

Believing on Jesus, and Its Counterfeits

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of continuing in faith and trusting in Jesus for salvation, highlighting the difference between believing on Jesus and believing in him.

Scripture: Matthew 5:10, John 15:18, Acts 8:1, Acts 13:50, Acts 14:19, Acts 22:4, Romans 8:35, 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 4:14, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Persecution", "Discipleship"

Description

John Rutherford discusses the history of persecutions faced by Christians, highlighting the inevitability of persecution due to the clash between the principles of the Roman empire and the exclusive loyalty demanded by the Christian faith. Persecution was a means of testing true discipleship, blessing, and maintaining faith in the face of trials. The persecutions endured by God's messengers, the message, and the danger of corrupting the message to avoid persecution are explored, emphasizing the need for Christians to endure persecution with faith and thanksgiving.

Transcript

OUR LORD, on this occasion, was surrounded by cavillers. We must not be astonished if the like should happen to us when declaring the gospel. Our Lord went on preaching all the same, and he did not conceal objectionable truth because of opposition; say, rather, that he set it forth with greater boldness and decision when surrounded by his enemies. The more they opposed, the more he testified. The Lord Jesus also told the contradicting sinners that the day would come when cavillers would be convinced.

Observe how he put it: "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself." Cavillers may have a fine time of it just now; but they will one day be convinced either to their conversion or their confusion. Let us hope that many will see the truth before they die--early enough to seek and find a Saviour. But many in our Lord's day who discovered it after his uplifting on the cross, and his uplifting from the grave, came by their knowledge sadly late; for in the mean time they had crucified the Lord of glory.

Ah, how much of sin comes out of faith delayed! A far greater number of these Jews were convinced in their minds altogether too late; for when they were driven to feel, by the attendant circumstances of his crucifixion and resurrection, that he really was the Son of God, they still persevered in rebellion, and sank into obstinate rejection of his claims. On such his blood rested to their eternal condemnation. Cavillers, you may riot for a little season, but your time is short; the hour will come when you shall behold, and

wonder, and perish.

I pray that there may come an end to your unbelief by your being convinced in this life, and led to repentance; but if it be not so, you will certainly be ashamed and confounded in the day when the Lord shall come in his glory, and you shall in vain beseech the mountains to fall upon you and hide you from his face. Cavillers ought to be convinced even now; the Saviour implies this when he adds, "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

The character of Jesus should have convinced the Jews of his mission. His evident obedience to God, and the equally evident witness of God to him, would have led them to see his Messiahship if they had not been blinded by prejudice and pride. Any candid man at the present day studying the life of Christ, and observing his unique character, should be convinced that he is the Son of God, and should come to believe in him. But, beloved, though the Saviour was thus surrounded with objectors and had so much to endure from their ignorance and their malice, yet his controversies with them were not without hopeful effects; for our text informs us, "As he spake these words, many believed on him."

Albeit we may be surrounded with general and virulent opposition, yet there will be fruit from the preaching of the truth. The Word of the Lord shall not return unto him void: it shall prosper in the thing whereto God hath sent it. We may hope that not only a few, but many will accept the sacred testimony, since we see that, even in the midst of an exceedingly hot dispute, it happened that "As he spake these words, many believed on him." I. These believers were not all of one kind; and upon that fact I shall enlarge in this beginning of my sermon.

Let that stand as our first observation upon the text--OUR LORD HAD DIFFERENT KINDS OF BELIEVERS AROUND HIM. There were two sorts of believers evidently, who may be set forth to you by the differing expressions used in the Revised Version. We read in verse 30, "Many believed on him"; and then in the thirty-first verse we read of "those Jews which had believed him." Mark the distinction between "believed on him" and "had believed him." It is a singular expression also, "Those Jews which had believed him."

They were Jews still as to their traditional belief and connection--Jews first of all, whatever they might be in connection with their Judaism. The omission of the word "on" or "in" is a happy one, because it is exactly accurate; and it helps to bring out an important distinction, while it also accounts for what seems so strange, that those who had believed him should, almost immediately after, charge him with being a Samaritan and having a devil, and should even take up stones to stone him.

