

For Whom Is the Gospel Meant?

by C.H. Spurgeon

The gospel is intended for sinners, those who are burdened with a load of sin and in need of salvation, and it looks towards them with love and mercy.

Duration: 49:22

Scripture: Mark 2:17, Romans 5:6, Romans 5:8, 1 Timothy 1:15

Topics: "Gospel Message", "Divine Grace"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the importance of persevering in successful processes and applying them on a larger scale. The preacher emphasizes the need to preach the basic elements of the gospel, focusing on the mission of Jesus in relation to sin. The transformative power of grace is highlighted, as it not only converts individuals but also inspires and moves them deeply. The preacher shares a personal experience of preaching a simple gospel message and witnessing immediate results, leading him to believe in the effectiveness of sticking to similar subjects.

Transcript

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit For whom is the gospel meant? A sermon delivered on Lord's Day morning, March 25th, 1877 By C. H. Burgin At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington Mark 2, 17 They that are whole have no need of the physician But they that are sick I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance Romans 5, 6 Christ died for the ungodly Romans 5, 8 God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us 1 Timothy 1, 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners Last Thursday evening, with considerable difficulty, I stood here to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ And I handled one of the simplest imaginable texts, full of nothing but the very plainest elements of the gospel Within a very few minutes, I had a harvest for the sermon The congregation was slender, for you know how ill a night it was And how little you expected that your pastor would be able to preach But three souls came forward uninvited to acknowledge that they had found peace with God How many more there were, I do not know But these three sought out the brethren, and bore a good and hearty confession to the blessed fact For the first time in their lives, they had understood the plan of salvation Now it seemed to me, that if a plain gospel theme was so promptly profitable I had better keep to the like subjects If a farmer finds that a certain seed has paid him so well that he never had a better crop before Then he will keep to that seed and sow more of it Those processes of husbandry, which have been successful, should be persevered in And even used upon a larger scale So this morning, I shall just preach the ABC of the gospel The first

rudiments of the art of salvation And I thank God this will be no new thing to me May God, the Holy Spirit, in answer to your prayers Grant us a reward this morning after the same proportion as last Thursday And if so, our heart will be exceedingly glad Out of a very great number, I have selected the four texts Which I have read just to set forth the truth That the mission of our Lord related to sinners What did Christ come into the world for?

For whom did he come? These are questions of the greatest importance And they are clearly answered in scripture When the children of Israel first found manna outside the camp They said to one another, manna, or what is it?

For they wist not what it was There it lay, a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost upon the ground No doubt they looked at it and rubbed it in their hand and smelt it But how glad they were when Moses said, this is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat They were not long before they put the good news to the test For each man gathered his omer full and took it home And prepared it according to his liking Now concerning the gospel There are many who might call out manna For they know not what it is Very frequently, too, they make a mistake As to its bearings and its objects Dreaming that it is a kind of improved law Or an easier system of salvation by works Hence they err also in their idea of the persons for whom it is designed They imagine that surely the blessings of

salvation must be meant for deserving persons And Christ must be the redeemer of the meritorious On the principle of good for the good They infer that grace is for the excellent And Christ for the virtuous Hence it is a most useful thing for us continually to be reminding men What the gospel is and for whom it is sent into the world For though the great mass of you know full well And do not need to be told Yet there are multitudes around us who persist in grave mistakes And need to be instructed over and over again in the very simplest of the doctrines of grace There is less need for laborious explanations of profound mysteries Than for simple explanations of plain truths Many men need only a simple latch key to lift the latch and open the door of faith And such a key I hope God's

infinite mercy may put into their hands this morning Our business is to show that the gospel is intended for sinners That it has an eye to guilty persons That it is not sent into the world as a reward for the good and for the excellent Or for those who think that they have any measure of fitness or preparation for the divine favor But that it is intended for lawbreakers For the undeserving For the ungodly For those who have gone astray like lost sheep Or left their father's house like the prodigal Christ died to save sinners And he justifieth the ungodly The truth is plain enough in the word But since the human heart kicks against it We will the more earnestly insist upon it First, even a superficial glance at our Lord's mission suffices to show That his work was for the sinful For dear

