



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

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Prayer

Lord, I thank You for giving me a shield of faith that completely covers me from head to toe. I don't have to constantly succumb to the devil's attacks. By holding my shield of faith above all and out in front so that it covers me completely as You intended it to do, I can be protected from the attacks that the enemy would like to wage against me. Forgive me for the times I've let my shield lay at my side while I stayed busy complaining about the devil giving me fits. I realize now that it's up to me to pick up my shield of faith and put it where it belongs. So with Your help, Lord, I am reaching out right now to pick it up, to hold it out front, and to do my part to make sure the enemy has no access to me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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1 THEN ALL the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the Lord told you, You shall feed My people Israel and be prince over [them]. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them [there] before the Lord, and they anointed [him] king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began his forty-year reign. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. 6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, You shall not enter here, for the blind and the lame will prevent you; they thought, David cannot come in here. 7 Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the City of David. 8 David said on that day, Whoever smites the Jebusites, let him get up through the water shaft and smite the lame and the blind who are detested by David's soul. So they say, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. 9 So David dwelt in the stronghold and called it the City of David. And he built round about from the Millo and inward. 10 David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him. 11 Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house. 12 And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake. 13 And David took more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and other sons and daughters were born to [him]. 14 And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15 Ibhaz, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet. 17 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they all went up to find [him], but [he] heard of it and went down to the stronghold. 18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 19 David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand? And the Lord said to David, Go up, for I will surely deliver [them] into your hand. 20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and he smote them there, and said, The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like the bursting out of great waters. So he called the name of that place Baal-perazim [Lord of breaking through]. 21 There the Philistines left their images, and David and his men took them away. 22 The Philistines came up again and spread themselves out in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 When David inquired of the Lord, He said, You shall not go up, but go around behind them and come upon them over opposite the mulberry (or balsam) trees. 24 And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then bestir yourselves, for then has the Lord gone out before you to smite the army of the Philistines. 25 And David did as the Lord had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

Chapter 5

Then all of the tribes came to David there in Hebron, and they said, Behold, we're of your bone, we're of your flesh. In times past, when Saul was king, you were the one that led us out to victories over our enemies: and you, the LORD said to you, You are to feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all ye elders of Israel came to the king in Hebron; and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. And David was thirty years old when he began to reign, he reigned for forty years. Seven of those years there in Hebron and thirty-three years there in Judah, or Jerusalem over all of Israel (2Sa 5:1-5).

Now notice David was called to feed God's people, and to be captain over them. God's people always need feeding. Jesus said to Peter, "Lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep"(John 21:16). Peter later wrote "feed the flock of God that is among you"(1 Peter 5:2). In Jeremiah, God said, "I will give them shepherds who will feed them with the knowledge of God"(Jeremiah 23:4). God's people: the greatest need is that of feeding. David was a true shepherd called to feed God's people. So David and his men came to Jerusalem where the Jebusites were still there in a stronghold (2Sa 5:6):

Now the Jebusites figured that their city was impregnable. The Israelites had never been able to take Jebus, it was the ancient site of Jerusalem, but it was a walled city. It had excellent defenses, and no one had been able to take this city of Jebus. And when David came, they said to him, Unless you can defeat our blind and our lame, you're not gonna be able to take our city (2Sa 5:6):

In other words, they were saying to David, "Hey, we're just gonna put the blind and the lame in to fight you, you're not even able to overcome them." They felt that their defenses, their walls, and all were that strong that they could actually man them with just blind and lame men. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: and the same became the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smites the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be the chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt in the fort, and he called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on, and he grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. And Hiram the king of Tyre sent down cedars, and carpenters, and masons: and they built a palace for David. And David took more wives and concubines out of Jerusalem, when he was come from Hebron: and he had many more sons and daughters. [The list is some eleven more sons and daughters that were born to him there in Jerusalem.] Now when the Philistines heard that they anointed David the king over Israel, all of the Philistines came to seek David; and David heard of it, and he went down to the fortress. And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of the LORD, [Now again, David's seeking counsel of God.] And he said, Shall I go up against the Philistines? will you deliver them into my hand? And the LORD said to David, GO up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand. And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and he said, The LORD has broken forth upon my enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of the place Baalperazim. [Which means, "the plain of breaches".] And the Philistines left their images there, and David burned them with his men. And the Philistines came up the second time into the same valley. And David inquired of the LORD again, and the Lord said, Thou shalt not go up; but circle around behind them, and circle around and attack them from the rear. So wait over there until you hear the sound of the wind in the mulberry trees, and that's the time to attack (2Sa 5:7-24).