There were two sorts of believers, and on these I will speak a while. The first "believed on him": these are the right kind. What is it to believe on Christ? It means not only to accept what he says as true, and to believe that he is the Messiah and the Son of God, but trustfully to rest in him. To believe on him is to take him as the ground of our hopes, as our Saviour, upon whom we depend for salvation. When we believe in him or on him, we accept him as God sets him forth; and we make use of him by trusting on him to do for us what God has appointed him to do.

This trusting on Jesus is saving faith. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." To believe him may be a very different thing from believing on him. Such belief may fall far short of saving faith. To believe on him means heartily to give yourself up to him, and to follow him as the way, the truth, and the life to you. Rejecting all rival confidences, the heart leans on Jesus all its weight, and leaves with

him all its burdens.

Believing in him, we repose all our concerns, for time and for eternity, in his hands. To believe on him is also to believe implicitly. We believe all that he may yet say. We accept not only what he says which we can fully understand, but that which as yet is dark to us. We so believe in him that we go with him in all his teachings, be they what they may. We not only go as far as he has hitherto revealed himself to us, but we are prepared to go as much farther as he pleases.

What he says is truth to us, on the sole evidence that he says it. We believe in Jesus, not because we judge that what he says can be endorsed by our understanding (though that is, indeed, the case), but because he says it. Our Lord's word is reason enough for us. The ipse dixit of the Son of God suffices us, even if all men deny his assertions. He has said it, and he is the truth itself. We believe on him; Son of God and Son of man, living, dying, risen again, ascended into the heavens, we trust him.

He is our infallible prophet, and our omniscient teacher. We rest ourselves wholly on him. That is saving faith. Oh, that it may be said of this congregation, "Many believed on him"! But there is another kind of faith which was produced by the Saviour's testimony, and had much of hope in it, and yet it never came to anything. There is a temporary faith which believes Jesus in a sense, and after its own way of understanding him, or rather of misunderstanding him. This faith believes about him; believes that he was undoubtedly sent of God; that he was a great prophet; that what he says is, to a high degree, reasonable and right, and so forth.

This faith believes what he has just now said; but it is not prepared to believe on him so as to accept everything that he may say at another time. This faith believes everything that commands itself to its own judgment: it does not, in fact, believe in Jesus, but believes in itself, and in him so far as he agrees with its own opinions. This faith is not prepared to obey Christ, and accept him as its Master and Lord. This was the kind of faith these Jews possessed: it was a faith which was so crowded up with a mass of favourite prejudices that before long it was smothered by them.

They might accept Jesus as the Messiah, but then he must be the kind of Messiah they had always pictured in their own minds--a leader who would defeat the Romans, who would deliver Palestine from the foreign yoke, rebuild the temple, and glorify the Jewish race. They half hoped that he might turn out to be a great leader for their own purposes; but they did not believe in him as he revealed himself as the light of the world, as the Son of God, and as one with the Father. A great deal of disbelief and misbelief is current at the present day.

We are encouraged by certain persons to include in our churches all that have any sort of belief; and, indeed, the line is to be more inclusive still, for these who have no belief at all are to find an open door. The Church of Christ is to be a menagerie of creatures of every kind. I fear, if they come into this Noah's ark wild beasts, they will also go out wild beasts. Only those who enter by the door of regeneration and spiritual faith will in very deed be within the kingdom of the Lord.

If they have received Christ, we may receive them into his church, but not else. It is true the people of temporary faith will creep into the visible church, but they do so on their own responsibility. Nor need we think that some strange thing has happened unto us as a church when the baser sort are found among us; for one such entered into that college of apostles; a man who, doubtless, believed the words of Jesus, and thought him to be the Messiah: I mean Judas, who, with a traitor's hand, sold his Master.

His intellect had been convinced, but his heart had never been renewed. He even dared to use his profession of religion, and the position which it brought him, as a means of unhallowed gain. Another notable believer of this sort was Simon Magus, who believed because he saw the signs and wonders wrought by the apostles; but as he also sought to make gain of godliness, he remained in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, and never became "a disciple indeed." There is a greater one than all these, even the devil.

We read that "the devils believe and tremble." They hold the faith, and feel something of the power of it, for they tremble which is more than modern critics do. Devils know that Jesus is the Christ of God; for they have upon occasion confessed it, and have borne witness to the gospel in the open streets, crying after the preachers of the Word; and yet with all their knowledge, and with much of a sort of faith, and with an apprehension which leads to trembling, they remain devils still, and make no advance towards God.

