



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

[It Ain't Over-
CeCe Winans](#)

[It Wasn't Easy –
CeCe Winans](#)

[Alabaster Box-
CeCe Winans](#)

Prayer

Lord, today I am asking You to forgive me for the times I've talked to people about my problems more than I've talked to You. I confess that I have leaned on people more heavily than I have leaned on You when facing difficult situations that required solutions. Now that I realize what I have done, I am making the decision to change the way I respond to challenges. I thank You, Lord, for the friends You have given me whom I can trust and confide in, but I know I will only find my real help and most permanent solutions as a result of being in Your Presence. Therefore, today I purpose to run to You first whenever the problems of life try to assault me. Only after I have received comfort and direction from You, my primary Source of help, will I consider turning to others whom You have given me for support. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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Cathe Laurie](#)

1 AGAIN DAVID gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000. 2 And [he] arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah [Kiriath-jearim] to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, Who sits enthroned above the cherubim. 3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, with the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord with all their might, with songs, lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals. 6 And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled and shook it. 7 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for touching the ark, and he died there by the ark of God. 8 David was grieved and offended because the Lord had broken forth upon Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah [the breaking forth upon Uzzah] to this day. 9 David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, How can the ark of the Lord come to me? 10 So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord to him into the City of David; but he took it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 11 And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. 12 And it was told King David, The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the City of David with rejoicing; 13 And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14 And David danced before the Lord with all his might, clad in a linen ephod [a priest's upper garment]. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. 16 As the ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter [David's wife], looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. 17 They brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. 18 When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name [and presence] of the Lord of hosts, 19 And distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, each to his house. 20 Then David returned to bless his household. And [his wife] Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, How glorious was the king of Israel today, who stripped himself of his kingly robes and uncovered himself in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the worthless fellows shamelessly uncovers himself! 21 David said to Michal, It was before the Lord, Who chose me above your father and all his house to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord. Therefore will I make merry [in pure enjoyment] before the Lord. 22 I will be still more lightly esteemed than this, and will humble and lower myself in my own sight [and yours]. But by the maids you mentioned, I will be held in honor. 23 And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

Chapter 6

And again, David gathered together the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand of them. And David arose, and went and all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring from there the ark of God (2Sa 6:1-2), Now Baale of Judah is actually Kirjath-Jearim, it's about eight miles from Jerusalem. It is where they had brought the ark of God. So he was coming now to bring the ark of God into Jerusalem. In coming to Kirjath-Jearim, what they did is make a new cart, and they put the Ark of the Covenant on this new cart, and they got these oxen to pull the cart. As they were coming with all of this big celebration, the oxen pulling the cart with the Ark of the Covenant upon it, the ox, one of the oxen tripped and the cart began to shake, and the Ark of the Covenant looked like it was going to fall. This one fellow reached forth his hand, Uzzah, and he reached out his hand to steady the ark of God so it wouldn't fall, and when he reached out his hand to touch the ark of God, God smote him dead. This angered David, number one, with God, and it put a fear in David's heart. He said, "Hey man that thing's powerful. Who among us can live around that thing?" Seeing the power of God against anyone who would dare to violate the word of God, David really got panicked, because he knew that he wasn't doing that close, "Who can live around this thing?" So he just had to turn in, and he had to go back to Jerusalem empty, not taking the Ark of the Covenant. But he just put it in there at the house of Obededom.

It is interesting though that as David sought to bring the Ark of the Covenant back, rather than going back to the book of the law to see how God had ordered the Ark of the Covenant to be transported, David was following the Philistine example. When they sent the Ark of the Covenant back, they had built a cart, and they took oxen and had it pulled back with the cart pulled by oxen. Now that was the Philistines' method of transporting the ark. However, the law of God said that when they bore the ark, they were to put these staves through the rings, and it was to be borne by four priests. So David really wasn't following the law of God in building this new cart, and having it pulled by oxen. He was not following God's pattern, but the Philistine pattern. It had, of course, disastrous results.

So they just put the ark there at the house of Obededom, and God began to bless Obededom like everything, because the Ark of the Covenant was there. For three months this guy was just blessed of God. They came and told David, "Wow is Obededom ever being blessed because of the Ark of the Covenant." So David decided, "All right, I'll go and get it and I'll bring it on into Jerusalem." So this time now he went back to the scriptures to follow the law of the Lord, and he had the priests bear the Ark of the Covenant, and when they would walk six steps, he would make a sacrifice unto the Lord. Then go three, six more steps, and he'd offer another sacrifice unto the Lord. He was out there, he had on just a linen robe, a common garment, took off his kingly robes and everything, and was just dressed in a common garment, of a common person, out with the crowd dancing with all of his might before the Lord. I mean he was just having a hilarious time. He was so excited bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, with tremendous excitement and joy. The people were praising the Lord, offering sacrifices, dancing before the Lord, David in the middle of them, dancing with all of his might. Just singing praises unto God as the Ark of the Covenant was coming unto Jerusalem.