So David is receiving directions from God, inquiring of the Lord, and God is directing him, and thus he is very successful, as is any man who will seek guidance from God.

And so David did so; and they smote the Philistines from Geba even to Gazer (2Sa 5:25).
(Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:

BY THE: DWIGHT L. MOODY

Reformatted by Katie Stewart

The Handwriting Blotted Out

WE HAVE NOW CONSIDERED the Ten Commandments, and the question for each one of us is- are we keeping them? If God should weigh us by them, would we be found wanting or not wanting? Do we keep the law, the whole law? Are we obeying God with all our heart? Do we render Him a full and willing obedience?

ONE LAW, NOT TEN

These Ten Commandments are not ten different laws; they are one law. If I am being held up in the air by a chain with ten links and I break one of them, down I come, just as surely as if I break the whole ten. If I am forbidden to go out of an enclosure, it makes no difference at what point I break through the fence.

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10).

The golden chain of obedience is broken if one link is missing.

We sometimes hear people pray to be preserved from certain sin, as if they were in no danger of committing others. I firmly believe that if a man begins by willfully breaking one of these commandments it is much easier for him to break the others. I know of a gentleman who had a confidential clerk and insisted on his going down Sunday morning to work on his books. The young man had a good deal of principle, and at first refused; but he was anxious to keep in the good graces of his employer and finally yielded. He had not done that a great while before he speculated in stocks, and became a defaulter for one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. The employer had him arrested and put in the penitentiary for ten years, but I believe he was just as guilty in the sight of God as that young man, for he led him to take the first step on the downward road. You remember the story of a soldier who was smuggled into a fortress in a load of hay, and opened the gates to his comrades. Every sin we commit opens the door for other sins.

ALL HAVE COME SHORT

For fifteen hundred years man was under the law, and no one was equal to it. Christ came and showed that the commandments went beyond the mere letter; and can anyone since say that he has been able to keep them in his own strength? As the plummet is held up, we see how much we are out of the perpendicular. As we measure ourselves by that holy standard, we find how much we are lacking. As a child said, when reproved by her mother and told that she ought to do right: "How can I do right when there is no right in me?"

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23),

"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

I do not say that all are equally guilty of gross violations of the commandments. It needs a certain amount of reckless courage openly to break a law, human or divine; but it is easy to crack them, as the child said. It has been remarked that the life of many professors of religion is full of fractures that result from little sins, little acts of temper and selfishness. It is possible to crack a costly vase so finely that it cannot be noticed by the observer; but let this be done again and again in different directions, and some day the vase will go to pieces at a touch. When we hear of someone who has had a lifelong reputation for good character and consistent living, suddenly falling into some shameful sin, we are shocked and puzzled. If we knew all, we would find that only the fall has been sudden, that he has been sliding toward it for years. Away back in his life we should find numerous cracked commandments. His exposure is only the falling of the vase to pieces.

FALSE WEIGHTS

Men have all sorts of weights that they think are going to satisfy, but they will find that they are altogether vanity, and lighter than vanity.

The moral man is as guilty as the rest. His morality cannot save him.

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5).

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

I have often heard good people say that our meetings were doing good, they were reaching the drunkards, and gamblers, and harlots; but they never realized that they needed the grace of God for themselves.

Nicodemus was probably one of the most moral men of his day. He was a teacher of the law. Yet Christ said to him:

It is much easier to reach thieves and drunkards and vagabonds than self-righteous Pharisees. You do not have to preach to those men for weeks and months to convince them that they are sinners. When a man learns that he has need of God and that he is a sinner, it is very easy to reach him. But the self-righteous Pharisee needs salvation as much as any drunkard that walks the streets.