Ah, my hearers! beware of that faith which is a mere intellectual movement, which does not control the heart and the life. To come to faith through a cold argument, and to feel no spiritual life, is but a poor business. You want a faith that leads you to an entire reliance upon the person of Jesus, to the giving up of everything to him, to the reception of him as your Saviour and King, your all in all. You have not believed unto eternal life unless you have so believed on him that you make him the foundation and corner-stone of your hope?

You must believe in him as taking away sin. God has set him forth to be the propitiation for sin, and you must believe on him in that capacity. This will suffice upon our first head, and this very naturally leads us to the second remark. II. OUR LORD TAKES NOTICE EVEN OF THE LOWEST SORT OF FAITH. When he saw that these people believed him in a measure and were willing to accept his testimony so far as they comprehended it, he looked upon them hopefully, and spoke to them. Out of a weak and imperfect faith, something better may arise.

Saving faith, in its secret beginnings, may be contained in this common and doubtful faith. It is written, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Certainly he can find it if anyone can. He has a very quick eye for faith. He deals with little faith as we used to do with a spark in the tinder, in the days of our boyhood. When we had struck a spark, and it fell into the tinder--though it was a very tiny one--we watched it eagerly, we blew upon it softly, and we were zealous to increase it, so that we might kindle our match thereby.

When our Lord Jesus sees a tiny spark of faith in a man's heart, though it be quite insufficient of itself for salvation, yet he regards, it with hope, and watches over it, if, haply, this little faith may grow to something more. It is the way of our compassionate Lord not to quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. If any of you have only a little faith now, and that marred by ignorance and prejudice, it may be like a connecting thread between you and Jesus, and the thread may thicken to a cable.

Your partial and feeble faith as yet only takes hold upon a part of the revelation of God; but I am glad that it takes hold on anything which is from above. I would not roughly break that single holdfast which now links you to the truth; and yet I would not have you trust to it as though it would stand the stress of tempest. Oh, that your faith may be increased till you trustfully commit yourself to Jesus, and believe in him unto eternal life! Our Lord addressed himself especially to these questionable believers.

He turned from his assured disciples to look after those who were more in danger. Their character was a curious combination--full of peril, "Jews who believed him." You that are familiar with the New Testament

Scriptures will think the phrase more suggestive than it at first sight appears. It reminds me of those of you who believe the gospel and still remain worldly, impenitent, prayerless. You fear the Lord, and serve other gods. You are not infidels in name, but you are atheists in life.

To you there is urgent need to speak. The Master turned round, and spoke to those who were believers, and yet not believers; holding with Jesus, and yet really opposed to him. Oh, you that halt between two opinions, my Lord looks on you with a pitying hopefulness, and he speaks especially to you at this time! May you have grace to hear and obey his Word! It is clear that he encourages them, but he does not flatter them. He says, "if." A great "if" hovered over them like a threatening cloud.

Wisely does our Lord commence his word to them with "if." If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Continuance is the sure test of the genuine believer. Our Lord does not say, "Go your way, you are not my disciples"; but he, in effect, says, "I stand in doubt of you. The proof of your discipleship will be your persevering in your faith." If we say that we believe in Jesus, we must prove it by abiding in believing, and by still further believing. The Word of Jesus must be the object of our faith; into that Word we must enter, and in that Word we must continue.

Beginning to believe is nothing unless we continue to believe. Our Lord showed his interest in the weaker sort of believers by helping them on in the safe way, urging them to continue in his Word. You believe," he seems to say, "believe still; believe more; believe all that I say. You have entered into my Word; dive deeper into it, and abide in it. Let my Word surround you: dwell in it; continue in it." Good advice this! and it is the advice I would give in my Master's name to any here who are feeling after Christ and his gospel.

As far as you have already come in faith, keep fast hold, and seek for more. You are on the right track in believing Jesus; a track which will lead to the King's highway if fairly followed up. Any kind of faith is better than that deadly doubt which is cried up so much nowadays. By faith comes salvation, but by doubt comes the opposite. Your feeble and imperfect believing has in it much of hopefulness, but it must be continued, or we shall be disappointed. Your home and refuge must be the Word of the Lord Jesus, and in that refuge you must abide.

