

A Comforting Message for the Closing Year

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true and perfect rest for believers is found only in the Lord, encompassing rest from wandering, foes, weariness, and assured safety in Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 37:7, Joshua 1:13, Galatians 1:8, John 10:28, Isaiah 28:12, 1 Corinthians 10:4, Hebrews 4:10

Topics: "Rest in God", "Christian Assurance", "Faith and Trust"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon encourages believers to find their true rest in the Lord alone. He explores multiple dimensions of rest including freedom from wandering, enemies, weariness, and the assurance of eternal safety. Spurgeon's powerful message calls Christians to trust fully in Christ's finished work and to reject all other false refuges. This sermon offers comfort and strength for the Christian journey, especially as the year closes.

Transcript

"Rest in the Lord." Psalm 37:7.

IT is certain, Christian, that you have nowhere else to rest. Of the whole of this time-state it was well said, "This is not your rest," and of all the comfort that you find in earthly friendships and relationships, in the good things of this life, or in any hopes short of Heaven, we may truly say, "This is not your rest." The other day, at Highgate, I passed some fine old trees that were marked with a white cross, to indicate, no doubt, that they were to be cut down. So, everything we have here is marked with the woodman's cross and the axe must fell all our joys. You birds of paradise, build not your nests on trees that are marked to fall! This earth is not your rest! You shall fly the wide world over till your wings are weary, but, you doves of Christ, you shall find no rest till you come back to the hand of your Noah and nestle in His ark of Covenant Grace. "Rest in the Lord," says the text, and in saying so it does, as it were, condemn all other pretended rests and fancied refuges! May everyone of you who have wandered hear the voice of Wisdom and may your hearts say, "Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you!"

But though there is no rest to be found in earthly things, yet we may have rest even while here—rest which drops from above. Just as the wilderness yielded no bread to the children of Israel, yet there was bread for them in the wilderness, for it fell from Heaven! The arid sands could give no streams of cooling water, yet there was water even there, for the Apostle Paul tells us that "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Because I tell you that this world is a wilderness and you find it true, do not think that you are never to have any rest in it. Behold, your rest is sent to you from on high!

Behold, your refreshment comes from the Rock of Ages! In Jesus you have rest, even though you are pilgrims, and even though you are troubled, for we who have believed in Him, even now have entered into rest! True Christians, when they are in a healthy state of mind and heart, rest in the Lord and, as I hope this Tabernacle is not a leper house, but a place where the warriors of Christ have come to feast at the table of their great Captain, I desire for each of you, and for myself, also, that all of us who are in Christ may this night have perfect "rest in the Lord."

What is this rest that is mentioned in our text?

I. The rest which Believers enjoy is, first of all, REST FROM WANDERING.

You know that God promised to give rest to His ancient people. They had none in the wilderness, for, often, they had no sooner pitched their tents than they had to strike them again. As quickly as the fiery-cloudy pillar moved, so had they, though weary and footsore, to follow. Joshua said to the Reubenites and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance was to be on the further side of Jordan "You shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valor, and help them until the Lord has given your brethren rest." The Promised Land was always looked forward to by the weary and wandering tribes as a place where they would rest.

Well, Beloved, you and I no longer wander—we have come to our rest. O my Heart, how you did wander, like a weary pilgrim, through the Egypt of your bondage! You did wander to Sinai, where you did hear the Law of God that made you tremble! You did wander across the wilderness of Sin, where your good works vexed and tired you, and your evil works, like fiery serpents, bit you! But that is all over now. My Soul, you have crossed the Jordan and, having found Christ, you have no inclination to wander anymore. My Brothers and Sisters, remember how our minds used to wander after 50 pretended comforts and we found no joy in any of them? One day we thought this, the next day we thought that.

One day we dreamed that peace was to be found here, the next day, we fancied it was to be obtained yonder, the bubble mocked us as we pursued it and it continually fled from our grasp! We thought full sure that we had secured something solid, but the apple of Sodom was crushed when we laid hold upon it—it turned to ashes in our hand!

