

Justification by Grace

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately explains that sinners are justified freely by God's grace through the complete and accepted redemption accomplished by Christ Jesus on the cross.

Scripture: Romans 3:24, Romans 3:23, Isaiah 53:12, John 19:30, Hebrews 7:25, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Psalm 40:6-8, Acts 2:24

Topics: "Justification", "Redemption", "Grace"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the profound doctrine of justification by grace through the redemption accomplished by Christ Jesus. He vividly portrays the completeness of Christ's sacrifice, its acceptance by God, and the resulting legal declaration of sinners as righteous. Spurgeon's clear and passionate teaching offers deep comfort and assurance to believers, emphasizing the unmerited favor granted through faith in Christ. This message remains a timeless exposition on the heart of the gospel.

Transcript

"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."—Rom. 3:24.

THE hill of comfort is the hill of calvary; the house of consolation is builded with the wood of the cross; the temple of heavenly cordials is founded upon the riven rock, riven by the spear which pierced its side. No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like the scene on Calvary.

"Is it not strange, the darkest hour

That ever dawn'd on sinful earth

Should touch the heart with softer power

For comfort, than an angel's mirth?

That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn,

Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?"

Nowhere does the soul ever find such consolation as on that very spot where misery reigned, where woe triumphed, where agony reached its climax. There grace hath dug a fountain, which ever gusheth with

waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes and the agonies of mankind. Ye have had your seasons of woe, my brethren and my sisters in Christ Jesus; and ye will confess it was not at Olivet that ye ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor; but Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha hath often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight.

We have, this morning, then, a subject which I trust may be the means of comforting God's saints, seeing it takes its rise at the cross, and thence runs on in a rich stream of perennial blessing to all believers. You note, we have in our text, first of all, the redemption of Christ Jesus; secondly, the justification of sinners flowing from it; and then thirdly, the manner of the giving of this justification, "freely by his grace."

I. First, then, we have THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN OR BY CHRIST JESUS.

The figure of redemption is very simple, and has been very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive, and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid down. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness, and, indeed, virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law; we were given into the hands of justice; justice claimed us to be his bond slaves for ever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had not wherewith to bless ourselves. We were, as our hymn hath worded it, "bankrupt debtors;" an execution was put into our house; all we had was sold; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ stepped in, stood sponsor for us, and, in the room and stead of all believers, did pay the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God, and go our way, clean, free, justified by his blood.

Let me just endeavour to show you some qualities of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You will remember the multitude he has redeemed; not me alone, nor you alone, but "a multitude that no man can number," which shall as far exceed the stars of heaven for number, as they exceed all mortal reckoning. Christ hath bought for himself, some out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, under heaven; he hath redeemed from among men some of every rank, from the highest to the lowest; some of every colour—black and white; some of every standing in society, the best and the worst. For some of all sorts hath Jesus Christ given himself a ransom that they might be redeemed unto himself.

Now, concerning this ransom, we have to observe, that it was all paid, and all paid at once. When Christ redeemed his people, he did it thoroughly; he did not leave a single debt unpaid, nor yet one farthing for them to settle afterwards. God demanded of Christ the payment for the sins of all his people; Christ stood forward, and to the utmost farthing paid whate'er his people owed. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment; it was not a partial exoneration, it was a complete and perfect payment, and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the debts of all believers that have lived, do live, or shall live, to the very end of time. On that day when Christ hung on the cross, he did not leave a single farthing for us to pay as a satisfaction to God; he did not leave, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, that he had not satisfied. The whole of the demands of the law were paid down there and then by Jehovah Jesus, the great high priest of all his people. And blessed be his name, he paid it all at once too. So priceless was the ransom, so princely and munificent was the price demanded for our souls, one might have thought it would have been marvellous if Christ had paid it by instalments; some of it now, and some of it then. King's

ransoms have sometimes been paid part at once, and part in dues afterwards, to run through years. But not so our Saviour: once for all he gave himself a sacrifice; at once he counted down the price, and said, "It is finished," leaving nothing for him to do, nor for us to accomplish. He did not drivel out a part-payment, and then declare that he would come again to die, or that he would again suffer, or that he would again obey; but down upon the nail, to the utmost farthing, the ransom of all people was paid, and a full receipt given to them, and Christ nailed that receipt to his cross, and said, "It is done, it is done; I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the cross; who is he that shall condemn my people, or lay anything to their charge? for I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions, and like a thick cloud their sins!"

