

A Memorable Day

by James Smith

The speaker shares his personal testimony of experiencing God's free grace and being born again through faith in Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of seeking the Lord and trusting in His salvation.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, John 3:3, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Gods Grace"

Description

James Smith reflects on the transformative power of God's grace in his life, emphasizing the profound impact of being 'born of God' and 'born from above.' He recounts a pivotal moment in a place of worship where he was convicted of his sins and experienced a deep spiritual awakening, leading to a radical transformation by the grace of God alone. Despite feeling hopeless and lost, he found salvation, peace, and joy through faith in Jesus, highlighting the importance of seeking the Lord and experiencing His free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace.

Transcript

What Christian, in looking back, cannot call to mind some memorable days in his history? I can recall many. I consider the day of my natural birth a memorable day; but of that, of course, I know nothing--but from others. But there is another day, and another birth, of which I have been thinking, more memorable to me by far. What a mercy it is to be "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "born from above!" and it is very blessed, when we can look back, and remember how the Lord met with us, renewed us in the Spirit of our minds, and saved us by his grace.

In my case, grace, and grace alone can be seen. Never was one more unlikely to be saved than me. Never did I appear farther from God, than on the day the Lord came near to me to judgment. O my soul, as I call to mind God's mercy, I charge you to praise the Lord! And it was distinguishing grace, too, for one was taken and the other left; and it was the worst, and the most unlikely, that was taken. By the grace of God alone, I am what I am! As grace did the work, effected the change, and made me a new creature in Christ Jesus--let grace have all the glory.

At Old Brentford, Middlesex, on the 28th day of February, 1819, in a large room fitted up as a place of worship, might have been, seen two lads, sitting together on the Lord's day morning; an aged man occupied the little desk, to preach the word of God. A peculiarity of manner tickled the fancy of the lads, and instead of listening to the word, with a view to profit by it, they were employed in ridiculing and making sport of this aged servant of Christ. They went from the little sanctuary without remorse, hardened in sin

and afar from God.

In the evening of that day, the same lads were in the same place--but the desk was occupied by another, and a younger man. He was evidently from the country--a plain, unlettered man. His manner was solemn, his voice unmusical--but his message was Divine. After reading the Word, he prayed devoutly, and when the second hymn was sung, he arose and gave out for his text, Mark 8:36, 37, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Solemnly did he speak of the value of the soul, of its danger, and the importance of seeking its salvation. The attention of the writer was arrested, the arrow of conviction pierced his conscience, and penetrated his soul. He sighed deeply--but unconsciously. He went home sorely depressed in mind. He went to bed, hoping to fall asleep and forget all; but sleep fled away, and sad and distressing thoughts were his companions. He was filled with tossings to and fro, until the dawning of the day. When exhausted nature fell asleep, the mind found no rest, and in the morning he arose unrefreshed.

That was a gloomy morning, and a distressing day, for the arrows of the Almighty were within me, and the poison thereof was drinking up my spirits. I tried to pray--but could not. I sunk in deep waters where there was no standing. Conviction was attended with temptation, and temptation almost drove me to despair. No human hand could extract that barbed arrow. No works of the creature could satisfy the enlightened conscience. Ignorant of the way of salvation, by simple faith in Jesus, the soul was groping in the dark, like the blind for the wall, until at last it came to the conclusion, "There is no hope!"

But as in nature, when the darkness is greatest, the light is nearest, so it was in this case; for when all hope that I should be saved was taken away, then Jesus was revealed, faith was wrought in the heart by the Spirit, and salvation by free grace was received and enjoyed. Faith in the atonement removed guilt from the conscience; and the application of the word chased away darkness from the mind. Instead of bitterness, there was now peace; instead of gloom, there was sweet joy; instead of despondency, there was confidence in God. The trumpet of the jubilee was now sounded, the year of release was come. The debtor was freed from his obligations, the prisoner from his chains, and the bondslave from his thralldom. The feast of fat things was made, the table was spread, the head was anointed with oil, and the cup ran over. The darkness was past, and the true light now shined. The tempter fled, and the soul escaped like a bird out of the hand of the fowler.

