

Saving Faith

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes that faith, not works or feelings, is the divinely appointed instrument through which sinners are saved, highlighting its essential role in justification and sanctification.

Scripture: Luke 7:50, Luke 18:42, Luke 8:48, Luke 17:19, Matthew 21:22, Mark 5:34, John 3:16, Romans 3:28

Topics: "Faith", "Justification", "Salvation"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the unique and vital role of faith in salvation, drawing from the examples of the penitent woman and the blind man healed by Jesus. He carefully distinguishes faith from works, feelings, and repentance, showing that faith alone is the divinely appointed instrument through which sinners receive forgiveness and new life. Spurgeon also highlights the nature of saving faith as humble, persevering, and openly confessed, encouraging believers to trust fully in Christ's grace. This sermon offers deep theological insight and practical encouragement for all who seek assurance and growth in their Christian walk.

Transcript

(No. 1162-3)

'Thy faith hath saved thee.' Luke 7:50; and Luke 18:42.

I do not remember that this expression is found anywhere else in the Word of God. It is found in these two places in the Gospel by Luke, but not in any other Gospel. Luke also gives us in two other places a kindred, and almost identical expression, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' This you will find used in reference to the woman whose issue of blood had been stanch'd (Luke 8:48), and in connection with that one of the ten lepers who returned to praise the Saviour for the cure he had received (Luke 17:19). You will find the expression, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole' once in Matthew and twice in Mark, but you find it twice in Luke, and together therewith the twice repeated words of our text, 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' Are we wrong in supposing that the long intercourse of Luke with the apostle Paul led him not only to receive the great doctrine of justification by faith which Paul so plainly taught, and to attach to faith that high importance which Paul always did, but also to have a peculiar memory for those expressions which were used by the Saviour, in which faith was manifestly honoured to a very high degree. Albeit Luke would not have written anything which was not true for the sake of maintaining the grand doctrine so clearly taught by the apostle, yet I think his full conviction of it would help to recall to his memory more vividly those words of the Lord Jesus from which it could be more clearly learned or illustrated. Be that as it may,

we know that Luke was inspired, and that he has written neither more nor less than what the Saviour actually said, and hence we may be quite sure that the expression, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' fell from the Redeemer's lips, and we are bound to accept it as pure unquestionable truth, and we may repeat it ourselves without fear of misleading others, or trenching upon any other truth. I mention this because the other day I heard an earnest friend say that faith did not save us, at which announcement I was rather surprised. The brother, it is true, qualified the expression, and showed that he meant to make it clear that Jesus saved us, and not our own act of faith. I agreed with what he meant, but not with what he said, for he had no right to use an expression which was in flat contradiction to the distinct declaration of the Saviour, 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' We are not to strain any expression to make it mean more than the speaker intended, and it is well to guard words from being misunderstood; but on the other hand, we may not quite go so far as absolutely to negative a declaration of the Lord himself, however we may mean to qualify it. It is to be qualified if you like, but it is not to be contradicted, for there it stands, 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' Now we shall this morning, by God's help, inquire what was it that saved the two persons whose history will come before us? It was their faith. Our second inquiry will be what kind of faith was it which saved them? and then thirdly, what does this teach us in reference to faith?