And when Christ paid all this ransom, will you just notice, that he did it all himself! He was very particular about that. Simon, the Cyrenian, might bear the cross; but Simon, the Cyrenian, might not be nailed to it. That sacred circle of Calvary was kept for Christ alone. Two thieves were with him there; not righteous men, lest any should have said that the death of those two righteous men helped the Saviour. Two thieves hung there with him, that men might see that there was majesty in his misery, and that he could pardon men and show his sovereignty, even when he was dying. There were no righteous men to suffer; no disciples shared his death; Peter was not dragged there to be beheaded, John was not nailed to a cross side by side with him; he was left there alone. He says, "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me." The whole of the tremendous debt was put upon his shoulders; the whole weight of the sins of all his people was placed upon him. Once he seemed to stagger under it: "Father, if it be possible." But again he stood upright: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." The whole of the punishment of his people was distilled into one cup; no mortal lip might give it so much as a solitary sip. When he put it to his own lips, it was so bitter, he well nigh spurned it—"Let this cup pass from me." But his love for his people was so strong, that he took the cup in both his hands, and

"At one tremendous draught of love

He drank damnation dry,"

for all his people. He drank it all, he endured all, he suffered all; so that now for ever there are no flames of hell for them, no racks of torment; they have no eternal woes; Christ hath suffered all they ought to have suffered, and they must, they shall go free. The work was completely done by himself, without a helper.

And note, again, it was accepted. In truth, it was a goodly ransom. What could equal it? A soul "exceeding sorrowful even unto death;" a body torn with torture; a death of the most inhuman kind; and an agony of such a character, that tongue cannot speak of it, nor can even man's mind imagine its horror. It was a goodly price. But say, was it accepted? There have been prices paid sometimes, or rather offered, which never were accepted by the party to whom they were offered, and therefore the slave did not go free. But this was accepted. The evidence I will shew you. When Christ declared that he would pay the debt for all his people, God sent the officer to arrest him for it; he arrested him in the garden of Gethsemane, and seizing upon him, he dragged him to the bar of Pilate, to the bar of Herod, and to the judgment seat of Caiaphas; the payment was all made, and Christ was put into the grave. He was there, locked up in durance vile, until the acceptance should have been ratified in heaven. He slept there a portion of three days in his tomb. It was declared that the ratification was to be this: the surety was to go his way as soon as ever his suretyship engagements had been fulfilled. Now let your minds picture the buried Jesus. He is in the sepulchre. 'Tis true he has paid all the debt, but the receipt is not yet given; he slumbers in that narrow tomb. Fastened in with a seal upon a giant stone, he sleeps still in his grave; not yet has the

acceptance been given from God; the angels have not yet come from heaven to say, "The deed is done, God has accepted thy sacrifice." Now is the crisis of this world; it hangs trembling in the balance. Will God accept the ransom, or will he not? We shall see. An angel comes from heaven with exceeding brightness; he rolls away the stone; and forth comes the captive, with no manacles upon his hands, with the grave clothes left behind him; free, never more to suffer, never more to die. Now,

"If Jesus had not paid the debt,

He ne'er had been at freedom set."

If God had not accepted his sacrifice, he would have been in his tomb at this moment; he never would have risen from his grave. But his resurrection was a pledge of God's accepting him. He said, "I have had a claim upon thee to this hour; that claim is paid now; go thy way." And death gave up his royal captive, the stone was rolled into the garden, and the conqueror came forth, leading captivity captive.