Oh, how precious was the Savior now! There was music in his name, salvation in his blood, and true freedom in his service. Oh, how sweet was grace now! It was grace that arrested the criminal, and grace that brought the pardon. It was grace that wounded, and grace that healed. All was grace--free, sovereign, distinguishing grace. Never was creature further from God, or sinner less likely to be converted, than I was on that day, when the word came home with power. Never was soul in a more helpless or hopeless condition than I was, when the Lord passed by me, and in his love bade me, Live. At his word, death and darkness fled from me. At his bidding, I stood up a new creature. Truly, I was his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before appointed, that I should walk in them.

And now, forty years have passed away, since that memorable day. Many have been the changes I have passed through, and many the trials I have endured. Satan has thrust sore at me that I might fall, the world has done its worst to lead me astray--but having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day. The life imparted so long ago was immortal. The change effected was permanent. The transformation was divine. The Lord who called me--has kept me. The grace that renewed me--has employed me. And being kept by the power of God, and used in the service of God, I wish to give all the glory of all that has been wrought in

me, or done by me--to the grace of God alone.

The Lord sought me--when I did not seek him. The Lord converted me--when I was mocking and insulting him. If ever a sinner was unlikely to be saved--I was that sinner. If ever creature was unlikely to be employed in the service of God--I was that creature. If, therefore, others can ascribe their change to free will, I cannot; I must ascribe mine to free grace! If any other man can take credit to himself, for anything that is good, I cannot, for I never had a good thought, or felt a good desire, or did a good deed--but as the effect of God working in me, to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Glory be to God the Father, for choosing me to eternal life in his beloved Son. Glory be to God the Son, for redeeming me by his most precious blood. Glory be to God the Holy Spirit, for quickening me by his divine power, and translating me out of darkness into his marvelous light. Glory, glory be to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the author of my salvation, the source of all good, and the giver of every gift and grace!

And now, my soul, I charge you--never let this day pass by without raising an Ebenezer to your God; nor let any day pass without some effort to bring glory to his holy name, for his most free, powerful, and sovereign grace!

Oh, what evils have been prevented, what blessings have been conferred, and what good has been effected, in my experience, by God's free grace! All that I am, all that I have, Lord--is given to me by your free grace. From you I have received all--and to you, and your service, I devote all. Before this--oh, awful thought!--before this--but for grace, I had most probably been in hell! Before this, I had degraded my nature to the lowest, and disgraced my name beyond recovery--but for the grace of God. How can I do otherwise than speak of grace, write of grace, and glory in grace--who am laid under such obligations to grace? It is astonishing that I do not prize it more, praise it more, preach it more, and glory in it more, than I do. But in heaven, in eternity, when I review all the Lord's dealings with me, and all the way the Lord has led me--I shall no doubt look back to the little sanctuary where he met with me, and the hallowed day when he called me, and with thrilling pleasure and holy joy--praise, bless, and adore Ha holy name, for his rich and sovereign grace!

Reader, do you know anything of a change of heart --which always produces a change of life? Have you been arrested, convicted, condemned--and then pardoned, and set to work for God, of his free grace? Can you say, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears!" You must be born again--or perish. You must seek the Lord--or die in your sins.

Not everyone is drawn suddenly as I was; many are drawn gradually to the Savior. How we are brought to Christ is of little importance; the question is, Are we truly brought to him? All are not sought out by grace in the exact manner as I was; but no one ever sought the Lord but as the effect of grace; nor did anyone ever seek the grace of God in vain. If you seek the Lord, he will be found by you, reveal himself to you, and save you with an everlasting salvation.

And, never forget this, for it is a thought as full of comfort as of truth, that the very desire to seek the Lord comes from the Lord, and is a proof that he has favor toward you. Never would we seek him--if he did not first seek us; and his seeking us--is evidenced by our seeking him. Having loved us with an everlasting love, with his loving-kindness he draws us to himself; and as he draws--we run; nor can we rest, until we find rest in Jesus. Oh that the Lord would draw millions more, as he has drawn us, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

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