And his wife the daughter of Saul [Michal] looked out the window, and saw him doing that; and she hated him in her heart (2Sa 6:16).

So David had a big party, gave everybody a big portion of meat, jug of wine, sent them on their way, blessed all of the people. Everybody was thrilled. He was on cloud nine, "All right" just so thrilled. He came in to bless his house, just overflowing, and who should meet him at the door but ice sickles, Michal.

And she said, Didn't the king behave himself gloriously today, uncovering yourself in front of all those handmaidens, [they're gonna despise you] (2Sa 6:20).

Boy, that big, cold put down, cold blanket. You know it is so hard when you've had such a glorious experience with the Lord, and you're just floating. You meet someone that says, "Well, aren't you just the one." You know, "Ugh." Well David's not one to be messed with.

And he said to her, [He gets very caustic with her, he said,] it was before the LORD, which chose me [cut, cut, cut] before your father, and before his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore I will play before the LORD (2Sa 6:21).

"That was before the Lord. I wasn't out there before the people." You, just making a big show out there in front of all those people, out there dancing, making a big show, making a big thing of yourself." David said, "It was before the Lord who chose me before your father, and his house. And I'm gonna play before the Lord."

And I will be yet even more vile than this, and will be base in my own sight: and of these maidservants which you have spoken of, I'll be held in honour of them. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death (2Sa 6:22-23).

He actually disgraced her by refusing then to have relationships with her, and refused her the honor of having a child, which in that culture was a most important thing for a woman was to bear a child, a son, especially for her husband, and David got even. He was not one that you really wanted to mess with. (Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

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 aforesaid 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.

"IT IS GOD THAT JUSTIFIETH" Romans 8:33

A WONDERFUL THING it is, this being justified, or made just. If we had never broken the laws of God we should not have needed it, for we should have been just in ourselves. He who has all his life done the things which he ought to have done, and has never done anything which he ought not to have done, is justified by the law. But you, dear reader, are not of that sort, I am quite sure. You have too much honesty to pretend to be without sin, and therefore you need to be justified. Now, if you justify yourself, you will simply be a self-deceiver. Therefore do not attempt it. It is never worth while. If you ask your fellow mortals to justify you, what can they do? You can make some of them speak well of you for small favors, and others will backbite you for less. Their judgment is not worth much. Our text says, "It is God that justifieth," and this is a deal more to the point. It is an astonishing fact, and one that we ought to consider with care. Come and see. In the first place, nobody else but God would ever have thought of justifying those who are guilty. They have lived in open rebellion; they have done evil with both hands; they have gone from bad to worse; they have turned back to sin even after they have smarted for it, and have therefore for a while been forced to leave it. They have broken the law, and trampled on the gospel. They have refused proclamations of mercy, and have persisted in ungodliness. How can they be forgiven and justified? Their fellowmen, despairing of them, say, "They are hopeless cases." Even Christians look upon them with sorrow rather than with hope. But not so their God. He, in the splendor of his electing grace having chosen some of them before the foundation of the world, will not rest till He has justified them, and made them to be accepted in the Beloved. Is it not written, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"? Thus you see there are some whom the Lord resolves to justify: why should not you and I be of the number?

None but God would ever have thought of justifying me. I am a wonder to myself. I doubt not that grace is equally seen in others. Look at Saul of Tarsus, who foamed at the mouth, against God's servants. Like a hungry wolf, he worried the lambs and the sheep right and left; and yet God struck him down on the road to Damascus, and changed his heart, and so fully justified him that ere long, this man became the greatest preacher of justification by faith that ever lived. He must often have marveled that he was justified by faith in Christ Jesus; for he was once a determined stickler for salvation by the works of the law. None but God would have ever thought of justifying such a man as Saul the persecutor; but the Lord God is glorious in grace.