brethren The descent of the Son of God into this world as a Savior Implied that men needed to be delivered from a great evil by a divine hand The coming of a Savior who should by his death provide pardon for human sins Supposed men to be greatly guilty And to be incapable of procuring pardon by any doings of their own You would never have seen a Savior if there had not been a fall Eden's withering was a necessary preface to Gethsemane's groaning You would never have heard of a cross and a bleeding Savior on it If you had not first heard of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil And of a disobedient hand which plucked the forbidden fruit If the mission of our Lord did not refer to the guilty It was an unnecessary errand altogether so far as we can see What justifies the incarnation

except man's ruin?

What explains our Lord's suffering life but man's guilt? Above all, what explains his death and the cloud under which he died but human sin? All we like sheep have gone astray And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all That is the answer to an otherwise unanswerable riddle If we give a glance at the covenant under which our Lord came We soon perceive that its bearing is towards guilty men The blessing of the covenant of works has to do with men who are innocent And to them it promises great blessings If there had been salvation by works it would have been by the law For the law is upright and just and good But the new covenant evidently deals with sinners For it does not speak of the reward of merit but it freely promises I will be merciful to their unrighteousness And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more If there had been no sins and iniquities and no unrighteousness Then there had been no need of the covenant of grace of which Christ is the messenger and the ambassador The slightest glimpse at our Lord's official character as the Adam of a new covenant Should suffice to convince us that his errand is to guilty men Moses comes to show how the holy should behave But Jesus comes to reveal how the unholy may be cleansed Whenever we hear the mission of Christ spoken of It is described as one of mercy and of grace In the redemption which is in Christ Jesus It is always the mercy of God that is extolled According to his mercy he saved us He for Christ's sake according to his abundant mercy forgiveth us our trespasses The law was given by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ The grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ Hath abounded unto many The apostle Paul who most fully expoundeth the gospel Makes grace to be the one word upon which he rings the changes Where sin abounded grace did much more abound By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves It is the gift of God Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord But brethren, mercy implies sinfulness There can be no mercy extended to the just For justice itself secures every good thing to them Grace too can only be for offenders What grace is wanted by those who have kept the law and deserved well at Jehovah's hands To them eternal life would be a matter of debt A fairly earned reward When you talk of grace you at once shut out merit and introduce another principle Mercy can only be exercised where there is sin And grace cannot be manifested except to the undeserving This is plain enough And yet the whole tenor of some men's religion is based on another theory The fact is, when we begin to study the gospel of the grace of God We see that it turns its face always towards sin Even as a physician looks towards disease Or as charity looks towards distress The gospel issues its invitations But what are the invitations?

Are they not addressed to those who are burdened with a load of sin And laboring to escape from its consequences? It invites every creature because every creature has its needs But it especially says, let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts It invites the man who has no money Or in other words, no merit It calls to those who are needy and thirsty and poor and naked And all these are but used as figures of states produced by sin The very gifts of the gospel imply sin Life is for the dead Sight is for the blind Liberty is for the captives Cleansing is for the filthy Absolution is for the sinful No gospel blessing is proposed as a reward And no invitation is issued to those who claim the blessings of grace as a matter of right Men are invited to come and receive them freely according to the grace of God And what are the commands of the gospel?

Repent But who repented save a sinner? Believe But believing is not according to the law The law speaks only of doing Believing has to do with sinners And with the method of salvation by grace The gospel representations of itself usually look sinner-ward The great king who makes a feast finds not a guest to sit at the table among those who were naturally expected to come But from the highways and hedges men are compelled to come in If the gospel describes itself as a feast, it is a great feast for the blind, the haught, and the lame If it describes itself as a fountain, it is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness

Everywhere, in all that it does and says and provides to men, the gospel proves itself to be the sinner's friend The motto of its founder and lord still is, this man receiveth sinners The gospel is a hospital for the sick None but the guilty will ever accept its benefits It is medicine for the diseased The whole and the self-righteous will never relish in its saving draughts Those who imagine that they have some excellence before God will never care to be saved by sovereign grace The gospel, I say, looks sinner-ward That way, and that way only, doth it cast its blessings And brethren, ye know that the gospel has always found its greatest trophies amongst the most sinful It enlists its best soldiers not only from amongst the guilty, but from amongst the most guilty Simon, said our lord, I have somewhat to say unto thee, a certain man has two debtors The one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