I. WHAT WAS IT THAT SAVED the two persons whose history we are about to consider?

In the penitent woman's case, her great sins were forgiven her and she became a woman of extraordinary love: she loved much, for she had much forgiven. I feel, in thinking of her, something like an eminent father of the church who said, 'This narrative is not one which I can well preach upon; I had far rather weep over it in secret.' That woman's tears, that woman's unbraided tresses wiping the Saviour's feet, her coming so near to her Lord in such company, facing such proud cavillers, with such fond and resolute intent of doing honour to Jesus; verily, among those that have loved the Saviour, there hath not lived a greater than this woman who was a sinner. Yet for all that Jesus did not say to her, 'Thy love hath saved thee.' Love is a golden apple of the tree of which faith is the root, and the Saviour took care not to ascribe to the fruit that which belongs only to the root. This loving woman was also right notable for her repentance. Mark ye well those tears. Those were no tears of sentimental emotion, but a rain of holy heart-sorrow for sin. She had been a sinner and she knew it; she remembered well her multitude of iniquities, and she felt each sin deserved a tear, and there she stood weeping herself away, because she had offended her dear Lord. Yet it is not said, 'Thy repentance hath saved thee.' Her being saved caused her repentance, but repentance did not save her. Sorrow for sin is an early token of grace within the heart, yet it is nowhere said, 'Thy sorrow for sin hath saved thee.' She was a woman of great humility. She came behind the Lord and washed his feet, as though she felt herself only able to be a menial servant to perform works of drudgery, and to find a pleasure in so serving her Lord. Her reverence for him had reached a very high point; she regarded him as a king, and she did what has sometimes been done for monarchs by zealous subjects'she kissed the feet of her heart's Lord, who well deserved the homage. Her loyal reverence led her to kiss the feet of her Lord, the Sovereign of her soul, but I do not find that Jesus said, 'Thy humility hath saved thee;' or that he said, 'Thy reverence hath saved thee;' but he put the crown upon the head of her faith, and said expressly, 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'

In the case of the blind man to whom my second text refers'this man was notable for his earnestness; he cried, and cried aloud, 'Son of David, have mercy on me.' He was notable for his importunity, for they who would have silenced him rebuked him in vain; he cried so much the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me.' But I do not discover that Christ attributed his salvation to his prayers, earnest and importunate though they were. It is not written, 'Thy prayers have saved thee'; it is written, 'Thy faith hath saved thee.'

He was a man of considerable and clear knowledge, and he had a distinct apprehension of the true character of Christ: he scorned to call him Jesus of Nazareth, as the crowd did, but he proclaimed him 'Son of David,' and in the presence of that throng he dared avow his full conviction that the humble man, dressed in a peasant's garb, who was threading his way through the throng, was none other than the royal heir of the royal line of Judah, and was indeed the fulfiller of the type of David, the expected Messiah, the King of the Jews, the Son of David. Yet I do not find that Jesus attributed his salvation to his knowledge, to his clear apprehension, or to his distinct avowal of his Messiahship; but he said to him, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' laying the entire stress of his salvation upon his faith.

This being so in both cases, we are led to ask, what is the reason for it? What is the reason why in every case, in every man that is saved, faith is the great instrument of salvation? Is it not first because God has a right to choose what way of salvation he pleases, and he has chosen that men should be saved, not by their works, but by their faith in his dear Son? God has a right to give his mercy to whom he pleases; he has a right to give it when he pleases; he has a right to give it in what mode he pleases; and know ye this, O sons of men, that the decree of heaven is immutable, and standeth fast forever" 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.' To this there shall be no exception; Jehovah has made the rule and it shall stand. If thou wouldst have salvation, 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'; but if not, salvation is utterly impossible to thee. This is the appointed way; follow it, and it leads to heaven; refuse it, and thou must perish. This is God's sovereign determination, 'He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God.' Jehovah's will be done. If this be his method of grace, let us not kick against it. If he determines that faith shall save, so let it be; only, Good Master, create and increase our faith.

But while I attribute this to the sovereign choice of God, I do see, for Scripture plainly indicates it, a reason in the nature of things why faith should thus have been selected. The apostle tells us it is of faith that it might be of grace. If the condition of salvation had been either feeling or working, then, such is the depravity of our nature, that we should inevitably have attributed the merit of salvation to the working or the feeling. We should have claimed something whereof to glory. It matters not how low the condition may have been, man would have still considered that there was something required of him, that something came from him, and that, therefore, he might take some credit to himself. But no man, unless he be demented, ever claims credit for believing the truth. If he hears that which convinces him, he is convinced; and if he be persuaded, he is persuaded; but he feels that it could not well be otherwise. He attributes the effect to the truth and the influence used. He does not go about and boast because he believes what is so clear to him that he cannot doubt it. If he did so boast of spiritual faith, all thinking men would say at once, 'Wherefore dost thou boast in the fact of having believed, and especially when this believing would never have been thine if it had not been for the force of the truth which convinced thee, and the working of the Spirit of God which constrained thee to believe?' Faith is chosen by Christ to wear the crown of salvation because 'let me contradict myself' it refuses to wear the crown. It was Christ that saved the penitent woman, it was Christ that saved that blind beggar, but he takes the crown from off his own head, so dear is faith to him, and he puts the diadem upon the head of faith and says, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' because he is absolutely certain that faith will never take the glory to herself, but will again lay the crown at the pierced feet, and say, 'Not unto myself be glory, for thou hast done it; thou art the Saviour, and thou alone.' In order, then, to illustrate and to protect the interests of sovereign grace, and to shut out all vain glorying, God has been pleased to make the way of salvation to be by faith, and by no other means.

