

Numbered With the Transgressors

by Henry Law

The sermon explores the profound truth of Jesus being numbered with transgressors, highlighting His role as our sin-bearer and the grace that offers salvation to all who believe.

Scripture: Genesis 39:20, Isaiah 53:6, Luke 23:42, John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Sin And Salvation", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Henry Law preaches on the story of Joseph being wrongfully imprisoned, drawing parallels to Jesus being arrested and crucified despite His innocence. He emphasizes how Jesus, though sinless, bore the weight of all our sins, becoming our sin-bearing surety. The sermon delves into the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of sinners, using the example of the repentant thief on the cross who found salvation through faith in Jesus. Law urges listeners to seek Christ earnestly, as He alone can provide the ultimate relief and salvation, just as He did for the dying thief.

Transcript

"Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined."
Genesis 39:20

Prison is a place of humiliation and of shame. It is peopled by those who are under accusation of crime, or who are awaiting the sentence of outraged law. As such, the very name suggests ideas of infamy, and chains, and death. The inmates are the actual or suspected perpetrators of evil, whose name is a reproach--whom society casts out--who are as the noxious weed, which must be rooted from the soil, and as the plague-spot, which it is peril to approach.

But who is the prisoner, into whose cell these words admit us? Within these walls of guilt we find a guiltless man. The blameless Joseph is here immured. Without offence, he is wronged as an offender--without transgression, he is numbered with transgressors.

Reader! the pure delight, the sanctifying feast of Scripture, consists in this. In every page the voice of Jesus is heard--at almost every turn the image of Jesus is discerned. It is clearly so in the dungeon-scene before us. Joseph in custody, reviled for iniquity which he did not commit, foreshadows Jesus, who, without sin, is made sin for us. Yes, He for whom the heaven of heavens is no worthy throne, is clothed for us in prison-garb, and tastes for us the prison-shame. Hence the Spirit records, "He was taken from prison and from judgment."

In approaching this truth, it is well to ask the amazing question, By whom was Jesus arrested? and often to ponder the more amazing reply. He was arrested by the justice of God. But why? Had any fault stained His path? The bare thought is chilling, as the shock of blasphemy. Let it be met with a shudder of denial. Holiness was the essence of His being--the pulse of His soul. He was born the Holy Child Jesus. He lived the Holy Man Jesus. He died the Holy Sufferer. He rose the Holy Conqueror. He ascended in Holy triumph. Holiness is the scepter of His kingdom forever.

How, then, could justice touch Him with a jailor's grasp? Because, though no shade of sin was in Him, still mountains of sins were upon Him. Although infinitely far from personal offence, He stood before God laden with all the countless transgressions of a countless multitude. Here is the godlike grace of God. He consents to remove guilt from the guilty, and to place it on the guiltless. He transfers the sins of the sinful to His sinless Son. Wondrous is the word, but true as wondrous, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all." So Jesus is our sin-bearing surety. He appears, by substitution, as covered, defiled, deformed by the whole accumulated mass of all our guilt. He is verily accounted, and is verily treated, as the perpetrator of every evil deed--as the speaker of every evil word--as the harborer of every evil thought, which had stained, or should stain, each child in the redeemed family.

Hence we understand the agony of His heart: My iniquities have taken hold upon Me, they are more than the hairs of my head. He presents His back to receive the hateful load. Justice finds it on Him. And therefore justly claims Him as his prisoner.

O my soul, have you by faith a saving interest in Christ? Then know your full relief. He snaps the chain which would have dragged you down to hell. He passes under the dark waters of your pollution, that you may be reckoned clear of every stain. He becomes your unrighteousness, that you may be the righteousness of God in Him. The Bible is a sealed book--the story of the cross is a beclouded page--peace is a delight untasted--hope is an idle fiction, until Jesus is prized as a substitute and a surety. How great the change, when He is so revealed! Then Justice shines in all its glory--Grace in all its brightness--Mercy in all its triumphs--Salvation in all its riches. Then the Gospel-trumpet sounds with power, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."

But in the Egyptian dungeon we see more than a resemblance of the blameless Jesus bearing blame. Transactions are transacted there, which help to unclasp the records of the empire of grace. There are two offenders of no common note by Joseph's side. Human judgment looks in vain for difference between them. They are similar in outward calling--involved in like displeasure and degradation--expecting like ignominious end. But soon they are parted. One mounts the path of favor, and is crowned with honors--the other is left in bonds to die. Such is the relation.

But in it there is a predictive picture. It is a signal of the distant wonders of the cross. When man's rage and Satan's craft seem to prevail, and Jesus is led as a lamb to the slaughter, a corresponding circumstance occurs. To fill the cup of insult to the brim, notorious culprits are linked as His befitting companions. But this studied effort to degrade Him to the level of the vilest sons of infamy, only attests His truth. The word which cannot fail, had said, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

Behold the fulfillment. He is uplifted between two malefactors. When will vain men learn, that opposing rage only works out the purposes of God? The wildest rebellion is yoked to the chariot of His counsels, and His will. But let us draw nearer and trace the coinciding features of the two events. We take our station at Calvary. The accursed trees are upraised. The three are transfixed thereon. Jesus hangs in the midst.