The gospel goes upon the principle that he who has had much forgiven, the same loveth much And so its gracious lord delights to seek out the most guilty And to manifest himself to them with abundant and overflowing love Saying, I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thy transgressions Among great transgressors it finds its warmest lovers when it wants to save them From these it receives the heartiest welcome, and in them it obtains the most enthusiastic adherence Great sinners when saved, crowned free grace with its most illustrious diadems Well may we be sure that it has its eye towards sinners Since it is amongst the chief of sinners that it finds its highest glory There is one other reflection which also lies very near the surface Namely, that if the gospel do not look towards sinners, to whom else could it look?

There seems to have been a revival lately of the old convening spirit So that proud Pharisees constantly tell us that the preaching of justification by faith is overdone And that we are leading people to think less of morality by preaching up the grace of God This oft refuted objection is coming forth again Because Protestantism is losing its sapen soul The very force and backbone of the Reformers' teaching was that That great doctrine of grace, that salvation is not of works, but of the grace of God alone And because men are getting away from the Reformation and drifting into Romanism They are casting into the background this grand truth of justification by faith alone And pretending to be afraid of it But oh knaves and fools that most men are upon this matter I put to all such this one question To whom, sirs, would the gospel look if not towards sinners?

For what are you but sinners? You who talk about morality being injured, about holiness being ignored What have you to do with either? The people who usually urge these objections as a rule had better be quiet on such topics In general these fierce defenders of morality and holiness are exceedingly lax While believers in the grace of God are frequently charged with puritanism and rigidity He who stands out most to speak against the doctrines of grace is frequently the man who needs grace most While the very man who cries down good works as a ground of trust is just a person Whose life is carefully directed by the statutes of the Lord Know ye, O men, that there lies not on the face of the earth a man upon whom God can look with pleasure If he consider that man on the ground of his law They are all gone out of the way They are all together become unprofitable There is none that doeth good, no, not one Not one heart is sound and right before God by nature Not one life is pure and clean when the Lord comes to examine it with his all-searching eye We are shut up in the same prison as all guilty If not a light guilty, yet guilty according to the proportion of our light and knowledge And each one justly condemned, for we have erred in heart and have not loved the Lord To whom then could the gospel look if it did not cast its eyes sinnerward?

For whom else could the Savior have died? Who is there in this world for whom the benefits of grace could be desired? Secondly, the more closely we look, the more clear this fact becomes For brethren, the work of salvation was certainly not performed for any one of us who are saved on account of any goodness in us If there be any goodness in us, it was put there by the grace of God And it certainly was not there when first the bowels of Jehovah's love began to move towards us If you take the first instant of salvation that was actually visible on earth, namely the coming of Christ We are told concerning it that when we were yet without strength in due time, Christ died for the ungodly For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die But God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us So that our redemption, my brother, was effected before we were born This was the fruit of the Father's great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins There was nothing in us going before which could have merited that redemption Indeed the very idea of meriting the death of Jesus is absurd and blasphemous Yes, and when we were living in sin and loving it, there were preparations made for our salvation Divine love was busy on our behalf when we were busy in rebellion The gospel was brought near to us, earnest hearts were set a-praying for us The text was written which would convert us, and as I have already said, the blood was spilt which cleanses us And the Spirit of God was given who should renew us All this was done while as yet we had no breathings of soul after God Is not that a wonderful passage in Ezekiel where the Lord passed by and saw the helpless infant Cast out in the open field while it was yet unswaddled and unwashed but was foul and polluted in its own blood He says that it was a time of love and yet it was a time of pollution and loathing He did not love the chosen baby because it was well washed and fitly clad But He loved it when it was foul and naked Let every believing heart admire the freeness and compassion of divine love He saw me ruined in the fall, yet loved me, notwithstanding all He saved me from my lost estate, His loving kindness, oh, how great When thy heart was hard, when thy neck was obstinate When thou wouldst not repent nor yield to Him but rebelled yet more and more He loved thee, even thee, with supreme affection Why such grace?