Believe what Jesus says in his New Testament of love. Whatever you find that he reveals by himself or by his apostles, receive it without question. Hold fast his Word, and let it hold you fast. First, believe him, believe him to be true, believe him to be sent of God for your salvation; and then put yourself into hands. When you have committed yourself to him, continue to do so. Do not run away from your faith because of ridicule. Mind that you so believe in Jesus as to practice what he commands: you cannot continue in his Word except you learn to obey it.

The text of faith is obedience. What he bids you, do it. Let your life be affected by the truth he teaches. Let your whole mind, and thought, and desire, and speech, and bearing, and conversation, be coloured and savoured by your full faith in Jesus. Enter into his Word as a man into a stream, and live therein as a fish in the water. "Continue in my word": get into Christ's Word as a sinking sailor would get into a life-boat, and once there, keep inside the boat: do not throw yourself out into the stormy waves through despair, but continue in the place of hope.

This is Christ's gracious counsel to those in whom there seems to be some hopeful sign. My hearers, we never preach the saving power of temporary, unpractical, unsanctifying faith. If a man says, "I believe in Christ and therefore I shall be saved, his faith will have to be tested by his life. If, sometime after, he has no faith in Christ, that faith which he claimed to have is proved to be good for nothing. The faith of God's

elect is an abiding faith; it is precious faith, and like precious metal, it survives the fire.

Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three." Thus true faith is classed among the abiding things, it is undying, unquenchable. If you truly believe in Jesus, it is for life. Saving faith is a life-long act. It is the relinquishment of all trust in self, once for all, and the trusting in Jesus for ever. He is and ever shall be our only confidence. That is the faith which saves; but the temporary faith which comes and goes, is nothing worth. The shout of "I believe it" too often ends when the excitement is over.

To sing "I do believe, I will believe," is well enough; but unless that believing appertains to daily life, and changes the inner nature, and abides even till death, it has not saved the man. The measure of faith of which we have been speaking may turn out to be the beginning of saving faith; but it may, on the other hand, turn out to be a mere deception soon to be dispelled, a morning cloud which disappears, an early dew exhaled by the sun. I think I have said enough upon my second point.

Let it encourage you, that our Lord takes notice even of the lowest kind of faith; but let it also warn you when you see that he receives it with an "if," and goes on carefully to exhort and warn, lest the hopeful thing should die, and its promise should be unfulfilled. III. But, next, OUR LORD SETS BEFORE THESE PEOPLE INDUCEMENTS TO CONTINUE IN HIS WORD. "Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Observe three inducements, each one of them great, and when placed together exceedingly attractive. The first was certified discipleship: "Then are ye my disciples indeed." That is to say, if they persevered in obeying his Word, they would be disciples, not in name only, but in truth. It is a small thing to be called Christians; but it is a great matter truly to be Christians. Further, they would not be merely superficial learners, but deeply taught, and inwardly instructed disciples of Jesus.

They would really and truly know what Jesus taught, and would receive it into their inmost souls: they would be, of untrained beginners in the school of Christ, but pupils of the sixth form, "disciples indeed. Dear friends, it is a great thing to be no longer a probationer, but a disciple indeed. There is more in the expression than I can readily set forth in words. A certain person says he is a disciple of Christ; but you would never know it if he did not tell you. You might live with him for years without hearing an expression or remarking an action which is distinctly Christian: this is not to be a disciple indeed.

Another man loves his Lord, and treasures his words; he puts his discipleship of Christ before everything, and you cannot live with him a single day without perceiving a savor of Christ in his words and action. You say of him, "That man is indeed a Christian." In such a case religion is not exhibited by way of pride, as with the Pharisees of old, but it is seen because it is there, and must shine forth. Faith throbs in the man's pulse, it looks out from his eyes, it tunes his voice, and lights up his countenance, it rules his house, and controls his business.