I read of a minister traveling in the South who obtained permission to preach in the local jail. A son of his host went with him. On the way back the young man who was not a Christian, said to the minister:

"I hope some of the convicts were impressed. Such a sermon as that ought to do them good."

"Did it do you good? the minister asked.

"Oh, you were preaching to the convicts" the young man answered.

The minister shook his head, and said: "I preached Christ, and you need Him as much as they."

If you do not repent of your sins and ask Him for mercy, there is no hope for you. Let me ask you to take this question home to yourself. If a summons would come at midnight for you to be "weighed in the balances," what would become of your soul?

Many are only making a profession. Are you ready to be weighed- ready to step into the scales? A great many would be found like those five foolish virgins. When the hour came, they would be found with no oil in their lamps. If you have only an empty lamp, or are living on mere formalism, I beg of you to give it up. Give up that dead, cold, miserable lukewarmness. God will have none of it. Are you lusting to your good works? Do you think your Bible, your crucifix, your prayers, your church-going will help you?

Or do you set your hope upon your education, your wealth, your earthly distinctions? What will your university education amount to, and all your wealth and honors, if you go down through lust and passion and covetousness, and lose your soul at last? We are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. If you have not Christ when God weighs you, "Tekel" will be your sentence.

DO NOT DESPAIR

I can imagine that you are saying to yourself,

"If we are to be judged by these laws, how are we going to be saved? Nearly every one of them has been broken by us- in spirit, if not in letter."

I almost hear you say:

"I wonder if Mr. Moody is ready to be weighed. Would he like to put those tests to himself?"

With all humility I reply that if God commanded me to step into the scales now, I am ready.

"What!" you say, "haven't you broken the law?"

Yes, I have. I was a sinner before God, the same as you; but forty years ago I pled guilty at His bar. I cried for mercy, and He forgave me. If I step into the scales, the Son of God has promised to be with me. I would not dare to step in without Him. If I did, how quickly the scales would fly up!

CHRIST IS ALL

Christ kept the law. If He had ever broken it, He would have to die for Himself; but because He was a Lamb without spot or blemish, His atoning death is efficacious for you and me. He had no sin of His own to atone for, and so God accepted His sacrifice. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. We are righteous in God's sight, because the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe.

If we had to live forever with our sins in the handwriting of God on the wall, it would be hell on earth. But thank God for the Gospel we preach! If we repent, our sins will all be blotted out.

"You, being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross" (Colossians 2:13-14).

LOVE, THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW

If the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, you will be able to fulfill the law. Paul reduced the commandments to one:

"Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10).

Someone has written the following:

Love to God will admit no other god.

Love resents everything that debases its object by representing it by an image.

Love to God will never dishonor His name.

Love to God will reverence His day.

Love to parents makes one honor them.

Hate, not love, is a murderer.

Lust, not love, commits adultery.

Love will give, but never steal.

Love will not slander or lie.

Love's eye is not covetous.

ARE YOU READY?

It is the height of madness to turn away and run the risk of being called by God to judgment and have no hope in Christ. Now is the day and hour to accept salvation, and then He will be with you. Do you step aside and say: "I'm not ready yet. I want a little more time to prepare, to turn the matter over in my mind"? Well, you have time, but bear in mind it is only the present; you do not know that you will have tomorrow. Wasn't Belshazzar cut off suddenly? Would he have believed that that was going to be his last night, that he would never see the light of another sun? That banquet of sin didn't close as he expected. As long as you delay you are in danger. If you don't enter into the kingdom of heaven by God's way, you cannot enter at all. You must accept Christ as your Saviour, or you will never be fit to be weighed.

My friend, do you have Him? Will you remain as you are and be found wanting, or will you accept Christ and be ready for the summons?

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12).

(" The Ten Commandments " D.L. Moody; Conclusion ; Public Domain; Dwight Lyman Moody (February 5, 1837 – December 22, 1899), also known as D.L. Moody, was an American evangelist and publisher who founded the Moody Church, Northfield School and Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts (now Northfield Mount Hermon School), the(Moody Bible Institute and Moody Publishers.)