We used to be always wandering—none could tell where we would rest on the morrow—but now we rest in the Lord! We have no inclination to wander to anyone else. "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." Every now and then people discover a new gospel and they want us to believe it, but we say to them, "No, we are perfectly content with what we have received." Sometimes a new form of religion is invented, but it has no attractions for us! We have left off being pilgrims—we are settled down and cannot, by God's Grace, be moved! We say of all these inventions—

"Should all the forms that men devise

Assault my faith with treacherous art,

I'd call them vanity and lies

And bind the Gospel to my heart." I do not usually find it worth my while, nowadays, when anybody tells me, at the beginning of a book, that he is going to disprove all that I believe, to read the book at all! If a cook informs me that a joint of meat is bad and, on tasting the first mouthful, I find that it is so, there is no need that I should eat it all in order to prove that it is not good wholesome food! So, you had better leave

these tainted doctrines alone! When you have your principles firmly fixed, especially when you have come to rest at the very feet of the unchanging Jesus and have learned the meaning of that text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever," you have reached perfection's own self and you may well grow conservative and never go a step beyond! Paul could say to the Galatians, "If any man preaches any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed," for he could also say, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—

"Now rest, my long-divided Heart,

Fixed on this blissful center, rest, never more to go gadding abroad, to seek after other loves and other trusts! In that sense, dear Friends, "rest in the Lord." Be not carried about with every wind of doctrine, but abide fast by Christ, whom you have received by faith.

II. We have also another rest, and that is, REST FROM ALL OUR FOES.

Scripture, speaking of the victories of the children of Israel under Joshua and Caleb, says, "The land had rest from war." When Saul of Tarsus, the great persecutor, was converted, we read, "Then had the churches rest." Now, dear Friends, the people of God are always being molested by enemies—there are multitudes of foes on the right hand and on the left. Yet was David right when he penned that verse, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." The moment we begin to think of the prevalence of Christ's plea, the merit of Christ's blood, the power of Christ's arm, the faithfulness of Christ's heart—what are all our sins within us, or all our foes without us? Do they not melt away like the host of Midian before the sword of the Lord and of Gideon? Does some stout sin, like Goliath of Gath, come out and challenge you to fight? Take the name of the Lord as your sling and stone, and you shall yet be able to cut off the giant's head! Do your foes come out against you with multitudes of chariots? Let your faith open its eyes and you shall see horses of fire and chariots of fire round about you! Put your trust in God and you shall soon learn that more are they that are for you than all that can be against you. "War, war, war!" the voices of enemies constantly cry around the walls of Zion, but what is that sweet sound within the city? It is the music of the harp and the song of them that make merry!—

"There is a stream whose gentle flow

Supplies the city of our God

Life, love, and joy, still gliding through,

And watering our Divine abode." Yes, Brothers and Sisters, notwithstanding that Hell is against us, and that devilish trinity, the world, the flesh, and Satan—yet, when we come to our Lord Jesus Christ and sit under the shadow of His great Atonement and remember His glorious Resurrection and Ascension—we feel at once that we can "rest in the Lord."

III. Further, we have REST IN THE SENSE OF CONFIDENCE.

In this meaning of the word, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we do really, "rest in the Lord." We are not Christians if we do not, for the first mark of a Believer is that he rests in Christ for everything, depending on the blood

and righteousness of Christ as the Alpha and the Omega of his salvation. Now, as Believers rest in Christ for the first things, so ought they to rest in Christ for all things. Whatever need you have, rest on the bare

arm of God to supply it. Though you should require infinity, it is at your beck and call. Only rest in God, for Omniscience is watching for your good and Omnipotence is prepared to aid you!

Beloved, I fear that we often place our confidence in ourselves, or get resting on an arm of flesh, depending first on this friend and then on that, relying first upon this scheme and then upon that plan. Happy is the man who has learned to cast off Saul's armor, saying, "I cannot go with these." The man who can cry, as David did to the giant, "You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." "Rest in the Lord," Christian, whatever it is that you require to bring you safely to His dwelling place above, and let your confidence exercise itself upon your Lord's faithfulness, almightiness and truth.

IV. Now, though we have used the word, "rest," in three senses, we have not as yet come to the sweetest part of our subject. Believers have REST IN THE SENSE OF SAFETY.

A Hebrew, pursued by the manslayer, never rested till he reached the City of Refuge. Lot must not rest until he gets into the little city of Zoar. So, we must never think of resting till we are saved. You who are afraid you are not saved have no rest. There are some of you who never say more than this, "Well, I hope I am saved," or, "I trust I may be saved." You do not have real rest, dear Friends—you may have something like rest, but you do not know the perfect peace of one who has fled for refuge to Christ—one who has given up every resting place except the finished work of Jesus! Such a person, having taken refuge in Christ, feels positively sure that nothing can harm him. What if I should venture to make my boast in my God tonight? What if I should say—

"In my Surety I am free His dear wounds avail for me."