Reader! again and again I beseech you, be often at this spot. That cross is the price of countless souls! the ransom of all the redeemed! and the glory of God in the highest! He knows nothing of sin's remission, who makes not these wounds his covert. He will never taste life, who washes not in the fountain here opened. He only enters heaven, who pleads this plea. Jesus here suffers, that He may wrest the scepter from the hands of Satan--overthrow the empire of darkness, and cause every perfection of Jehovah to be a pledge for salvation. It is a truth to be maintained before all the world, that the religion which glories not in the blood of the Lamb, is but a superstition of ignorance and conceit. The blood-besprinkled hope alone can live.

We look next, to those who writhe in torture on each side. It seems that they both begin to die, hard as the very nails which pierced them. But soon a change--as great as light from darkness--life from death--love from hate, passes over the one. He loathes the sin which once he fondled. He confesses its enormous malignity, and he professes to fear the God whom he had scorned. But from where is this newness of every feeling? It is not the fruit of outward circumstance. All visible appearances are common to them both. But one alone is touched, and taught, and enlightened, and turned. How is he thus softened? Some invisible power has entered the recesses of his heart, and there crushed every godless foe. It can only be the Spirit of the Most High. It is His sole prerogative to convince of sin. Without Him the outward fact of trial, affliction, pain, suffering, warning, threat, entreaty, never opens the blinded eye, or turns the wandering feet. Whenever awakened conscience cries, "Behold I am vile, I loathe and abhor myself," Omnipotence has aimed the blow, which brought the rebel to his knees.

But more than this. A trusting eye now gazes upon Jesus. To the mocking mob He seems "a worm and no man" but through all the rags and poverty of humanity, through all the disguise of blood and of infamy, faith knows the King of kings, the Conqueror of Satan, the divine Deliverer, the all-subduing Savior! The shameful cross is discerned as the glorious high throne of incarnate Deity. Here again we see the mighty Spirit's work. He alone can show Jesus to the soul. But when He speaks the word, the despised and rejected of men is loved and adored as the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One, the one dispenser of the mercies of salvation.

But this is not all. A man may confess, "I have sinned," and yet perish. Such was the case of Judas. The knowledge of the head may boast, "We know You, who You are," and never obtain life. Such is the case of devils. To gain interest in Christ, there must be a personal application to Him--close dealing with Him. But when the soul is deeply taught its need, and sees that Christ alone can minister relief, it cannot be kept back. It receives a strength which bursts all fetters--wades through oceans of difficulty--surmounts mountains of obstacles--and never rests, until, safe in His sheltering arms, it hears the welcome of His lips. It was so with the dying thief. Mark his cry, "Lord, remember me." I am perishing, but You can save me. The flames of hell almost encompass me, but You can rescue. "Lord, remember me."

Reader! is your need less than his? No! For it is great as need can be. And things infinite admit not of comparison. Is your loss less precious than his? Is your eternity less eternal? It cannot be. Have you, then, cried with his intensity, "Lord, remember me?" Happy they, whose hearts thus wrestle with the Lord! They win the priceless prize of heaven. They gain the matchless gain of everlasting joy. It was so with the dying thief. So it will always be. Quick is the heart of Christ to feel, and swift His word to cheer. "This day you shall be with Me in Paradise." There is no doubt, no demur, no delay. A sinner mourns, the Savior pities! A sinner looks, the Savior smiles! A sinner speaks, the Savior hears! A sinner prays, the Savior answers! The petition is, "Remember." The grant is "You shall be with Me." Blessed sorrow! blessed faith! blessed prayer! blessed grace!

Blessed Savior! You are worthy to be called Jesus. You are worthy to reign on the throne of the adoring heart. You are worthy to be extolled with every breath. You are worthy to be proclaimed by every lip in every climate, in every age. You are worthy to be the eternal hymn of eternal hallelujahs.

It may be, that I address some, who, through many years of worldly-mindedness, and unbelief, have been tottering on the precipice of perdition. But you yet live; and Christ still lives; and the Spirit has ever a heart of tenderness, and an arm of power. Therefore there is hope. The door, though closing, is not yet closed. The thief pressed forward and found grace. He had a golden moment; he seized it, and he is now with Jesus. What will you do? Will you sit still and perish?

But perhaps Satan, that liar from the beginning, is suggesting the thought that a death-bed will bring grace to repent, and to believe, and to seek mercy. Believe him not. Was it so with the other thief? The gnawing of agony only hardened him. Hell was near, but he neither saw, nor feared, nor shunned it. And now from the midst of a fiery lake he warns, as a frightful beacon, that death approaching with sure tread, and touching with strong hand, neither changes the heart, nor begets faith.

But let me rather hope that you have drunk truly of the cup of life. If so, you differ, you widely differ, you infinitely differ from former self, and from the mass around. But from where is the difference? Surely you will gratefully allow, Sovereign love looked lovingly on me--conquering grace dealt graciously with me. Surely you will add, "By the power of sin I was what I was. By the grace of God I am what I am. Sin numbered me with transgressors. But eternal purpose and eternal love laid help for me on One that is mighty. Jesus was numbered with the transgressors, that I might be numbered with His saints in everlasting glory!"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/henry-law/numbered-with-the-transgressors/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net