"ALL of GRACE"; An Earnest Word with Those Who Are Seeking Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ

By C.H. SPURGEON; (19 June 1834 – 31 January 1892) was a British Particular Baptist preacher.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Romans 5:20

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TO YOU

HE WHO SPOKE and wrote this message will be greatly disappointed if it does not lead many to the Lord Jesus. It is sent forth in childlike dependence upon the power of God the Holy Ghost, to use it in the conversion of millions, if so He pleases. No doubt many poor men and women will take up this little volume, and the Lord will visit them with grace. To answer this end, the very plainest language has been chosen, and many homely expressions have been used. But if those of wealth and rank should glance at this book, the Holy Ghost can impress them also; since that which can be understood by the unlettered is none the less attractive to the instructed. Oh that some might read it who will become great winners of souls!

Who knows how many will find their way to peace by what they read here? A more important question to you, dear reader, is this--Will you be one of them?

A certain man placed a fountain by the wayside, and he hung up a cup near to it by a little chain. He was told some time after that a great art-critic had found much fault with its design. "But," said he, "do many thirsty persons drink at it?" Then they told him that thousands of poor people, men, women, and children, slaked their thirst at this fountain; and he smiled and said, that he was little troubled by the critic's observation, only he hoped that on some sultry summer's day the critic himself might fill the cup, and he refreshed, and praise the name of the Lord.

Here is my fountain, and here is my cup: find fault if you please; but do drink of the water of life. I only care for this. I had rather bless the soul of the poorest crossing-sweeper, or rag-gatherer, than please a prince of the blood, and fail to convert him to God.

Reader, do you mean business in reading these pages? If so, we are agreed at the outset; but nothing short of your finding Christ and Heaven is the business aimed at here. Oh that we may seek this together! I do so by dedicating this little book with prayer. Will not you join me by looking up to God, and asking Him to bless you while you read? Providence has put these pages in your way, you have a little spare time in which to read them, and you feel willing to give your attention to them. These are good signs. Who knows but the set time of blessing is come for you? At any rate, "The Holy Ghost saith, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

WHAT ARE WE AT?

I HEARD A STORY; I think it came from the North Country: A minister called upon a poor woman, intending to give her help; for he knew that she was very poor. With his money in his hand, he knocked at the door; but she did not answer. He concluded she was not at home, and went his way. A little after he met her at the church, and told her that he had remembered her need: "I called at your house, and knocked several times, and I suppose you were not at home, for I had no answer." "At what hour did you call, sir?" "It was about noon." "Oh, dear," she said, "I heard you, sir, and I am so sorry I did not answer; but I thought it was the man calling for the rent." Many a poor woman knows what this meant. Now, it is my desire to be heard, and therefore I want to say that I am not calling for the rent; indeed, it is not the object of this book to ask anything of you, but to tell you that salvation is all of grace, which means, free, gratis, for nothing.

Oftentimes, when we are anxious to win attention, our hearer thinks, "Ah! now I am going to be told my duty. It is the man calling for that which is due to God, and I am sure I have nothing wherewith to pay. I will not be at home." No, this book does not come to make a demand upon you, but to bring you something. We are not going to talk about law, and duty, and punishment, but about love, and goodness, and forgiveness, and mercy, and eternal life. Do not, therefore, act as if you were not at home: do not turn a deaf ear, or a careless heart. I am asking nothing of you in the name of God or man. It is not my intent to make any requirement at your hands; but I come in God's name, to bring you a free gift, which it shall be to your present and eternal joy to receive. Open the door, and let my pleadings enter. "Come now, and let us reason together." The Lord himself invites you to a conference concerning your immediate and endless happiness, and He would not have done this if He did not mean well toward you. Do not refuse the Lord Jesus who knocks at your door; for He knocks with a hand which was nailed to the tree for such as you are. Since His only and sole object is your good, incline your ear and come to Him. Hearken diligently, and let the good word sink into your soul. It may be that the hour is come in which you shall enter upon that new life which is the beginning of heaven. Faith cometh by hearing, and reading is a sort of hearing: faith may come to you while you are reading this book. Why not? O blessed Spirit of all grace, make it so!