Why indeed, but because His nature is full of goodness and He delighteth in mercy Is not mercy seen to be evidently extended towards the sinner and not exerted because of some goodness moving thereto? Look a little closer still What did our Lord come into the world to do? Here is the answer He was wounded for our transgressions He was bruised for our iniquities The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed He came that He might be a sin-bearer And do you think He came to bear only the little trifling sins of the best sort of men, if such sins there be?

Do you suppose that He is a little Saviour who came to save us from little offences? Beloved, it is Jehovah's darling Son that comes to earth and bears the load of sin A load which, when He bears it, He finds it to be no fictitious burden, for it forces from Him the bloody sweat So heavy is that load that He bows His head to the grave, and evilness and death beneath it That stupendous load which lay on Christ was the heap of our sins And hence we look into the subject, we perceive that the gospel must have to do with sinners No sin?

Then the cross is a mistake No sin? Then the Llama Subbotinai was just a complaint against unnecessary cruelty No sin? Then, O Redeemer, what are those glories which we have so eagerly ascribed to Thee? How canst Thou put away sin which does not exist? The existence of great sin is implied in the coming of Christ And that coming was occasioned and rendered necessary by sin against which Jesus comes as our Deliverer He declares that He has opened a fountain filled with the blood of His own veins But what for?

A cleansing fountain implies filth It must be, sinner, that somewhere or other there are filthy people Or else there had not been such an amazing fountain as this filled from the heart of Christ If Thou be guilty, Thou

art one who needs the fountain, and it is opened for Thee Come Thou with all Thy sin and foulness about Thee, and wash this morning, and be clean T'was for sinners that He suffered agonies unspeakable Canst Thou doubt Thou art a sinner? If Thou canst, then hope farewell But believing what is written, all are guilty, dead in sin Looking to the Crucified One, hope shall rise Thy soul within Brethren, all the gifts which Jesus Christ came to give, or at least most of them, imply that there is sin What is His first gift but pardon?

How can He pardon a man who has not transgressed? With all reverence do I speak, there can be no such thing as pardon where there is no offense committed Propitiation for sin and blotting out of iniquity both require that there must be sin to be blotted out Or what is there real about them? Christ comes to bring justification, and this shows that there must be a lack of natural holiness in men For if not, they would be justified by themselves and by their own works And while this outcry about justification by the righteousness of the Son of God, if men are already justified by a righteousness of their own Those two blessings and others of the same kind are clearly applicable only to sinful men To no other men can they be of any use Our Lord Jesus Christ came girded also with divine power He says, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me To what end was He girded with divine power?

Unless it is because sin had taken all power and strength from man, and man was in a condition out of which he could not be lifted Except by the energy of the Eternal Spirit And what does this imply but that Christ's errand bears upon those who through sin are without strength and without merit before God? The Holy Spirit is given because man's spirit has failed Because sin has taken the life out of man and made him dead in trespasses and sins Therefore comes the Holy Spirit to quicken him into newness of life And that Spirit comes by Jesus Christ Therefore the errand of Jesus Christ is manifestly to the guilty I will not omit to say that the great deeds of our Lord, if you look at them carefully, all bear upon sinners Jesus lives, it is that He may seek and save that which is lost Jesus dies, it is that He may make a propitiation for the sins of guilty men Jesus rises, He rises again for our justification And as I have shown, we should not want justification unless we had been naturally guilty Jesus ascends on high and He receives gifts for men But note that special word, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them Jesus lives in heaven, but He lives there to intercede Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them So take whatever part of His glorious achievements you please You will find that there is a distinct bearing towards those who are immersed in guilt And beloved, all the gifts and blessings that Jesus Christ has brought to us derive much of their radiance from their bearing upon sinners It is in Christ Jesus that we are elect And to my mind the glory of electing love lies in this, that it pitched upon such undeserving objects How had there been any election had it been according to merit?