Nor is this all. It is clear to every one who chooses to think that in order to the renewal of the heart, which is the chief part of salvation, it is well to begin with the faith; because faith once rightly exercised becomes the mainspring of the entire nature. The man believes that he is forgiven. What then? He feels gratitude to him who has pardoned him. Feeling gratitude, it is but natural that he should hate that which displeases his Saviour, and should love intensely that which is pleasing to him who saved him, so that faith operates upon the entire nature, and becomes the instrument in the hand of the regenerating Spirit by which all the faculties of the soul are put into the right condition. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he, but his thinkings come out of his believings; if he be put right in his believings, then his understanding will operate upon his affections, and all the other powers of his manhood, and old things will pass away, all things will become new through the wonderful effect of the faith, which is of the operation of God. Faith works by love, and through love it purifies the soul, and the man becomes a new creature. See ye then the wisdom of God? He may choose what way he will, but he chooses a way which at once guards his grace from our felonious boastings, and on the other hand produces in us a holiness which other wise never would have been there.

Faith in salvation, however, is not the meritorious cause; nor is it in any sense the salvation itself. Faith saves us just as the mouth saves from hunger. If we be hungry, bread is the real cure for hunger, but still it would be right to say that eating removes hunger, seeing that the bread itself could not benefit us, unless the mouth should eat it. Faith is the soul's mouth, whereby the hunger of the heart is removed. Christ also is the brazen serpent lifted up; all the healing virtue is in him; yet no healing virtue comes out of the brazen serpent to any who will not look; so that the looking is rightly considered to be the act which saves. True, in the deepest sense it is Christ uplifted who saves, to him be all the glory; but without looking to him ye cannot be saved, so that

'There is life in a look,'

as well as life in the Saviour to whom you look. Nothing is yours until you appropriate it. If you be enriched, the thing appropriated enriches you; yet it is not incorrect but strictly right to say it is the appropriation of the blessing which makes you rich. Faith is the hand of the soul. Stretched out, it lays hold of the salvation of Christ, and so by faith we are saved. 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' I need not dwell longer on that point. It is self-evident from the text that faith is the great means of salvation.

II. WHAT KIND OF FAITH WAS IT that saved these people? I will mention, first, the essential agreements; and then, secondly, the differentia, or the points in which this faith differed in its external manifestations in the two cases.

<>'None but Jesus, none but Jesus

Can do helpless sinners good.'

All true faith is alike in this respect.

The faith of these two was alike in its confession of unworthiness. What meant her standing behind? What meant her tears, her everflowing tears, but that she felt unworthy to draw near to Jesus? And what meant the beggar's cry, 'Have mercy on me?' Note the stress he lays upon it. 'Have mercy on me.' He does not claim the cure by merit, nor ask it as a reward. To mercy he appealed. Now I care not whose faith it is, whether it be that of David in his bitter cries of the fifty-first Psalm, or whether it be that of Paul in his highest exaltation upon being without condemnation through Christ, there is always in connection with true

faith a thorough and deep sense that it is mercy, mercy alone, which saves us from the wrath to come. Dear hearer, do not deceive yourself. Faith and boasting are as opposite to one another as the two poles. If you come before Christ with your righteousness in your hand, you come without faith; but if you come with faith you must also come with confession of sin, for true faith always walks hand in hand with a deep sense of guiltiness before the Most High. This is so in every case.