The man lives for Jesus, and if it were necessary he would die for him. How we prize a thorough-bred believer! Your mongrel is a poor animal. Blessed is he who makes his Master's service his pleasure; his Lord's law his delight; his Saviour's glory the absorbing occupation of his time; he is a disciple indeed! To be a disciple indeed creates within the mind a blissful assurance. Some are always asking themselves, "Am I truly a disciple?" It is not wonderful that they do ask the question, for a great question it is.

But he that continues in Christ's Word in loving obedience, soon ceases to ask that question: he has the witness in himself, or, better still, as some read it, he has the witness in Christ. He knows that he is Christ's disciple, for he so continually follows his Master. He not only believes, but he knows that he believes. He has continued in the Word so long that he has no doubt about his being in it. How can he, when he is from hour to hour feeding on the Word in which he lives, like a mite feasting upon the cheese in which he dwells.

He is a disciple indeed, for his deeds are those of a disciple. Oh, you that believe my Master at times, and up to a certain point, you must go on to believe him more constantly, more thoroughly, more absolutely! May you cheerfully stake your souls upon your Lord's veracity! O my friend, if you would find Jesus to be your Saviour, surrender yourself to his wisdom, yield your whole being to his power! So shall you become a disciple indeed, and be able to claim all the love, and care, and comfort, and honor which such a Lord puts on his faithful disciples.

May you bring forth much fruit; so shall you be his disciples, and to you shall be the double portion which belongs to those who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. The next blessing which our Lord set before believers was that of sacred knowledge. Observe: "Ye shall know the truth"--not a truth; but the truth; the saving, purifying, glorifying truth. Keep on believing, and Jesus will teach you that great truth which is above all other truth--essential, quickening, cleansing, divine.

You shall know the truth. You may be charged dogmatism, but you will not flinch from the assurance that you know the truth. You no longer guess at truth, nor hit on a sliding scale of probabilities; but you know it assuredly. You will grow familiar with it; truth will be to you a well-known friend. You will discriminate so as to know the truth when you see it, and detect it at once from the deceptive falsehood. You will know the truth, and you will not be led away by the flattering voice of error.

You will have the touchstone with you, and will not be deceived by base metals. You will so know the truth as to be influenced by it, actuated by it, filled by it, strengthened by it, comforted by it, and by its power you will yourself be made true. Surely this is a good reason for abiding Christ's Words! The third benefit was spiritual liberty; "the truth shall make you free." Our Saviour further on explains that he means free from sin. He that lives in sin is the slave of sin.

Sincere belief in the Word of Christ leads to emancipation from the tyrannical power of the evil which dwells in our members, and from the dominating power of the sin which rules in the customs of the world. "The truth shall make you free." You shall be free from your own prejudices, prides, and lusts. You shall so free from the fear of man. If you have sunk so low as almost to ask of the great ones leave to breathe, you shall break that irksome fetter. The truth known within your spirit shall make a free man of you.

Hitherto you have been the bondsman of self. You have enquired, "What will this thing profit me?" and thus the desire of self-aggrandizement has ruled everything; but when Jesus is your Lord you shall be free from this sordid motive. "The truth shall make you free"; this is a noble saying. Oh, the liberty that comes into the soul through believing on Jesus, who is the truth! It makes life to be life indeed when this freedom is enjoyed. In laying hold on the truth as it is in Jesus, the soul lays hold on the Charter of her liberties, and she enters on her citizenship in heaven.

Dear brethren, I hope many here enjoy these three privileges; disciples indeed, you believe anything that is taught to you in God's Word, be it what it may; the truth has so entered into you that you now know it and are sure; and this believed-truth has made you so free that you defy the fetters which men would cast

around you. Your Lord has caused you to believe in him, and you have now found the element wherein your soul may abide in life, light, and liberty. Thus our Lord dealt with those in whom he saw some hopeful signs: he set choice blessings before them to induce them to proceed further.

IV. But now, fourthly, OUR LORD THUS TESTED THEM BY THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS. The test was very sharp in its action, and sudden in its results. He said to them, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free": and what follows? "They answered him"--answered him rather than believed him. How did they answer? Did they say, "Yes, Lord, we believe; teach us thy truth, and make us free"? No, no. They cried, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free"?

