be like the legs of the lame, which are not equal, but they will be much alike in their happy effect upon your life. Down with self, and up with Christ—

*“Thus while I sink my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high.”*

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew 8:1-13; Luke 7:1-10.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—100 (VERS. II), 597, 556.***

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