And, moreover, God gave a second proof of acceptance; for he took his only begotten Son to heaven, and set him at his right hand, far above all principalities and powers; and therein he meant to say to him, "Sit upon the throne, for thou hast done the mighty deed; all thy works and all thy miseries are accepted as the ransom of men." O my beloved, think what a grand sight it must have been when Christ ascended into glory; what a noble certificate it must have been of his Father's acceptance of him! Do you not think you see the scene on earth? It is very simple. A few disciples are standing upon a hill, and Christ mounts into the air in slow and solemn movement, as if an angel sped his way by gentle degrees, like mist or exhalation from the lake into the skies. Can you imagine what is going on up yonder? Can you for a moment conceive how, when the mighty conqueror entered the gates of heaven, the angels met him,

"They brought his chariot from on high,

To bear him to his throne;

Clapp'd their triumphant wings, and cried,

'The glorious work is done'"

Can you think how loud were the plaudits when he entered the gates of heaven? Can you conceive how they pressed on one another, to behold how he came conquering and red from the fight? Do you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the saints redeemed, come to behold the Saviour and the Lord? They had desired to see him, and now their eyes behold him in flesh and blood, the conqueror over death and hell! Do you think you see him, with hell at his chariot- wheels, with death dragged as a captive through the royal streets of heaven? Oh, what a spectacle was there that day! No Roman warrior ever had such a triumph; none ever saw such a majestic sight. The pomp of a whole universe, the royalty of entire creation, cherubim and seraphim and all powers create, did swell the show; and God himself, the Everlasting One, crowned all, when he pressed his Son to his bosom, and said, "Well done, well done; thou hast finished the work which I gave thee to do. Rest here for ever, mine accepted one." Ah, but he never would have had that triumph, if he had not paid all the debt. Unless his Father had accepted the ransom-price, the ransomer had never been so honoured; but because it was accepted, therefore did he so triumph. So far, then, concerning the ransom.

II. And now, by the help of God's Spirit, let me address myself to THE EFFECT OF THE RANSOM; being justified—"justified freely by his grace through the redemption."

Now, what is the meaning of justification? Divines will puzzle you, if you ask them. I must try the best I can to make justification plain and simple, even to the comprehension of a child. There is not such a thing as justification to be had on earth for mortal men, except in one way. Justification, you know, is a forensic term; it is employed always in a legal sense. A prisoner is brought to the bar of justice to be tried. There is only one way whereby that prisoner can be justified; that is, he must be found not guilty; and if he is found not guilty, then he is justified—that is, he is proved to be a just man. If you find that man guilty, you cannot justify him. The Queen may pardon him, but she cannot justify him. The deed is not a justifiable one, if he were guilty concerning it; and he cannot be justified on account of it. He may be pardoned; but not royalty itself can ever wash that man's character. He is as much a real criminal when he is pardoned as before. There is no means among men of justifying a man of an accusation which is laid against him, except by his being proved not guilty. Now, the wonder of wonders is, that we are proved guilty, and yet we are justified: the verdict has been brought in against us, guilty; and yet, notwithstanding, we are justified. Can any earthly tribunal do that? No; it remained for the ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to any tribunal upon earth. We are all guilty. Read the 23rd verse, immediately preceding the text—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There the verdict of guilty is brought in, and yet we are immediately afterwards said to be justified freely by his grace.