Then men would have taken rank by right according to their own deeds But elections' glories are brilliant with grace And grace always has for its foil and background the unworthiness of the objects towards whom it is manifested The election of God is not according to our works, but it is a gracious election of sinners Adore and wonder Turn you to a factual calling And see how delightful it is to view that calling as a calling from among the dead As a calling of the things that are not as though they were As a calling of condemned ones into forgiveness and favor Turn ye next to adoption What is the glory of adoption but that God has adopted those who were strangers and rebels to make them His children?

What is the peculiar beauty of regeneration but that He has been able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham? What is the beauty of sanctification but that He has taken such unholy creatures as we are To make us kings and priests unto God And to sanctify us wholly, spirit, soul and body? To my mind it is the glory of heaven to think that yonder white-robed choristers were once foully defiled Those happy

worshippers were once rebels against God It is a happy sight to see the unfallen angels who have kept their first estate Perfectly pure and forever praising God But the vision of fallen men divinely restored is more full of the glory of God Lift as they may their joyful voices in perpetual chorals The angels can never reach the special sweetness of that song We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb They cannot experimentally enter into that truth which is of Jehovah's name In its crowning glory thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood Thus I have abundantly shown that the further we look the more clear it is that the gospel is aimed at sinners And especially intended for their benefit Now thirdly it is evident that it is our wisdom to accept the situation I know that to many this is very unpalatable doctrine Well friend, you had better have your palate altered For you will never be able to alter the doctrine It is the truth of the everlasting God and cannot be changed The very best thing you can do since the gospel looks towards sinners Is to get where the gospel looks And I can recommend this to you not merely on the ground of policy But on the ground of honesty Because you will be only in your right place when you get there I think I hear you raising objections I do not admire this system Am I to be saved in the same way as the dying thief?

Precisely so sir Unless there should happen to be even more grace shown towards you than to him But you do not mean to assert that in the matter of salvation I am to be put on a level with the woman that was a sinner I have been pure in chaste and I am to owe my salvation Just as much to the absolute mercy of God as she did Yes sir, I do say that exactly as it stands There is but one principle upon which the Lord saves men And it is that of pure grace I want you to understand this Even if it grinds like grit between your teeth and makes you angry I shall not regret it so long as you know what I mean For the truth may yet find entrance into your soul And you may yet bow before its power O you children of godly parents You young people of excellent morals and delicate consciences To you I speak, even to you Rejoice in your privileges But do not boast in them For you too have sinned You have sinned against light and knowledge You know you have If you have not plunged into the grosser sins in act and deed Yet in desire and in imagination you have gone far enough astray And in many things you have offended grievously against God If with these considerations before you You take your place as a sinner You will not be disgraced But be merely standing where you certainly are And then remember if you get the blessing this way You will have obtained it in the safest possible way Suppose there are a number of guest chambers And I have my seat in one of the best of them I may have no right to be there I am eating and drinking of what is provided for superior guests But my ticket does not mark me out as one of these And therefore I am ill at ease Every mouthful that I eat I think to myself I do not know whether I shall be allowed to remain here Perhaps the Lord of the Feast will come in and say to me Friend, how camest thou in hither?

And I must begin with shame to take the lowest room Brethren, when we begin at the bottom And sit in the lowest room, we feel safe We are satisfied that what we do get is meant for us And will not be taken away from us Perhaps also when the King comes He may take us up to a higher room There is nothing like beginning in the lowliest place When I lay hold of a promise as a saint I have my doubts upon it But when I grasp it as a sinner I can have no question If the Lord bid me feed on His mercy as His child I do it But the devil whispers that I am presuming For I never was really adopted by grace But when I come to Jesus As a guilty, undeserving sinner And take what the Lord freely presents to me upon believing The devil himself cannot tell me that I am not a sinner For if he does, the lie is too transparent and causes me no distress There is nothing like having an indefeasible title And if the description given to you in the title Is that you are a sinner Well, it is an indisputable one For depend upon it a sinner you are So the sinner's place is your true place And your safest place Another blessing is It is a place into which you can get directly Even at this very moment If the gospel looks towards men In a certain state of heart in which they are

commendable virtues Then how long will it take me to raise my heart to that state?