What if I should glory in sin completely pardoned and in a robe of righteousness, woven from the top throughout, in which I stand arrayed before the Lord? If I said all this, I should say no more than you ought to say, you who are trusting in the Lord!

You are saved, you are saved now! You are safe for all the days and all the nights you may live. You are safe in life and in death, in time and through eternity! Since Christ endured your condemnation, it cannot rest on you! God acquits you—therefore no accusation can lie against you. God absolves you. Christ pleads on your behalf—it is not possible that all your past sin can ruin you, for it was laid upon the Scapegoat's head of old—nothing in the present can daunt you, for Jesus says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Nothing in the future shall cast you down, for even to the end does the Lord keep His people! He gives unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

I recollect when I first heard the glorious doctrine of the Believer's eternal safety—the good old man preached it very plainly, indeed, but its effect on me—I was then an unconverted but anxious soul—its effect on me was that it set my mouth a-watering. "Oh," I thought, "what would I not give to be saved?" I never had any relish for that tinkering gospel which is preached by Arminians—it is a very fine thing to look at, but it does not bear the wear and tear of life! I never cared for that sham gospel which may save today, but may damn tomorrow. I never admired that gospel chariot which has no bottom to it, or has wheels with rotten spokes, and that breaks down in the miry places of the way. I never had a taste for that sort of teaching, even before I was converted.

But that Gospel which says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," and makes no, "ifs," and, "ands," about it—that Gospel which promises eternal life and says that Believers shall never perish—oh it set my heart a-longing! How ardently I desired to get hold of it! And when I learned that I might have it, that I, the vilest of the vile, might have it, have it on these terms—"Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth"—oh, it seemed worthy of God's giving and worthy of man's accepting, worthy of the Spirit's work, worthy of Christ's procuring, worthy, indeed, of the man it blesses and of the God who is glorified in blessing him! O dear Friends, let us, if we are not safe in Christ, long to be so, and may the Lord bring us to Him, even at this very hour!

"Rest in the Lord," then, Christians, for in Him is every Believer perfectly safe—

"Munitions of stupendous rock His dwelling place shall be.

There might his soul without a shock, The wreck of nature see."

V. But the word, "rest," has a further meaning. God gives to His people PERFECT REST FROM WEARINESS. Man sometimes wipes his brow, and asks, "When will the shadows come? When shall I have fulfilled as a hireling my

day of toil? " To think of being saved by our feelings and works brings much weariness to the spirit and, indeed, even to a Believer, this world's cares and strifes may often make him fling himself down upon his couch, and say, "Lord, let me die; I am no better than my fathers!" But, dear Friends, when we really rest in Christ—when we sit down under His shadow with great delight—all our weariness goes away at once! Do you not know what it is to spring up with elastic footsteps and go forth to some new duty, or to some fresh suffering, at the mere mention of your Lord's name, when, just before, you were bowed down with sorrow and thought that surely your end must soon come, and that you must speedily fall by the hand of the enemy? Every now and then, you know, our bodily strength needs to be renewed in sleep—constantly must this experience recur, or else we must die. Now, Jesus, "gives His beloved sleep," and all the calm that sleep can infuse into the body, does faith in Christ give to the soul! The jaded mind is calm when He is near. The distracted heart, when Christ has breathed upon it, is like a mountain lake on a summer's day.

Absence from Christ produces weariness, but the Presence of Jesus always brings a sense of perfect ease. Have I not seen a man go staggering along beneath a little load of trouble because he had not gone to God with his burden? Yet I have seen another carry three times the weight and stand like a Hercules, unmoved, with his feet firmly set, because God was in him, and his confidence was in the Most High. I have seen you, Friend, groaning and repining because you had a trifling loss, or a slight sickness. And I have seen another, close to the verge of death, who has suffered the loss of all things, who has, nevertheless, rejoiced in the Lord and sung aloud in his Redeemer's name. All the difference is here—if we rest in the Lord, we rest, and nothing can make us weary—but if we go not to Him, we know no rest, and the slightest fatigue bows us down.