Now, allow me to explain the way whereby God justifies a sinner. I am about to suppose an impossible case. A prisoner has been tried, and condemned to death. He is a guilty man; he cannot be justified, because he is guilty. But now, suppose for a moment that such a thing as this could happen—that some second party could be introduced, who could take all that man's guilt upon himself, who could change places with that man, and by some mysterious process, which of course is impossible with men, become that man; or take that man's character upon himself; he, the righteous man, putting the rebel in his place, and making the rebel a righteous man. We cannot do that in our courts. If I were to go before a judge, and he should agree that I should be committed for a year's imprisonment, instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday to a year's imprisonment, I could not take his guilt. I might take his punishment, but not his guilt. Now, what flesh and blood cannot do, that Jesus Christ by his redemption did. Here I stand, the sinner. I mention myself as the representative of you all. I am condemned to die. God says, "I will condemn that man; I must, I will—I will punish him." Christ comes in, puts me aside, and stands himself in my stead. When the plea is demanded, Christ says, "Guilty," takes my guilt to be his own guilt. When the punishment is to be executed, forth comes Christ. "Punish me," he says; "I have put my righteousness on that man, and I have taken that man's sins on me. Father, punish me, and consider that man to have been me. Let him reign in heaven; let me suffer misery. Let me endure his curse, and let him receive my blessing." This marvellous doctrine of the changing of places of Christ with poor sinners, is a doctrine of revelation, for it never could have been conceived by nature. Let me, lest I should have made a mistake, explain myself again. The way whereby God saves a sinner is not, as some say, by passing over the penalty. No; the penalty has been all paid. It is the putting of another person in the rebel's place. The rebel must die; God says he must. Christ says, "I will be substitute for the rebel. The rebel shall take my place; I will take his." God consents to it. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to such a change. But the God of heaven had a right to do as he pleased. In his infinite mercy he consented to the arrangement. "Son of my love," said he, "you must stand in the sinner's place; you must suffer what he ought to have suffered; you must be accounted guilty, just as he was accounted guilty; and then I will look upon the sinner in another light. I will look at him as if he were Christ; I will accept him as if he were my only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. I will give him a crown in heaven, and I will take him to my heart for ever and ever." This is the way we are saved, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And now, let me further go on to explain some of the characteristics of this justification. As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, remember, he is justified for all his sins. Here stands a man all guilty. The moment he believes in Christ, his pardon at once he receives, and his sins are no longer his; they are cast into the depths of the sea. They were laid upon the shoulders of Christ, and they are gone. The man stands a guiltless man in the sight of God, accepted in the beloved. "What!" say you, "do you mean that literally?" Yes, I do, That is the doctrine of justification by faith. Man ceases to be regarded by divine justice as a guilty being; the moment he believes on Christ his guilt is all taken away. But I am going a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he ceases to be guilty in God's esteem; but what is more, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious; for, in the moment when Christ takes his sins he takes Christ's righteousness; so that, when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, he looks upon him with as much love and affection as he ever looked upon his Son. He himself has said it—"As the Father loved me, so have I loved you." He loves us as much as his Father loved him. Can you believe such a doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine whereby we must hope to be saved. Can I to any unenlightened person illustrate this thought better? I will give him the parable we have given to us in the prophets—the parable of Joshua the high-priest. Joshua comes in, clothed in filthy garments; those filthy garments representing his sins. Take away the filthy garments; that is pardon. Put a mitre on his head; clothe him in royal raiment; make him rich and fair; that is justification. But where do these garments come from? and where do those rags go to? Why, the rags that Joshua had on go to Christ, and the garments put on Joshua are the garments that Christ wore. The sinner and Christ do just what Jonathan and David did. Jonathan put his robes on David, David gave Jonathan his garments; so Christ takes our sins, we take Christ's righteousness; and it is by a glorious substitution and interchange of places that sinners go free and are justified by his grace.

"But," says one, "no one is justified like that, till he dies." Believe me, he is.

"The moment a sinner believes,

And trusts in his crucified God,

His pardon at once he receives;

Salvation in full, through his blood."

If that young man over there has really believed in Christ this morning, realizing by a spiritual experience what I have attempted to describe, he is as much justified in God's sight now as he will be when he stands before the throne. Not the glorified spirits above are more acceptable to God than the poor man below, who is once justified by grace. It is a perfect washing, it is perfect pardon, perfect imputation; we are fully, freely, and wholly accepted, through Christ our Lord. Just one more word here, and then I will leave this matter of justification. Those who are once justified are justified irreversibly. As soon as a sinner takes Christ's place, and Christ takes the sinner's place, there is no fear of a second change. If Christ has once paid the debt, the debt is paid, and it will never be asked for again; if you are pardoned, you are pardoned once for ever. God does not give man a free pardon under his own sign-manual, and then afterwards retract it and punish man: that be far from God so to do. He says, "I have punished Christ; you may go free." And after that, we may "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," that "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And now I hear one cry, "That is an extraordinary doctrine." Well, so some may think; but let me say to you, it is a doctrine professed by all protestant churches, though they may not preach it. It is the doctrine of the Church of England, it is the doctrine of

Luther, it is the doctrine of the Presbyterian church; it is professedly the doctrine of all Christian churches; and if it seems strange in your ears, it is because your ears are estranged, and not because the doctrine is a strange one. It is the doctrine of holy writ, that none can condemn whom God justifies, and that none can accuse those for whom Christ hath died; for they are totally free from sin. So that, as one of the prophets has it, God sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel. In the moment they believe, their sins being imputed to Christ, they cease to be theirs, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to them and accounted theirs, so that they are accepted.