If Jesus Christ comes into the world to save men Who have a certain measure of excellence Then how long will it take me to obtain that excellence? I may be taken sick and die within half an hour And hear the sentence of eternal judgment It would be poor gospel to tell me That I might possibly obtain salvation If I attained a state which would take me several months to reach At this hour I, a dying man Do know that I may be gone out of this world And be on the reach of mercy within an hour What a comfort it is that the gospel comes to me And gives itself to me just now Even as it finds me I am already in that position in which grace begins with men For I am a sinner And I have only to own that I am so Now then, poor soul, just sit thee down before the Lord and say Lord, does thy son come to save the guilty?

I am such, and I trust him to save me Did he die for thee ungodly? I am such, Lord, I trust in his blood to cleanse me Was his death for sinners, Lord? I take up the position, I plead guilty I accept the sentence of thy law as being just But save me, Lord, for Jesus died It is done You are saved Go in peace, my son Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee Go, my daughter, go thy way and rejoice The Lord hath put away thy sin Thou shalt not die For he that believeth is justified from all sin Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity And in whose spirit there is no guile Get then into your true position Accept the situation in which grace considers you to be Do not talk of justice and merit, but appeal to pity and love A certain man had several times plotted against the first Napoleon And eventually, being entirely in the Emperor's hands Sentence of death was pronounced upon him His daughter earnestly pleaded for his life And at last, having obtained an audience with the Emperor She fell upon her knees before him My girl, said the Emperor It is of no use to plead for your father For I have the clearest evidence of his repeated crimes And it is but justice that he should die The girl replied Sire, I do not ask for justice I beg for mercy It is upon the mercifulness of your heart And not upon the justice of the case that I rely She was heard patiently And her father's life was spared at her request Imitate this appeal And cry, have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness Justice owes you nothing but death Mercy alone can spare you Have done with every idea of making out a good case Admit it to be a bad one and plead guilty Cast yourself upon the mercy of the court And ask for mercy, free mercy Undeserved mercy, gratuitous favour This is what you must ask for And as in law they have a form of suing Called informal puppyery That is, in the form of a pupper Do you adopt the method?

And as a man full of necessities Do you beg for favour at the hands of God Informal puppyery And it shall be bestowed upon you Now I close this discourse with the next point Which is This doctrine has a great sanctifying influence There says one I do not believe that Surely you have been holding out a premium to sin By saying that Christ came to save nobody but sinners And does not call anybody to repentance but the sinful My dear sirs I have heard all that sort of talk so many times That I know it by heart The same objections were raised Against this doctrine in Luther's day by the papists And since then by the workmongers of all classes There is nothing substantial in their notion That free grace is opposed to morality It is only their fancy They dream that the doctrine of justification by faith Will lead to sin But it can be proved by history That whenever this doctrine has been best preached Men have become most holy And whenever this truth has been darkened All manner of corruption has abounded Gracious doctrine and gracious living fitly go together And legal teaching and unlawful living are generally found associated Let us show you the sanctifying power of this gospel Its first operation in that direction is this When the Holy Spirit brings the truth of free pardon home to a man It completely changes his thoughts concerning God What says he?

Has God freely forgiven me all my offenses for Christ's sake? And does he love me notwithstanding all my sin? I did not know he was such a one as this, so gracious and kind I thought he was hard I called him a tyrant, gathering where he had not strewed Does he feel towards me like this?

Then says the soul I love him in return There is a complete revulsion of feeling The man is turned right around as soon as ever he understands Redeeming grace and dying love Conversion follows on a sight of grace Moreover this grand truth does more than turn a man It inspires, melts, enlivens and inflames him This is a truth which stirs the deeps of the heart And fills the man with lively emotions You talk to him about doing good and about right and justice and reward and punishment And he heard it all and it may have had a measure of influence over him But he did not deeply feel it Such teaching is too cold to warm the heart The truth which comes home to the man appears to him to be new and exciting It runs like this God out of his free mercy forgives the guilty And he has forgiven you