But, even if anybody had thought of justifying the ungodly, none but God could have done it. It is quite impossible for any person to forgive offences which have not been committed against himself. A person has greatly injured you; you can forgive him, and I hope you will; but no third person can forgive him apart from you. If the wrong is done to you, the pardon must come from you. If we have sinned against God, it is in God's power to forgive; for the sin is against Himself. That is why David says, in the fifty-first Psalm: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight"; for then God, against whom the offence is committed, can put the offence away. That which we owe to God, our great Creator can remit, if so it pleases Him; and if He remits it, it is remitted. None but the great God, against whom we have committed the sin, can blot out that sin; let us, therefore, see that we go to Him and seek mercy at His hands. Do not let us be led aside by those who would have us confess to them; they have no warrant in the Word of God for their pretensions. But even if they were ordained to pronounce absolution in God's name, it must still be better to go ourselves to the great Lord through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, and seek and find pardon at His hand; since we are sure that this is the right way. Proxy religion involves too great a risk: you had better see to your soul's matters yourself, and leave them in no man's hands.

Only God can justify the ungodly; but He can do it to perfection. He casts our sins behind His back, He blots them out; He says that though they be sought for, they shall not be found. With no other reason for it but His own infinite goodness, He has prepared a glorious way by which He can make scarlet sins as white as snow, and remove our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west. He says, "I will not remember your sins." He goes the length of making an end of sin. One of old called out in amazement, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18).

We are not now speaking of justice, nor of God's dealing with men according to their deserts. If you profess to deal with the righteous Lord on law terms, everlasting wrath threatens you, for that is what you deserve. Blessed be His name, He has not dealt with us after our sins; but now He treats with us on terms of free grace and infinite compassion, and He says, "I will receive you graciously, and love you freely." Believe it, for it is certainly true that the great God is able to treat the guilty with abundant mercy; yea, He is able to treat the ungodly as if they had been always godly. Read carefully the parable of the prodigal son, and see how the forgiving father received the returning wanderer with as much love as if he had never gone away, and had never defiled himself with harlots. So far did he carry this that the elder brother began to grumble at it; but the father never withdrew his love. Oh my brother, however guilty you may be, if you will only come back to your God and Father, He will treat you as if you had never done wrong! He will regard you as just, and deal with you accordingly. What say you to this?

Do you not see--for I want to bring this out clearly, what a splendid thing it is--that as none but God would think of justifying the ungodly, and none but God could do it, yet the Lord can do it? See how the apostle puts the challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." If God has justified a man it is well done, it is rightly done, it is justly done, it is everlastingly done. I read a statement in a magazine which is full of venom against the gospel and those who preach it, that we hold some kind of theory by which we imagine that sin can be removed from men. We hold no theory, we publish a fact. The grandest fact under heaven is this--that Christ by His precious blood does actually put away sin, and that God, for Christ's sake, dealing with men on terms of divine mercy, forgives the guilty and justifies them, not according to anything that He sees in them, or foresees will be in them, but according to the riches of His mercy which lie in His own heart. This we have preached, do preach, and will preach as long as we live. "It is God that justifieth"--that justifieth the ungodly; He is not ashamed of doing it, nor are we of preaching it.

The justification which comes from God himself must be beyond question. If the Judge acquits me, who can condemn me? If the highest court in the universe has pronounced me just, who shall lay anything to my charge? Justification from God is a sufficient answer to an awakened conscience. The Holy Spirit by its means breathes peace over our entire nature, and we are no longer afraid. With this justification we can answer all the roarings and railings of Satan and ungodly men. With this we shall be able to die: with this we shall boldly rise again, and face the last great assize.

Bold shall I stand in that great day,

For who aught to my charge shall lay?

While by my Lord absolved I am

From sin's tremendous curse and blame.

Friend, the Lord can blot out all your sins. I make no shot in the dark when I say this. "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Though you are steeped up to your throat in crime, He can with a word remove the defilement, and say, "I will, be thou clean." The Lord is a great forgiver.

"I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins." Do You?

He can even at this hour pronounce the sentence, "Thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace;" and if He do this, no power in Heaven, or earth, or under the earth, can put you under suspicion, much less under wrath. Do not doubt the power of Almighty love. You could not forgive your fellow man had he offended you as you have offended God; but you must not measure God's corn with your bushel; His thoughts and ways are as much above yours as the heavens are high above the earth.

"Well," say you, "it would be a great miracle if the Lord were to pardon me." Just so. It would be a supreme miracle, and therefore He is likely to do it; for He does "great things and unsearchable" which we looked not for.