III. And now I close up with the third point, upon which I shall be brief, and I hope very earnest: THE MANNER OF GIVING THIS JUSTIFICATION. John Bunyan would have it, that there are some whose mouths are set a watering for this great gift of justification. Are there not some here who are saying, "Oh! if I could be justified! But, Sir, can I be justified? I have been a drunkard, I have been a swearer, I have been everything that is vile. Can I be justified? Will Christ take my black sins, and am I to take his white robes? Yes, poor soul, if thou desirest it; if God has made thee willing, if thou dost confess thy sins, Christ is willing to take thy rags, and give thee his righteousness, to be thine for ever. "Well, but how is it to be obtained?" says one "must I be a holy man for many years, and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by his grace;" "freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "By his grace," because it is not of our deservings. "But, O Sir, I have been praying, and I do not think God will forgive me, unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, Sir, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; if you bring anything to pay for it, he will throw it in your face, and will not give his justification to you. He gives it away freely. Old Rowland Hill once went preaching at a fair; he noticed the chapmen selling their wares by auction; so Rowland said, "I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there," said he "find a great difficulty to get you up to their price; my difficulty is to bring you down to mine." So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought by you at a sovereign a piece, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims tomorrow morning, every one of us? If I were to preach justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves, and that severely too. But when it is freely, freely, freely, men turn away. "What! am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing anything?" Yes, Sir, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all; it is "freely." "But may I not go to Christ, lay some claim to his mercy, and say, Lord, justify me because I am not so bad as others?" It will not do, Sir, because it is "by his grace." "But may I not indulge a hope, because I go to church twice a day?" No, Sir; it is "by his grace." "But may I not offer this plea, I mean to be better?" No, sir; it is "by his grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for his treasures. Oh! what poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's gospel, if they think they can buy it! God will not have your rusty farthings to buy heaven with. A rich man once, when he was dying, had a notion that he could buy a place in heaven by building a row of almshouses. A good man stood by his bed-side, and said, "How much more are you going to leave?" "Twenty thousand pounds." Said he "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in heaven; for the streets are made of gold there, and therefore of what value can your gold be, it would be accounted nothing of, when the very streets are paved with it?" Nay, friends, we cannot buy heaven with gold nor good works, nor prayers, nor anything in the world. But how is it to be got? Why it is to be got for asking only. As many of us as know ourselves to be sinners may have Christ for asking for him. Do you know that you want Christ? You may have Christ! "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But if you cleave to your own notions, and say, "No, Sir, I mean to do a great many good things, and then I will believe in Christ."—Sir, you will be damned if you hold by such delusions. I earnestly warn you. You cannot be saved so. "Well, but are we not to do good works?" Certainly you are; but you are not to trust in them. You must

trust in Christ wholly, and then do good works afterwards. "But," says one, "I think if I were to do a few good works, it would be a little recommendation when I came." It would not, sir; they would be no recommendation at all. Let a beggar come to your house in white kid gloves, and say he is very badly off, and wants some charity; would the white kid gloves recommend him to your charity? Would a good new hat that he has been buying this morning recommend him to your charity? "No," you would say, "you are a miserable impostor; you do not want anything, and you shall not have anything either! Out with you!"

The best livery for a beggar is rags, and the best livery for a sinner to go to Christ in, is for him to go just as he is, with nothing but sin about him. "But no;" say you, "I must be a little better, and then I think Christ will save me!" You cannot get any better, try as long as you please. And besides—to use a paradox—if you were to get better, you would be all the worse; for the worse you are, the better to come to Christ. If you are all unholy come to Christ; if you feel your sin, and renounce it, come to Christ; though you have been the most debased and abandoned soul, come to Christ; if you feel yourself to have nothing about you that can recommend you, come to Christ.

"Venture on him, venture wholly;

Let no other trust intrude."

I do not say this to urge any man to continue in sin. God forbid! If you continue in sin, you must not come to Christ; you cannot; your sins will hamper you. You cannot be chained to your galley- oar—the oar of your sins—yet come to Christ, and be a free man. No, sir, it is repentance; it is the immediate leaving off the sin. But mark thee, neither by repentance, nor by leaving off thy sin, can save thee. It is Christ, Christ, Christ—Christ only.