GOD JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY

THIS MESSAGE is for you. You will find the text in the Epistle to the Romans, in the fourth chapter and the fifth verse:

To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

I call your attention to those words, "Him that justifieth the ungodly." They seem to me to be very wonderful words.

Are you not surprised that there should be such an expression as that in the Bible, "That justifieth the ungodly?" I have heard that men that hate the doctrines of the cross bring it as a charge against God, that He saves wicked men and receives to Himself the vilest of the vile. See how this Scripture accepts the charge, and plainly states it! By the mouth of His servant Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, He takes to Himself the title of "Him that justifieth the ungodly." He makes those just who are unjust, forgives those who deserve to be punished, and favors those who deserve no favor. You thought, did you not, that salvation was for the good? that God's grace was for the pure and holy, who are free from sin? It has fallen into your mind that, if you were excellent, then God would reward you; and you have thought that because you are not worthy, therefore there could be no way of your enjoying His favor. You must be somewhat surprised to read a text like this: "Him that justifieth the ungodly." I do not wonder that you are surprised; for with all my familiarity with the great

grace of God, I never cease to wonder at it. It does sound surprising, does it not, that it should be possible for a holy God to justify an unholy man? We, according to the natural legality of our hearts, are always talking about our own goodness and our own worthiness, and we stubbornly hold to it that there must be somewhat in us in order to win the notice of God. Now, God, who sees through all deceptions, knows that there is no goodness whatever in us. He says that "there is none righteous, no not one." He knows that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," and, therefore the Lord Jesus did not come into the world to look after goodness and righteousness with him, and to bestow them upon persons who have none of them. He comes, not because we are just, but to make us so: he justifieth the ungodly.

When a counsellor comes into court, if he is an honest man, he desires to plead the case of an innocent person and justify him before the court from the things which are falsely laid to his charge. It should be the lawyer's object to justify the innocent person, and he should not attempt to screen the guilty party. It lies not in man's right nor in man's power truly to justify the guilty. This is a miracle reserved for the Lord alone. God, the infinitely just Sovereign, knows that there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not, and therefore, in the infinite sovereignty of His divine nature and in the splendor of His ineffable love, He undertakes the task, not so much of justifying the just as of justifying the ungodly. God has devised ways and means of making the ungodly man to stand justly accepted before Him: He has set up a system by which with perfect justice He can treat the guilty as if he had been all his life free from offence, yea, can treat him as if he were wholly free from sin. He justifieth the ungodly.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. It is a very surprising thing--a thing to be marveled at most of all by those who enjoy it. I know that it is to me even to this day the greatest wonder that I ever heard of, that God should ever justify me. I feel myself to be a lump of unworthiness, a mass of corruption, and a heap of sin, apart from His almighty love. I know by a full assurance that I am justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus, and treated as if I had been perfectly just, and made an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ; and yet by nature I must take my place among the most sinful. I, who am altogether undeserving, am treated as if I had been deserving. I am loved with as much love as if I had always been godly, whereas aforetime I was ungodly. Who can help being astonished at this? Gratitude for such favor stands dressed in robes of wonder.

Now, while this is very surprising, I want you to notice how available it makes the gospel to you and to me. If God justifieth the ungodly, then, dear friend, He can justify you. Is not that the very kind of person that you are? If you are unconverted at this moment, it is a very proper description of you; you have lived without God, you have been the reverse of godly; in one word, you have been and are ungodly. Perhaps you have not even attended a place of worship on Sunday, but have lived in disregard of God's day, and house, and Word--this proves you to have been ungodly. Sadder still, it may be you have even tried to doubt God's existence, and have gone the length of saying that you did so. You have lived on this fair earth, which is full of the tokens of God's presence, and all the while you have shut your eyes to the clear evidences of His power and Godhead. You have lived as if there were no God. Indeed, you would have been very pleased if you could have demonstrated to yourself to a certainty that there was no God whatever. Possibly you have lived a great many years in this way, so that you are now pretty well settled in your ways, and yet God is not in any of them. If you were labeled

UNGODLY..it would as well describe you as if the sea were to be labeled salt water. Would it not?