I was myself stricken down with a horrible sense of guilt, which made my life a misery to me; but when I heard the command, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else"--I looked, and in a moment the Lord justified me. Jesus Christ, made sin for me, was what I saw, and that sight gave me rest. When those who were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness looked to the serpent of brass they were healed at once; and so was I when I looked to the crucified Saviour. The Holy Spirit, who enabled me to believe, gave me peace through believing. I felt as sure that I was forgiven, as before I felt sure of condemnation. I had been certain of my condemnation because the Word of God declared it, and my conscience bore witness to it; but when the Lord justified me I was made equally certain by the same witnesses. The word of the Lord in the Scripture saith, "He that believeth on him is not condemned," and my conscience bears witness that I believed, and that God in pardoning me is just. Thus I have the witness of the Holy Spirit and my own conscience, and these two agree in one. Oh, how I wish that my reader would receive the testimony of God upon this matter, and then full soon he would also have the witness in himself!

I venture to say that a sinner justified by God stands on even a surer footing than a righteous man justified by his works, if such there be. We could never be surer that we had done enough works; conscience would always be uneasy lest, after all, we should come short, and we could only have the trembling verdict of a fallible judgment to rely upon; but when God himself justifies, and the Holy Spirit bears witness thereto by giving us peace with God, why then we feel that the matter is sure and settled, and we enter into rest. No tongue can tell the depth of that calm which comes over the soul which has received the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER; WE HAVE SEEN the ungodly justified, and have considered the great truth, that only God can justify any man; we now come a step further and make the inquiry--How can a just God justify guilty men? Here we are met with a full answer in the words of Paul, in Romans 3:21-26. We will read six verses from the chapter so as to get the run of the passage: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Here suffer me to give you a bit of personal experience. When I was under the hand of the Holy Spirit, under conviction of sin, I had a clear and sharp sense of the justice of God. Sin, whatever it might be to other people, became to me an intolerable burden. It was not so much that I feared hell, but that I feared sin. I knew myself to be so horribly guilty that I remember feeling that if God did not punish me for sin He ought to do so. I felt that the Judge of all the earth ought to condemn such sin as mine. I sat on the judgment seat, and I condemned myself to perish; for I confessed that had I been God I could have done no other than send such a guilty creature as I was down to the lowest hell. All the while, I had upon my mind a deep concern for the honor of God's name, and the integrity of His moral government. I felt that it would not satisfy my conscience if I could be forgiven unjustly. The sin I had committed must be punished. But then there was the question how God could be just, and yet justify me who had been so guilty. I asked my heart: "How can He be just and yet the justifier?" I was worried and wearied with this question; neither could I see any answer to it. Certainly, I could never have invented an answer which would have satisfied my conscience. The doctrine of the atonement is to my mind one of the surest proofs of the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture. Who would or could have thought of the just Ruler dying for the unjust rebel? This is no teaching of human mythology, or dream of poetical imagination. This method of expiation is only known among men because it is a fact; fiction could not have devised it. God Himself ordained it; it is not a matter which could have been imagined. I had heard the plan of salvation by the sacrifice of Jesus from my youth up; but I did not know any more about it in my innermost soul than if I had been born and bred a Hottentot. The light was there, but I was blind; it was of necessity that the Lord himself should make the matter plain to me. It came to me as a new revelation, as fresh as if I had never read in Scripture that Jesus was declared to be the propitiation for sins that God might be just. I believe it will have to come as a revelation to every newborn child of God whenever he sees it; I mean that glorious doctrine of the substitution of the Lord Jesus. I came to understand that salvation was possible through vicarious sacrifice; and that provision had been made in the first constitution and arrangement of things for such a substitution. I was made to see that He who is the Son of God, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father, had of old been made the covenant Head of a chosen people that He might in that capacity suffer for them and save them. Inasmuch as our fall was not at the first a personal one, for we fell in our federal representative, the first Adam, it became possible for us to be recovered by a second representative, even by Him who has undertaken to be the covenant head of His people, so as to be their second Adam. I saw that ere I actually sinned I had fallen by my first father's sin; and I rejoiced that therefore it became possible in point of law for me to rise by a second head and representative. The fall by Adam left a loophole of escape; another Adam can undo the ruin made by the first. When I was anxious about the possibility of a just God pardoning me, I understood and saw by faith that He who is the Son of God became man, and in His own blessed person bore my sin in His own body on the tree. I saw the chastisement of my peace was laid on Him, and that with His stripes I was healed. Dear friend, have you ever seen that? Have you ever understood how God can be just to the full, not remitting penalty nor blunting the edge of the sword, and yet can be infinitely merciful, and can justify the ungodly who turn to Him? It was because the Son of God, supremely glorious in His matchless person, undertook to vindicate the law by bearing the sentence due to me, that therefore God is able to pass by my sin. The law of God was more vindicated by the death of Christ than it would have been had all transgressors been sent to Hell. For the Son of God to suffer for sin was a more glorious establishment of the government of God, than for the whole race to suffer.