But I know you will go away, many of you, and try to build up your own Babel-tower, to get to heaven. Some of you will go one way to work, and some another. You will go the ceremony way: you will lay the foundation of the structure with infant baptism, build confirmation on it, and the Lord's supper. "I shall go to heaven," you say; "Do not I keep Good Friday and Christmas-day? I am a better man than those dissenters. I am a most extraordinary man. Do I not say more prayers than any one?" You will be a long while going up that treadmill, before you get an inch higher. That is not the way to get to the stars. One says, "I will go and study the Bible, and believe right doctrine; and I have no doubt that by believing right doctrine I shall be saved." Indeed you will not! You can be no more saved by believing right doctrine than you can by doing right actions. "There," says another, "I like that; I shall go and believe in Christ, and live as I like." Indeed you will not! For if you believe in Christ he will not let you live as your flesh liketh; by his Spirit he will constrain you to mortify its affections and lusts. If he gives you the grace to make you believe, he will give you the grace to live a holy life afterwards. If he gives you faith, he gives you good works afterwards. You cannot believe in Christ, unless you renounce every fault, and resolve to serve him with full purpose of heart. Methinks at last I hear a sinner say, "Is that the only door? And may I venture through it? Then I will. But I do not quite understand you; I am something like poor Tiff, in that remarkable book 'Dred.' They talk a great deal about a door, but I cannot see the door; they talk a great deal about the way, but I cannot see the way. For if poor Tiff could see the way, he would take these children away by it. They talk about fighting, but I do not see any one to fight, or else I would fight." Let me explain it then. I find in the Bible, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." What have you to do, but to believe this and trust in him? You will never be disappointed with such a faith as that. Let me give you over again an illustration I have given hundreds of times, but I cannot find another so good, so I must give it again. Faith is something like this. There is a story told of a captain

of a man-of-war, whose son—a young lad—was very fond of running up the rigging of the ship; and one time, running after a monkey, he ran up the mast, till at last he got on to the maintruck. Now, the maintruck, you are aware, is like a large round table put on to the mast, so that when the boy was on the maintruck there was plenty of room for him; but the difficulty was—to use the best explanation I can—that he could not reach the mast that was under the table; he was not tall enough to get down from this maintruck, reach the mast, and so descend. There he was on the maintruck; he managed to get up there, somehow or other, but down he never could get. His father saw that, and he looked up in horror; what was he to do? In a few moments his son would fall down, and be dashed to pieces! He was clinging to the main-truck with all his might, but in a little time he would fall down on the deck, and there he would be a mangled corpse. The captain called for a speaking trumpet; he put it to his mouth, and shouted, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea.” It was, in truth, his only way of escape; he might be picked up out of the sea, but he could not be rescued if he fell on the deck. The poor boy looked down on the sea; it was a long way; he could not bear the idea of throwing himself into the roaring current beneath him; he thought it looked angry and dangerous. How could he cast himself down into it? So he clung to the main-truck with all his might, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish. The father called for a gun, and pointing it up at him, said, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea, or I’ll shoot you!” He knew his father would keep his word; the ship lurched on one side, over went the boy splash into the sea, and out went brawny arms after him; the sailors rescued him, and brought him on deck. Now, we, like the boy, are in a position of extra-ordinary danger, by nature, which neither you nor I can possibly escape of ourselves. Unfortunately, we have got some good works of our own, like that maintruck, and we cling to them so fondly, that we never will give them up. Christ knows that unless we do give them up, we shall be dashed to pieces at the last, for that rotten trust must ruin us. He, therefore, says, “Sinner, let go thine own trust, and drop into the sea of my love.” We look down, and say, “Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if he were angry with me, and I could not trust him.” Ah, will not mercy’s tender cry persuade you?—“He that believeth shall be saved.” Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat—“He that believeth not shall be damned?” It is with you now as with that boy—your position is one of imminent peril in itself, and your slighting the Father’s counsel is a matter of more terrible alarm, it makes peril more perilous. You must do it, or else you perish! Let go your hold! That is faith when the poor sinner lets go his hold, drops down, and so is saved; and the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him, is the means of his being saved. Oh! believe on Christ, poor sinners; believe on Christ. Ye who know your guilt and misery come, cast yourselves upon him; come, and trust my Master, and as he lives, before whom I stand, you shall never trust him in vain; but you shall find yourselves forgiven, and go your way rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/justification-by-grace/>

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