Why this awakens him, stirs him up Touches the fountain of his tears and moves his whole being Perhaps at the first hearing of the gospel he does not care for it He even hates it, but when it comes with power it obtains a wonderful mastery over him When he really receives its message as his own When his cold heart of stone is turned to flesh Warm emotion, tender love, humble desire and sacred longing after the Lord are all excited in his bosom The quickening power of this divine truth As well as the converting power of it can never be too much admired Besides this truth when it enters the heart Deals a deadly blow at the man's self-conceit Many a man would have become wise, only he thought he was so already And many a man would have been virtuous, only he concluded that he had already

attained thereto Behold, this doctrine smites upon the skull all confidence in your own goodness And makes you feel your guilt and in so doing it removes the great evil of pride A sense of sin is the very threshold of mercy A consciousness of shortcoming, a grief because of past offenses Is a necessary preparation for a higher and a nobler life The gospel digs out the foundation, makes a great vacuum And so makes room to lay in their places the glorious stones of a noble spiritual character Moreover where this truth is received There is sure to spring up in the soul a sense of gratitude The man who has had much forgiven will be sure to love much in return Gratitude to God is a grand mainspring for holy action Those who do right in order to be rewarded for it are acting selfishly

Selfishness is at the bottom of their character They abstain from sin only lest self should suffer And they obey only that self may be safe and happy The man who does right, not because of heaven or hell, but because God has saved him And he loves the God who saved him is the truly right-loving man He who loves right because God loves it has risen out of the bog of selfishness And is capable of the loftiest virtue Yea, he has in him a living spring which will well up and flow forth in holy living so long as he exists And dear brethren, I think you will all see That the free forgiveness to sinners is very conducive towards one part of a true character Namely readiness to forgive others For he who has been forgiven much himself Is the very man who finds it easy to pass by the transgressions

of others If he do not so, he may well doubt whether he has been himself forgiven But if the Lord has blotted out his debt of a thousand talents He will readily enough forgive the hundred pence which his brother owes him Last of all, some of us know and we wish that all knew by personal experience That a sense of undeserved favor in free forgiveness is the very soul of enthusiasm And enthusiasm is to Christianity what the lifeblood is to the body Were you ever made enthusiastic by a cold discourse upon the excellence of morality?

Did you ever feel your soul stirred within you by listening to a sermon upon the rewards of virtue? Were you ever made enthusiastic by being told of the punishments of the law? No sirs, but preach up the doctrines of grace Let the free favor of God be extolled and mark the consequences There are people who will walk for many miles and stand without weariness by the hour together to hear this I have known them labor many a weary mile to listen to this doctrine What for? Because the man was eloquent or because it was put well?

Not so, it has sometimes been badly spoken in uncouth language And yet this doctrine has always aroused the people There is something in the soul of man that is looking out for the gospel of grace And when it comes there is a hungering to hear about it Look at the reforming times when death was the penalty of listening to a sermon How the people crowded at midnight How they journeyed into the deserts and the caves to listen to the teaching of these grand old truths There is sweetness about mercy, divine mercy, freely given, which holds the ear of man and stirs his heart When this truth enters the soul it breeds zealots, martyrs, confessors, missionaries, saints If any Christians are in earnest and full of love to God and man They are those who know what grace has done for them If any remain under reproaches, faithful, under losses and crosses, joyful They are those who are conscious of their indebtedness to divine love If any delight in God while they live and rest in Him as they die They are the men who know that they are justified by faith in Jesus Christ who justifies the ungodly All glory be to the Lord who lifteth the beggar from the dunghill and setteth him among princes Even the princes of His people He takes the very castoffs of the world and adopts them into His family And makes them heirs of God by Jesus Christ The Lord give us all to know the power of the gospel upon our sinful selves The Lord endear to us the name, work and person of the sinner's friend May we never forget the hole of the pit whence we were drawn Nor the hand which rescued us, nor the undeserved kindness which moved that hand Henceforth let us have more and more to say of infinite grace, free grace and dying love Well does the Negro song say, ring those charming bells Free grace and dying love, the sinner's windows of hope Our hearts exult in the very words Glory be unto Thee, O Lord Jesus, ever full of compassion Amen

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