Possibly you are a person of another sort; you have regularly attended to all the outward forms of religion, and yet you have had no heart in them at all, but have been really ungodly. Though meeting with the people of God, you have never met with God for yourself; you have been in the choir, and yet have not praised the Lord with your heart. You have lived without any love to God in your heart, or regard to his commands in your life. Well, you are just the kind of man to whom this gospel is sent--this gospel which says that God justifieth the ungodly. It is very wonderful, but it is happily available for you. It just suits you. Does it not? How I wish that you would accept it! If you are a sensible man, you will see the remarkable grace of God in providing for such as you are, and you will say to yourself, "Justify the ungodly! Why, then, should not I be justified, and justified at once?"

Now, observe further, that it must be so--that the salvation of God is for those who do not deserve it, and have no preparation for it. It is reasonable that the statement should be put in the Bible; for, dear friend, no others need justifying but those who have no justification of their own. If any of my readers are perfectly righteous, they want no justifying. You feel that you are doing your duty well, and almost putting heaven under an obligation to you. What do you want with a Saviour, or with mercy? What do you want with justification? You will be tired of my book by this time, for it will have no interest to you.

If any of you are giving yourselves such proud airs, listen to me for a little while. You will be lost, as sure as you are alive. You righteous men, whose righteousness is all of your own working, are either deceivers or deceived; for the Scripture cannot lie, and it saith plainly, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In any case I have no gospel to preach to the self-righteous, no, not a word of it. Jesus Christ himself came not to call the righteous, and I am not going to do what He did not do. If I called you, you would not come, and, therefore, I will not call you, under that character. No, I bid you rather look at that righteousness of yours till you see what a delusion it is. It is not half so substantial as a cobweb. Have done with it! Flee from it! Oh believe that the only persons that can need justification are those who are not in themselves just! They need that something should be done for them to make them just before the judgment seat of God. Depend upon it, the Lord only does that which is needful. Infinite wisdom never attempts that which is unnecessary. Jesus never undertakes that which is superfluous. To make him just who is just is no work for God--that were a labor for a fool; but to make him just who is unjust--that is work for infinite love and mercy. To justify the ungodly--this is a miracle worthy of a God. And for certain it is so.

Now, look. If there be anywhere in the world a physician who has discovered sure and precious remedies, to whom is that physician sent? To those who are perfectly healthy? I think not. Put him down in a district where there are no sick persons, and he feels that he

is not in his place. There is nothing for him to do. "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Is it not equally clear that the great remedies of grace and redemption are for the sick in soul? They cannot be for the whole, for they cannot be of use to such. If you, dear friend, feel that you are spiritually sick, the Physician has come into the world for you. If you are altogether undone by reason of your sin, you are the very person aimed at in the plan of salvation. I say that the Lord of love had just such as you are in His eye when He arranged the system of grace. Suppose a man of generous spirit were to resolve to forgive all those who were indebted to him; it is clear that this can only apply to those really in his debt. One person owes him a thousand pounds; another owes him fifty pounds; each one has but to have his bill receipted, and the liability is wiped out. But the most generous person cannot forgive the debts of those who do not owe him anything. It is out of the power of Omnipotence to forgive where there is no sin. Pardon, therefore, cannot be for you who have no sin. Pardon must be for the guilty. Forgiveness must be for the sinful. It were absurd to talk of forgiving those who do not need forgiveness--pardoning those who have never offended.

Do you think that you must be lost because you are a sinner? This is the reason why you can be saved. Because you own yourself to be a sinner I would encourage you to believe that grace is ordained for such as you are. One of our hymn-writers even dared to say:

A sinner is a sacred thing; The Holy Ghost hath made him so.

It is truly so, that Jesus seeks and saves that which is lost. He died and made a real atonement for real sinners. When men are not playing with words, or calling themselves "miserable sinners," out of mere compliment, I feel overjoyed to meet with them. I would be glad to talk all night to bona fide sinners. The inn of mercy never closes its doors upon such, neither weekdays nor Sunday. Our Lord Jesus did not die for imaginary sins, but His heart's blood was spilt to wash out deep crimson stains, which nothing else can remove. He that is a black sinner--he is the kind of man that Jesus Christ came to make white. A gospel preacher on one occasion preached a sermon from, "Now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees," and he delivered such a sermon that one of his hearers said to him, "One would have thought that you had been preaching to criminals. Your sermon ought to have been delivered in the county jail." "Oh, no," said the good man, "if I were preaching in the county jail, I should not preach from that text, there I should preach 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'" Just so. The law is for the self-righteous, to humble their pride: the gospel is for the lost, to remove their despair.