These supposed believers stumbled at the Lord's word--stumbled at a privilege. Jesus said, "The truth shall make you free," and that offended them! To make freedom a stumbling-block is folly. On another occasion our Lord spoke to his disciples concerning eating his flesh and drinking his blood; and then we read, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." The privilege of feeding upon his sacrifice, which binds many of us to him with bands of love, drove others away from him with cords of hate.

Sad fact this! But it is so in many ways. I believe that God chose his people from before the foundation of the world, I rejoice in the glorious doctrine of election; but a great many refuse to believe, because of this heavenly privilege. The privileges of the gospel are the stumbling-blocks of legalists. It is too large a gospel for narrow souls; for--it is too glorious a gospel for grovelling intellects. Men refuse the gift of God because it is so excellent. If we would cut it down, till there was nothing left but a more cheese-paring of grace, I suppose they would accept it; but the very glory of the gospel which should fascinate and attract them, repels and disheartens them.

The reason why these Jews became so angry with our Lord was that he touched their pride. "Make us free indeed!" they cried. "We always were free; we were never slaves. We enjoy the largest rights through our father Abraham; we have never come under the dominion of any false prophet or idol god. Make us free indeed! How sayest thou this!" Thus the wild thinker claims that he is free, and needs no liberty from Christ. The sinner who is in bondage to his passions and scorns the idea of being set at liberty, as if he were a bondman.

The more a slave a man is to his own conceit or his own lust, the more he talks about his freedom. We should not know that he was free if he did not call himself so. Unbelief calls itself "Honest doubt," and not without cause; for we should not have known it to be honest if it had not labelled itself so. When a man puts up in his shop window, "No cheating practiced here," I should trade next door. "He doth protest too much." Your free love, free thought, free life, and so forth, are the empty mockery of freedom.

Oh, that men knew their state, and then freedom would be prized. For lack of self-knowledge, the blessings of the gospel prove an offense when they should have hearty welcome. The prejudices of the Jews which believed him were wounded. Oh, how often do we find men who will hear the gospel just so far, and no farther! They have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; they have not entered into his Word so as to be prepared to believe all that he teaches; and, consequently, when some doctrine is heard which grates upon their feelings, or jars on their judgments, or conflicts with their original conceptions, straightway they grow angry with their Saviour.

After all, it would seem, from the criticisms which you offer, that you know better than the Son of God. Your judgment would seem to be clearer than his; for you sit in judgment upon his Word. What is Christ to you? Why, he comes before you like the prisoner who stood before Pilate. You question him, as the Roman Governor did when he asked, "What is truth?" You believe what you choose to believe, and disbelieve what you choose to disbelieve. In such a case, who is the greater, the disciple or his Master?

Surely, you presume too much when you act as judge of him who is to be the Judge of all the earth. You are no disciple of his; you can never know the truth, and the truth can never make you free; indeed, no blessing can come to you, since you put yourself out of its way. You may talk about believing; but you have not believed, and you cannot be saved by Jesus until you yield your judgment to his infallibility, your heart to his rule, your every faculty to his grace. Welcome him as undisputed Lord of your bosom, and crown him Lord of all within your soul: such loyal faith he claims; and this he must have, or you will fall short of his salvation.

These people soon showed their true character; for very soon afterwards they said, "Now we know that thou hast a devil", and they took up stones to cast at him. Oh, that we may be delivered from having a faith which will end in open rejection of the Lord! V. I close with a fifth point: OUR LORD DESERVES OF US THE HIGHEST FORM OF FAITH--ay, the highest degree of faith which is possible. Would you mind looking in your Bibles into the next chapter, which fitly follows the present one?

It contains the story of the man blind from his birth, to whom the Saviour gave sight. Let me read a description of the kind of faith which I desire for you all. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus aid unto him, Thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

That is the faith which saves, the faith which learns of Jesus from Jesus; hears and believes, and takes Jesus to be its God. The faith which bows at the feet of Jesus, and worships him as divine, is the faith which saves. Men will not do this till their eyes have been opened. While they say, "We see," their sin remains, and their blindness too. Only he who can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see," will worship Jesus with all his heart. The gracious Lord has come and touched my sightless eyeballs, and given me heavenly sight, and therefore I trust him.