Their faith was alike, moreover, in defying and conquering opposition. Little do we know the inward struggles of the penitent as she crossed the threshold of Simon's house. 'He will repel thee,' the stern, cold Pharisee will say, 'Get thee gone, thou strumpet; how darest thou defile the doors of honest men.' But whatever may happen she passes through the door, she comes to where the feet of the Saviour are stretched out towards the entrance as he is reclining at the table, and there she stands. Simon glanced at her: he thought the glance would wither her, but her love to Christ was too well rooted to be withered by him. No doubt he made many signs of his displeasure, and showed that he was horrified at such a creature being anywhere near him, but she took no notice of him. Her Lord was there, and she felt safe. Timid as a dove, she trembled not while he was near; but she returned no defiant glances for Simon's haughty looks; her eyes were occupied with weeping. She did not turn aside to demand an explanation of his unkind motions, for her lips were all engrossed with kissing those dear feet. Her Lord, her Lord, was all to her. She overcame through faith in him, and held her ground, and did not leave the house till he dismissed her with 'Go in peace.'

It was the same with the blind man. He said, 'Son of David, have mercy on me.' They cried, 'Hush! Why these clamours, blind beggar? His eloquence is music; do not interrupt him. Never man spake as he is speaking. Every tone rings like the harps of the angels. Hush! How darest thou spoil his discourse?' But over and above them all went up the importunate prayer, 'Son of David, have mercy upon me,' and he prevailed. All true faith is opposed. If thy faith be never tried it is not born of the race of the church militant. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,' but it is indicated in that very declaration that there must be something to overcome, and that faith must wage war for its existence.

Once more, the faith of these two persons was alike in being openly avowed. I will not say that the avowal took the same form in both, for it did not; but still it was equally open. There is the Saviour, and there comes the weeping penitent. She loves him. Is she ashamed to say so? It may bring her reproach; it will certainly rake up the old reproaches against her, for she has been a sinner. Never mind what she has been, nor who may be present to see her. She loves her Lord, and she will show it. She will bring the ointment and she will anoint his feet, even in the presence of Pharisees, Pharisees who would say, 'Is this one of the disciples of Christ? A pretty convert to boast of! A fine conquest this, for his kingdom! A harlot becomes a disciple! What next and what next?' She must have known and felt all that, but still there was no concealment. She loved her Lord, and she would avow it, and so in the very house of the Pharisee, there being no other opportunity so convenient, she comes forward, and without words, but with actions far more eloquent than words, she says, 'I love him. These tears shall show it; this ointment shall diffuse the knowledge of it, as its sweet perfume fills the room; and every lock of my hair shall be a witness that I am my Lord's and he is mine.' She avowed her faith.

And so did the blind man. He did not sit there and say, 'I know he is the Son of David, but I must not say it.' They said, some of them contemptuously, and others indifferently, 'It is Jesus of Nazareth.' But he will not have it so. 'Thou Son of David,' saith he; and loud above their noise I hear him cry, like a herald proclaiming the King, 'Son of David.' Why, sirs, it seems to me he was exalted to a high office: he became the herald of the King, and proclaimed him, and this belongs to a high officer of State in our country. The

blind beggar showed great decision and courage. He cried in effect, 'Son of David thou art; Son of David I proclaim thee; Son of David thou shalt be proclaimed, whoever may gainsay it; only turn thine eyes and have mercy upon me.' Are there any of you here who have a faith in Christ which you are ashamed of? I also am ashamed of you, and so also will Christ be ashamed of you when he cometh in the glory of his Father and all his holy angels with him. Ashamed to claim that you are honest? Then methinks you must live in bad company, where to be a rogue is to be famous; and if you are ashamed to say, 'I love my Lord,' methinks you are courting the friendship of Christ's enemies, and what can you be but an enemy yourself: If you love him, say it. Put on your Master's regimentals, enlist in his army, and come forward and declare, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' Their faith was alike then in these four particulars, it was fixed alone on him, it was accompanied with a sense of unworthiness, it struggled and conquered opposition, and it openly declared itself before all comers.