If you are not lost, what do you want with a Saviour? Should the shepherd go after those who never went astray? Why should the woman sweep her house for the bits of money that were never out of her purse? No, the medicine is for the diseased; the quickening is for the dead; the pardon is for the guilty; liberation is for those who are bound: the opening of eyes is for those who are blind. How can the Saviour, and His death upon the cross, and the gospel of pardon, be accounted for, unless it be upon the supposition that men are guilty and worthy of condemnation? The sinner is the gospel's reason for existence. You, my friend, to whom this word now comes, if you are undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving, you are the sort of man for whom the gospel is ordained, and arranged, and proclaimed. God justifieth the ungodly. I would like to make this very plain. I hope that I have done so already; but still, plain as it is, it is only the Lord that can make a man see it. It does at first seem most amazing to an awakened man that salvation should really be for him as a lost and guilty one. He thinks that it must be for him as a penitent man, forgetting that his penitence is a part of his salvation. "Oh," says he, "but I must be this and that,"--all of which is true, for he shall be this and that as the result of salvation; but salvation comes to him before he has any of the results of salvation. It comes to him, in fact, while he deserves only this bare, beggarly, base, abominable description, "ungodly." That is all he is when God's gospel comes to justify him.

May I, therefore, urge upon any who have no good thing about them--who fear that they have not even a good feeling, or anything whatever that can recommend them to God--that they will firmly believe that our gracious God is able and willing to take them without anything to recommend them, and to forgive them spontaneously, not because they are good, but because He is good. Does He not make His sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good? Does He not give fruitful seasons, and send the rain and the sunshine in their time upon the most ungodly nations? Ay, even Sodom had its sun, and Gomorrah had its dew. Oh friend, the great grace of God surpasses my conception and your conception, and I would have you think worthily of it! As high as the heavens are above the earth; so high are God's thoughts above our thoughts. He can abundantly pardon. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: forgiveness is for the guilty. Do not attempt to touch yourself up and make yourself something other than you really are; but come as you are to Him who justifies the ungodly. A great artist some short time ago had painted a part of the corporation of the city in which he lived, and he wanted, for historic purposes, to include in his picture certain characters well known in the town. A crossing-sweeper, unkempt, ragged, filthy, was known to everybody, and there was a suitable place for him in the picture. The artist said to this ragged and rugged individual, "I will pay you well if you will come down to my studio and let me take your likeness." He came round in the morning, but he was soon sent about his business; for he had washed his face, and combed his hair, and donned a respectable suit of clothes. He was needed as a beggar, and was not invited in any other capacity. Even so, the gospel will receive you into its halls if you come as a sinner, not otherwise. Wait not for reformation, but come at once for salvation. God justifieth the ungodly, and that takes you up where you now are: it meets you in your worst estate. Come in your deshabelle. I mean, come to your heavenly Father in all your sin and sinfulness. Come to Jesus just as you are, leprous, filthy, naked, neither fit to live nor fit to die. Come, you that are the very sweepings of creation; come, though you hardly dare to hope for anything but death. Come, though despair is brooding over you, pressing upon your bosom like a horrible nightmare. Come and ask the Lord to justify another ungodly one. Why should He not? Come for this great mercy of God is meant for such as you are. I put it in the language of the text, and I cannot put it more strongly: the Lord God Himself takes to Himself this gracious title, "Him that justifieth the ungodly." He makes just, and causes to be treated as just, those who by nature are ungodly. Is not that a wonderful word for you? Reader, do not delay till you have well considered this matter.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 424-426)

Chapel Flock ♦ PO Box 161102 ♦ Wichita, KS ♦ 67216 ♦ (316) 243-1438

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