Jesus has borne the death penalty on our behalf. Behold the wonder! There He hangs upon the cross! This is the greatest sight you will ever see. Son of God and Son of Man, there He hangs, bearing pains unutterable, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Oh, the glory of that sight! The innocent punished! The Holy One condemned! The Ever-blessed made a curse! The infinitely glorious put to a shameful death! The more I look at the sufferings of the Son of God, the more sure I am that they must meet my case. Why did He suffer, if not to turn aside the penalty from us? If, then, He turned it aside by His death, it is turned aside, and those who believe in Him need not fear it. It must be so, that since expiation is made, God is able to forgive without shaking the basis of His throne, or in the least degree blotting the statute book. Conscience gets a full answer to her tremendous question. The wrath of God against iniquity, whatever that may be, must be beyond all conception terrible. Well did Moses say, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" Yet when we hear the Lord of glory cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" and see Him yielding up the ghost, we feel that the justice of God has received abundant vindication by obedience so perfect and death so terrible, rendered by so divine a person. If God himself bows before His own law, what more can be done? There is more in the atonement by way of merit, than there is in all human sin by way of demerit.

The great gulf of Jesus' loving self-sacrifice can swallow up the mountains of our sins, all of them. For the sake of the infinite good of this one representative man, the Lord may well look with favor upon other men, however unworthy they may be in and of themselves. It was a miracle of miracles that the Lord Jesus Christ should stand in our stead and

Bear that we might never bear

His Father's righteous ire.

But he has done so. "It is finished." God will spare the sinner because He did not spare His Son. God can pass by your transgressions because He laid those transgressions upon His only begotten Son nearly two thousand years ago. If you believe in Jesus (that is the point), then your sins were carried away by Him who was the scapegoat for His people.

What is it to believe in Him? It is not merely to say, "He is God and the Saviour," but to trust Him wholly and entirely, and take Him for all your salvation from this time forth and forever--your Lord, your Master, your all. If you will have Jesus, He has you already. If you believe on Him, I tell you you cannot go to hell; for that were to make the sacrifice of Christ of none effect. It cannot be that a sacrifice should be accepted, and yet the soul should die for whom that sacrifice has been received. If the believing soul could be condemned, then why a sacrifice? If Jesus died in my stead, why should I die also? Every believer can claim that the sacrifice was actually made for him: by faith he has laid his hands on it, and made it his own, and therefore he may rest assured that he can never perish. The Lord would not receive this offering on our behalf, and then condemn us to die. The Lord cannot read our pardon written in the blood of His own Son, and then smite us. That were impossible. Oh that you may have grace given you at once to look away to Jesus and to begin at the beginning, even at Jesus, who is the Fountain-head of mercy to guilty man!

"He justifieth the ungodly." "It is God that justifieth," therefore, and for that reason only it can be done, and He does it through the atoning sacrifice of His divine Son. Therefore it can be justly done--so justly done that none will ever question it--so thoroughly done that in the last tremendous day, when heaven and earth shall pass away, there shall be none that shall deny the validity of the justification. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

Now, poor soul! will you come into this lifeboat, just as you are? Here is safety from the wreck! Accept the sure deliverance. "I have nothing with me," say you. You are not asked to bring anything with you. Men who escape for their lives will leave even their clothes behind. Leap for it, just as you are.

I will tell you this thing about myself to encourage you. My sole hope for heaven lies in the full atonement made upon Calvary's cross for the ungodly. On that I firmly rely. I have not the shadow of a hope anywhere else. You are in the same condition as I am; for we neither of us have anything of our own worth as a ground of trust. Let us join hands and stand together at the foot of the cross, and trust our souls once for all to Him who shed His blood for the guilty. We will be saved by one and the same Saviour. If you perish trusting Him, I must perish too. What can I do more to prove my own confidence in the gospel which I set before you?

"ALL of GRACE" An Earnest Word with Those Who Are Seeking Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ
By C.H. SPURGEON; "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."Romans 5:20

(19 June 1834 – 31 January 1892) was a British Particular Baptist preacher. Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is known as the "Prince of Preachers". He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the Church in agreement with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith understanding, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day

(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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