I would, dear Friends, that all the members of this Church had more of this resting in the Lord. Sometimes I wish that some of you had more weariness—you will never work yourselves to death serving Christ—you are a great deal more likely to weary yourselves by serving the world. How men will toil and run here and there, to get a little of this world's goods—and then they put it into a bag that is full of holes! They neglect the means of Grace and, as to the week-night service—dear, dear, dear, there is that shop that must be attended to! And some of you can scarcely give yourselves time to pray because you must rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness. I wish that you would sometimes grow weary in that

kind of labor, and take to another Master, and work for Him as you have worked for the world, till you grew weary in His cause, for then would you know the sweet rest with which He makes the weary to rest when they have wearied themselves for Him in preaching, in teaching, in spreading His truth!

We read in Isaiah's prophecy, "This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest," and I know there are some weary ones here. You are not weary of God's work, but you are weary of bearing Christ's Cross. You have had so much shame and so much sorrow—well, well, Brothers and Sisters—"rest in the Lord." You may come to Him and since He carried His Cross, and that Cross was yours as well as His, you may put your cross upon His shoulder, and then you will find it easy work to carry the cross, yourselves! This, then, is one of the rests which every Christian may have—rest from weariness.

VI. There is also a rest called THE REST OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

Was it not said of Boaz, by the mother-in-law of Ruth, "The man will not be in rest until he has finished the thing this day"? Some Christians never have any rest, or they have but very little, because they do not understand the doctrine of a finished salvation. If you and I are only half-saved, why, of course, we can never be really restful till the work is finished. No, if we are only three-quarters saved, we shall never have any true rest till the other quarter of the work is done! If there is one stone for us to lay in order to complete the edifice, we must not give sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids, till it is fixed in its place.

But here is the joy, here is the peace of Christians, that our salvation is a finished one! We have not a farthing to pay to complete the ransom of our souls. We have not a stitch to set to finish the robe of our salvation. We have not an act to perform, a prayer to offer, a tear to weep, a thought to think in order to finish the work of our redemption! I know that

all these things shall be worked in us and, that by the Spirit of God we shall be made to do them—but all that shall not be with any view to the completion of our salvation—that was finished in the Person of the bleeding Lamb of Calvary!

There are a great many people who imagine that they will be saved because they regularly go to Church—they might go to Church as long as Methuselah lived, but not get an inch nearer to Heaven by doing so! Others of you may suppose that you will go to Glory through constantly coming here. We will soon drive that delusion out of your minds if you are indulging any such notion! Still, there it is—you think that if you are kind, moral, upright, if you do good to your neighbors, if you bring up your families well—in some way Jesus Christ will mysteriously come in to make up your deficiencies and then when you get to Glory, of course, you intend to have a song all to yourself! You will say, "Praise and glory and honor be to myself! I did my part and Christ's assistance made the matter all right." The man who thinks that the work of salvation is partly his own does not understand the finished work of Christ! Either Christ completed all that was necessary for your salvation, or He did not! If He did finish it, then rest in Him and be glad, and say, "I am secure forever because my salvation is finished. I have nothing to do but to live to the honor of Him who has completely saved me by His Grace, His blood, His righteousness."

But if Christ did not finish the work, you cannot complete it! If He has left a stitch unsewn or a stone unlaied, you cannot supply the deficiency. What? The human and the Divine joined together as equals? What? Yoke your little, insignificant, insect-like power with the Omnipotent strength of the Divine Redeemer? God forbid! What? Shall the dross and scum of human merit come and be reckoned with the pure gold of Christ's atoning Sacrifice? No! That can never be! Grace reigns, and Grace, alone, reigns! It reigns in this, that there is a finished work! Therefore, Christian, rest—"rest in the Lord," for the work is done! Be of good

cheer, take your ease in Christ. Eat of Him, drink of Him and be merry, for you have much goods laid up for many years. Your feasting will never bring to you the censure of being a fool, but you will be as foolish as a thousand fools if you do not rest in Jesus!

VII. Once again, we have, as Christians, enjoyed and we do now enjoy, THE REST OF COMPLETE SATISFACTION. There are very few persons in this world who are perfectly contented, but true Believers, when they are in a right state of mind, are always so. I do not believe that I have a wish in all this world except to know more of my Master and to win more souls for Him. Besides that, I cannot see anything to long for and I can truly sing—

"I would not change my blest estate, For all that earth calls good or great! And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinner's gold."

Rich sinners think poor saints are great fools. You, young man, over there, you own a fine horse and you have a splendid house and garden, or you have a flourishing business and very bright prospects. But I could pick out some old woman here—and, thank God, there are many such who regularly come to the Tabernacle, poor souls who have little else but the Grace of God to comfort them—I could bring this old woman up for you to see. Her clothes are darned in a hundred places, or else she would be in rags. She works very hard to earn the little that keeps her out of the workhouse. She has not many comforts, yet sometimes, when we get a shake of her hand, we find she has some comforts, though they are of a sort that this young man does not understand.