By your patience I shall now try to show the differences between the same faith as to its manifestations. First, the woman's faith acted like a woman's faith. She showed tender love, and the affections are the glory and the strength of women. They were certainly such in her. Her love was intense, womanly love, and she poured it out upon the Saviour. The man's faith acted like a man's in its determination and strength. He persisted in crying, 'Thou Son of David.' There was as much that was masculine about his faith as there was of the feminine in the penitent's faith, and everything should be in its order and after its season. It would not have been meet for the woman's voice to be heard so boldly above the crowd; it would have seemed out of place for a man's tears to have been falling upon the Saviour's feet. Either one or the other might have been justifiable, but they would not have been equally suitable. But now they are as suitable as they are excellent. The woman acts as a godly woman should. The man like a godly man. Never let us measure ourselves by other people. Do not, my brother, say, 'I could not shed tears.' Who asked thee to do so? A man's tears are mostly within, and so let them be: it is ours to use other modes of showing our love. And, my sister, do not say, 'I could not act as a herald and publicly proclaim the King.' I doubt not thou couldst do so if there were need, but thy tears in secret, and those wordless tokens of love to Jesus which thou are rendering, are not less acceptable because they are not the same as a man would give. Nay, they are the better because they are more suitable to thee. Do not think that all the flowers of God's garden must bloom in the same colour or shed the same perfume.

Notice next that the woman acted like a woman who had been a sinner. What more meet than tears? What more fitting place for her than at the Saviour's feet? She had been a sinner, she acts like a sinner; but the man who had been a beggar acted like a beggar. What does a beggar do but clamour for alms? Did he not beg gloriously? Never one plied the trade more earnestly than he. 'Son of David,' said he, 'have mercy on me.' I should not have liked to have seen the beggar sitting there weeping; nor to have heard the penitent woman shouting. Neither would have been natural or seemly. Faith works according to the condition, circumstances, sex, or ability of the person in whom it lives, and it best shows itself in its own form, not in an artificial manner, but in the natural outflow of the heart.

Observe, also, that the woman did not speak. There is something very beautiful in the golden silence of the woman, which was richer than her silver speech would have been. But the man was not silent; he spoke; he spoke out, and his words were excellent. I venture to say that the woman's silence spoke as powerfully as the man's voice. Of the two I think I find more eloquence in the tears bedewing, and unbraided hair wiping the Saviour's feet, than in the cry, 'Son of David, have mercy on me.' Yet both forms of expression were equally good, the silence best in the woman with her tears, and the speech best in the man with his confident trust in Christ. Do not think it necessary, dear friend, in order to serve, to do other

people's work. What thine own hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. If you think you can never honour Christ till you enter a pulpit, it may be just possible that you will afterwards honour him best by getting out of it as quickly as you can. There have been persons well qualified to adorn the religion of Christ with a lapstone on their lap who have thought it necessary to mount a pulpit, and in that position have been a hindrance to Christ and his gospel. Sister, there is a sphere for you; keep to it, let none push you out of it; but do not think there is nothing else to do except the work which some other woman does. God has called her, let her follow God's voice; he calls you in another direction, follow his voice thither. You will be most like that other excellent woman when you are most different from her: I mean, you will be most truly obedient to Christ, as she is, if you pursue quite another path.

There was a difference, again, in this. The woman gave'she brought her ointment. The man did the opposite'he begged. There are various ways of showing love to Christ, which are equally excellent tokens of faith. To give him of her ointment, and give him of her tears, and give him the accommodation of her hair, was well; it showed her faith, which worked by love: to give nothing, for the beggar had nothing to give, but simply to honour Christ by appealing to his bounty and his royal power, was best in the beggar. I can commend neither above the other, for I doubt not that both the penitent and the beggar gave Christ their whole heart, and what more does Jesus ask for from any one?

The thoughts of the woman and the thoughts of the beggar were different too. Her thoughts were mainly about the past, and her sins'hence her tears. To be forgiven, that was her point. His thoughts were mainly about the present, and did not so much concern his sin as his deficiency, infirmity, and inability, and so he came with different thoughts. I do not doubt that he thought of sin, as I dare say she also thought of infirmity; but in her case the thought of sin was uppermost, and hence the tears; in his the infirmity was uppermost, and hence the prayer, 'Lord, that I might receive my sight.' Do not, then, compare your experience with that of another. God is a God of wonderful variety. The painter who repeats himself in many pictures has a paucity of conception, but the master artist scarcely ever sketches the same thing a second time. There is a boundless variety in genius, and God who transcends all the genius of men, creates an infinite variety in the works of his grace. Look not, therefore, for likeness everywhere. The woman, it is said, loved much, and she proved her love by her acts; but the man loved much too, and showed his love by actions which were most admirable, for he followed Jesus in the way, glorifying God. Yet they were different actions. I do not find that he brought any box of ointment, or anointed Christ's feet, neither do I find that she literally followed Christ in the way, though no doubt she followed him in the spirit; neither did she with a loud voice glorify God as the restored blind beggar did. There are differences of operation, but the same Lord; there are differences of capacity and differences of calling, and by this reflection I hope you will be enabled to deliver yourselves from the fault of judging one by another, and that you will look for the same faith, but not for the same development of it.