I, that could see nothing at all, have seen him! I, that had no idea of what light was, for I was born blind, I have seen the light through him, and I both believe and adore! Oh, for a worshipping faith, faith on its knees in the presence of the Son of God; faith beholding Jesus, with the eye which he has opened! Alas!" says one, "I wish I had that faith." Listen, then, that you may find it. Faith cometh by hearing. When I meet with persons converted, I like them to tell me what text was blessed to them, for then my mind runs on that text.

I have sometimes asked a convert, "What part of the sermon was it that God blessed to you? because I should like to repeat that passage more than once or twice, I should like to "tell it o'er and o'er again." Perhaps the Lord would bless it to another, and another. Think, then, what part of our Lord's sermon was it that brought faith to those many who believed on him? I think it was the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses. In verse 28 the Lord spoke of his death, and all that went with it, and all that came out of it: "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he."

How did they lift him up? They lifted him up on the cross; it alludes to his crucifixion. But they did not know that in another sense they lifted him up; it was through his death that there was a possibility of his resurrection; and when he rove again and ascended up on high, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the church, and he entered into heaven to make intercession for us; and all this was emphatically a lifting up. The cross and its surroundings remain to this day the great arguments for our holy faith.

The things that should lead men to believe on Jesus Christ are found at his cross. He was the Son of God, but he died the death of the cross for love of men. Being dead and buried, his Father raised him from the dead, and thus gave evidence of his mission and of his acceptance with God. There is no question about his resurrection: it is proved beyond all doubt that Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day. His disciples saw him for the space of forty days, and ate and drank with him, and then they beheld him go up into heaven till a cloud received him out of their sight.

They waited at Jerusalem, and the Holy Ghost came upon them in cloven tongues, the divine testimony to his ascended power. By the preaching of his Word in the power of the Holy Ghost the nations were made to hear concerning Jesus, the Saviour, and bowed before his cross. Now, the more you think of this unique occurrence--this fact which could not have been a piece of imagination, this fact which was attested by honest men, who bled and died for it--the more you think of this, I say, the more you will feel faith stealing over your spirit.

Christ on the cross is thought to be hard to believe in, but it is not so; for the more you know of a crucified Christ, the more easy will faith become. Christ raised to the crown by his cross is the great breeder of faith. Christ rising from the dead is a marvel; yet it is the keystone of the arch of faith. Believe it! Christ gone into glory, the Son of God bearing his manhood into the highest place of supreme sovereignty, and pleading there for guilty men--think much of this truth, and you will find faith come to you; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Especially is faith begotten and nourished by that part of God's Word which treats of the cross and the crown--the double lifting up of Jesus. Also, once more, and I have done: you will find faith much helped by looking to the life of Jesus, set forth in the gospels. Read the verse: "he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him." What a perfect life is that of Jesus! Could it have been invented? He who could have sketched it from his imagination must himself have been perfect.

But, then, no perfect man could have been guilty of a forgery. Jesus was obedient to the Father in all things, and yet he put no force upon himself in so doing: it was natural to him to be holy. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. And the God of heaven by his miracles was with him, and bore witness to him. There is no superfluous miracle recorded in the gospels; they are all needful evidence, such as was called for in that court wherein the perfection, the Messiahship, the Deity of our Lord were tried.

If you read his whole life through till you come to his death, and even study that death in which the Father hid his face from him as to the enjoyment of his smile, you can see that God was ever with his Son Jesus, working out his divine purposes by him, and bearing witness to him. God is in accord with Jesus: that is clear. He is with him even now. Nobody can doubt that there are such things as conversions, for they are common phenomena in every living church of God; and conversions are God's testimony to the Word of Jesus, and the proofs that the Father and the Holy Spirit are working with the Son.

Think of this, and then yield up to the Son of God, since God bears witness of him to you. Come along with you, you that have had other notions; come, and take Jesus to be your light and life! You that have had other confidences, leave them all and believe on him, for he is worthy of your utmost confidence. You that have been hesitating, believe in Jesus once for all. You that have been procrastinating, come this very day, and hearken to that voice which shall at once set you free.

Oh, that you would now trust Jesus, my Lord and my God! May the good Spirit help you now to believe on the Crucified One, and may this be another of those occasions concerning which it shall be written in the Book of Record, "Many believed on him"! God grant it, for our Lord Jesus' sake! Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/believing-on-jesus-and-its-counterfeits/>

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