Well now, come here, my good Sister! Do you see that young man over there? He never has rheumatism in his bones. He never has to sit shivering in winter because there is no fire in the grate. He never has to say to his landlord, "I do not know where I shall get the week's rent." He never has to pinch himself and live on nothing but a small piece of bread-and-butter for a couple of days—no, never! I ask her, "Will you change places with this young gentleman?" "Well," she says, "I should like to know, first, whether he has an interest in Christ." When I tell her that he has not, I am sure her answer would be, "Change places with him? No, never! I'd sooner starve and have Christ as my Savior, than own all the wealth and comforts of this world, and be without Christ." So say we, Brothers and Sisters, and in the language of Watts we sing—

"Go now, and boast of all your stores And tell how bright you shine!

Your heaps of glittering dust are yours, And my Redeemer's mine."

Having Christ, we feel perfect satisfaction and need nothing more! If we go up or down, to the right or to the left, we can find nothing beyond our Lord! Having Him, we possess all things, and our soul is satisfied! You remember that Naomi spoke of Ruth finding rest in the house of her husband. That is to say, she would have all she needed. Her husband would be all things to her. She did not need another husband, she did not need to find another house, nor broader fields, nor larger wealth. Boaz was all in all to her and what he gave her was enough for all her needs. So is it with the Christian—Christ is All in All to him—whatever He may give, or whatever He may deny, the Christian is perfectly content!

VIII. I close, dear Friends, by noticing that all these forms of rest should bring to the Believer THE REST OF CONSCIOUS ENJOYMENT.

Going down to Windsor to preach some time ago, my friend, John Anderson, was with me. And about twelve o'clock, as we were near Datchet, under the broad trees of a park we saw a number of sheep lying down peacefully. My friend quoted that passage in the Canticles, "Tell me, O You whom my soul loves, where You feed, where You make Your flock to rest at noon." It was the very picture of content and restful enjoyment! And as I came along tonight, I was thinking that I should like to see the same picture in this Church when we meet presently around the Communion Table. May you all have the rest of enjoyment! You have Christ to feed upon. You have heard about Him, again, this evening. You know He is yours. Then kiss Him with the kisses of your mouth. You have not a doubt, I hope, of your interest in Him— if you have, come to Him, again, just as you came at first, as poor sinners resting on Him alone!

And if He is, indeed, yours, treat Him as you would treat a loaf of bread if you were hungry—do not merely look at Him, but eat of Him and eat abundantly, O Beloved! Leave all your cares behind. You remember what Pharaoh said to Joseph's brethren, "Also regard not your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." Now, do not regard that household of yours, tonight, leave that stock-in-trade behind, let all that lumber lie where it is, for the good of Christ and of all the land of Heaven is yours! Come now, and be satisfied with all the goodness of God's Grace. "Ah," you say, "it is not quite so easy to leave all these things. There are such attractions in the world." Attractions, Brothers and Sisters? Rather, call them distractions! But I say that the attractions of Christ are greater than the distractions of the world! Fix your souls steadily on this fact, that you have Christ, that Christ is All in All to them that trust Him, and so come, now, and take your full rest in the Lord your God!

Oh, that some might be set a-longing, tonight, and say, "That is what we want to do!" Well, if you long for Christ, then Christ longs for you! If you want Christ, then Christ wants you! If you penitently return to the Lord now, He will hasten towards you while you are yet a great way off! He will run to meet you, even as the father ran to meet his prodigal son. If you begin to confess with the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in Your sight, and am no more worthy to be called Your son," the Lord will say to His servants, as the father in the parable said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this, My son, was dead, and is alive again! He was lost, and is found."

Remember that verse of Joseph Hart's which we have often sung, and as I repeat it, trust the Savior of whom He sings—

"Trust Him; He will not deceive us,

Though we hardly of Him deem: He will never, never leave us, Nor will let us quite leave Him."

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: Psalm123,124.125.

We shall read, this evening, three short Psalms—the 123rd , 124th and 125th . May the Holy Spirit, who Inspired the writers of them, strengthen our faith while we read these songs of joyous confidence!