So interesting is this subject that I want you to follow me while I very rapidly sketch the woman's case, and then the man's, not mentioning the differences one by one, but allowing the two pictures to impress themselves separately upon your minds.

Observe this woman. What a strange compound she was. She was consciously unworthy, and therefore she wept, yet she drew very near to Jesus. Her acts were those of nearness and communion; she washed his feet with her tears, she wiped them with the hairs of her head, and meanwhile she kissed them again and again. 'She hath not ceased,' said Christ, 'to kiss my feet.' A sense of unworthiness, and the enjoyment of communion, were mixed together. Oh, divine faith which blends the two! She was shamefaced, yet was she very bold. She dared not look the Master in the face as yet; she approached him

from behind; yet she dared face Simon, and remain in his room, whether he frowned or no. I have known some who have blushed in the face of Christ who would not have blushed before a judge, nor at the stake, if they had been dragged there for Christ's sake. Such a woman was Anne Askew, humble before her Master, but like a lioness before the foes of God.

The penitent woman wept, she was a mourner, yet she had a deep joy; I know she had, for every kiss meant joy. Every time she lifted that blessed foot, and kissed it, her heart leaped with the transport of love. Her heart knew bitterness for sin, but it knew also the sweetness of pardon. What a mixture! Faith made the compound. She was humble, never one more so; yet see how she takes upon herself to deal with the King himself. Brethren, you and I are satisfied, and well we may be, if we may wash the saints' feet, but she was not. Oh, the courage of this woman! She will pass through the outer court, and get right to the King's own throne, and there pay her homage, in her own person, to his person, and wash the feet of the wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God. I know not that an angel ever performed such suit and service, and therefore this woman takes preeminence as having done for Jesus what no other being ever did. I have said that she was silent, and yet she spake; I will add, she was despised, but Christ set her high in honour, and made Simon, who despised her, to feel little in her presence. I will also add she was a great sinner, but she was a great saint. Her great sinfulness, when pardoned, became the raw stuff out of which great saints are made by the mighty power of God. Finally she was saved by faith, so says the text, but if ever there was a case in which James could not have said, 'Shall faith save thee?' and in which he must have said, 'Here is one that shows her faith by her works,' it was the case of this woman. There she is before you. Imitate her faith itself, though you cannot actually copy her deeds.

Now look at the man. He was blind, but he could see a great deal more than the Pharisees, who said they could see. Blind, but his inward optics saw the king in his beauty, saw the splendour of his throne, and he confessed it. He was a beggar, but he had a royal soul, and a strong sovereign determination which was not to be put down. He had the kind of mind which dwells in men who are princes among their fellows. He is not to be stopped by disciples, nay, nor by apostles. He has begun to pray, and pray he will till he obtains the boon he seeks. Note well that what he knew he avowed, what he desired he pleaded for, and what he needed he understood. 'Lord, that I might receive my sight;' he was clear about his needs, and clear about the only person who could supply them. What he asked for he expected, for when he was bidden to come he evidently expected that his sight would be restored, for we are told by another Evangelist that he cast away his beggar's cloak. He felt he should never want to beg again. He was sure his eyes were about to be opened. Lastly, what he received he was grateful for, for as soon as he could walk without a guide he took Christ to be his guide, and followed him in the way, glorifying him. Look on both pictures. May you have the shadows and the lights of both, as far as they would tend to make you also another and distinct picture by the selfsame artist, whose hand alone can produce such wonders.

III. WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US IN REFERENCE TO FAITH? It teaches us first that faith is all important. Do, I pray you, my hearers, see whether you have the precious faith, the faith of God's elect. Remember there are not many things in Scripture called precious, but there is the precious blood, and there goes with it the precious faith. If you have not that you are lost; if you have not that you are neither fit to live nor fit to die; if you have not that, your eternal destiny will be infinite despair; but if you have faith, though it be as a grain of mustard seed, you are saved. 'Thy faith hath saved thee.'

Learn next that the main matter in faith is the person whom you believe. I do not say in whom you believe. That would be true, but not quite so scriptural an expression. Paul does not say, as I hear most people quote it, 'I know in whom I have believed.' Faith believes Christ. Your faith must recognise him as a

person, and come to him as a person, and rest not in his teaching merely, or his work only, but in him. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' A personal Saviour for sinners! Are you resting on him alone? Do you believe him? You know the safety of the building depends mainly upon the foundation, and if the foundation be not right, you may build as you will, it will not last. Do you build, then, on Christ alone? Inquire about that as a special point.

Observe next, that we must not expect exactly the same manifestation in each convert. Let not the elders of the church expect it, let not parents require it from their children; let not anxious friends look for it; do not expect it in yourself. Biographies are very useful, but they may become a snare. I must not judge that I am not a child of God because I am not precisely like that good man whose life I have just been reading. Am I resting in Christ? Do I believe him? Then it may be the Lord's grace is striking out quite a different path for me from that which has been trodden by my brother, that it may illustrate other phases of its power, and show to principalities and powers the exceeding riches of divine love.

And, lastly, the matter which sums up all is this, if we have faith in Jesus we are saved, and ought not to talk or act as if there were any question about it. 'THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE.' Jesus says it. Granted, you have faith in Christ, and it is certain that faith hath saved you. Do not, therefore, go on talking and acting and feeling as if you were not saved. I know a company of saved people who say every Sabbath, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners'; but they are not miserable sinners if they are saved, and for them to use such words is to throw a slight upon the salvation which Christ has given them. If they are saved sinners they ought to be rejoicing saints. What some say others do not say, but they act as if it were so. They go about asking God to give them the mercy they have already obtained, hoping one day to receive what Christ assures them is already in their possession, talking to others as if it were a matter of question whether they were saved or not, when it cannot be a matter of question. 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' Fancy the poor penitent woman turning round and saying to the Saviour, 'Lord, I humbly hope that it is true.' There would have been neither humility nor faith in such an expression. Imagine that blind man, when Christ said, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' saying 'I trust that in future years it will be found to be so.' It would be a belying at once of his own earnest character and of Christ's honesty of speech. If thou hast believed, thou art saved. Do not talk as if thou wert not, but now down from the willows take thy harp, and sing unto the Lord a new song. I have noticed in many prayers a tendency to avoid speaking as if facts were facts. I have heard this kind of expression, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we desire to be glad.' The text is, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad;' and if the Lord has done these great things for us our right is to be glad about them, not to go with an infamous 'if' upon our lips before the Lord who cannot lie. If ye are dealing with your fellow creatures, suspect them, for they mostly deserve it; if ye are listening to their promises, doubt them, for their promises go to be broken; but if ye are dealing with your Lord and Master, never suspect him, for he is beyond suspicion; never doubt his promises, for heaven and earth and hell shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his word shall fail. I claim for Christ that ye cast away forever all the talk which is made up of 'buts,' and 'ifs,' and 'peradventures,' and 'I hope,' and 'I trust.' You are in the presence of One who said, 'Verily, verily,' and meant what he said, who is 'the Amen, the faithful and true witness.'

You would not spit in his face if he were here, yet your 'ifs' and 'buts' are so much insult cast upon his truth. You would not scourge him, but what do your doubts do but vex him and put him to shame? If he lies, never believe him; if he speaks the truth, never doubt him. Then shall ye know when ye have cast aside your wicked unbelief, that your faith has saved you, and ye will go in peace.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON'Luke 7:36-50; 18:35-43.

HYMNS FROM 'OUR OWN HYMN BOOK'"18 (Ver. 1.), 536, 586.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/saving-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net