Psalms 123:1. Unto You lift I up my eyes. Instead of looking downward in despair, or looking to the right hand or to the left to human confidence, or looking within in pride, "Unto You lift I up my eyes."—

1. O You that dwells in the heavens. It is always delightful to the Christian to remember what the title of his God is— "Our Father, which are in Heaven." It is the place of prospect from which God looks down and sees all men, and under-

stands all their ways. And it is also the place of His Power and His Glory. Lord, I look up to You! You dwell in Glory, therefore all power is in Your hands, and You know how to use that power on the behalf of Your people!

2. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us. The servant looks to his master's hand for direction and for support. If he has a work to do that is too heavy for him, he looks to his master to send him help. And he also looks to his master's hand for his reward when his work is done. So, dear Friends, are we, day by day, walking as in our Master's light?

3. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. The best thing that the best of men can ask for is God's mercy! And that mercy is so great, even to the heavens, that, under the weariness of trials and troubles, it is a sufficient help for them. When we are not only in contempt, but even filled with contempt and, as the text puts it, "exceedingly filled with contempt," so that we have lost our good name among men, still may we turn to our God and seek His mercy.

4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. This was the lot of God's people in David's day. It is the same with Believers, now, and I suppose that, so long as the earth stands, the saints of the Lord will have to cry to Him concerning their adversaries. Let them remember always to use the same remedy that the godly ones of old used and not plead in earthly courts of law, but take the case to the great Court of King's Bench in Heaven! Let not any of the Lord's children ever be concerned about defending their own characters, but let them always go at once to Him whose bare arm is quite sufficient to right all wrongs and to deliver the oppressed.

Psalms 124:1. If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say. There is a break here, the sentence is not finished, so finish it for yourselves. If the Lord had not been on your side, what then? You would have been condemned on account of sin! If the Lord had not been on your side as the Redeemer, you would have been left to perish through the natural depravity of your own heart! If He who is "mighty to save" had not been your Helper, just think, Christians, you who are today filled with joy, whose feet are treading Mount Tabor—think what you would have been if the Lord had not been on your side—and then praise and magnify that Grace to which you owe so much!

2, 3. If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. The word, "quick," here means, "living." Before we were dead, they would have swallowed us up, for the anger of men against God's people is always exceedingly great. They called the Master of the house, "Beelzebub," so they are not likely to be very warmly affected towards His disciples! Suppose that we had been given up to the devices of wicked men, where would we have been?

My brethren, a man may live so circumspectly that, outwardly, he may be without fault, yet he may wake up, come morning, and find his character blasted! And it may remain so for years, for the tongue of slander is full of all manner of villainy and, often, the more pure the alabaster of a man's character may be, the more black are the filthy spots which the world makes upon it! Be not too much cast down, O you children of the living God, when you are dishonored among men, for so was it with the Lord God, Himself, who was slandered in the garden of Eden! Expect not, therefore, that you will escape the serpent's venom!

4, 5. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Here, in this life, we may have troubles, not only from our own evil hearts, but also

from Satan and from the world. Truly, if it had not been for the Lord, the proud waters had gone right over our souls! It is a wonder that we are alive, Brothers and Sisters! We can sing with Watts—

"Our life contains a thousand springs And dies if one is gone! Strange, that a harp of thousand strings Should keep in tune so long!"

But it is a ten thousand times greater miracle that we are spiritually alive when there are so many in this world seeking to destroy us! This is a marvel of marvels and the whole world, itself, contains no greater wonders than are to be found in that one little world of Mansoul!

6. Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth. We were almost in their teeth, like David's lamb, but David's Son plucked us out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paws of the bear! Now the Psalmist uses another figure. First he spoke of the proud waters, then of the wild beasts—now he mentions the fowlers.

7, 8. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made Heaven and earth. What a blessed conclusion is it to our experience when we can sing of what the Lord has done and so are encouraged by the all of what He will yet do! Let us write this text upon our banners and lift them up in the face of every adversary, "Our help is in the name of the Lord." As John Wesley said, "The best of all is, God is with us," that is the best of all to the Christian, so good an, "all," that he is blessed with that even if he has nothing besides!

Psalm 125:1-3. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about His people from henceforth even forever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. By, "the rod," is here meant, "the scepter." The wicked shall not permanently rule over the righteous—they may have a temporary dominion and sovereignty but, in due season, their rod shall be broken and their power shall be scattered to the winds.

4, 5. Do good O Lord, unto those that are good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel. May we have faith to lay hold upon that last blood promise and so enjoy the peace of God which passes all understanding! Amen!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/a-comforting-message-for-the-closing-year/>

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