

The Oil of Joy for Mourning

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that through Christ, the Anointed One, mourners receive the oil of joy, transforming their sorrow into divine comfort and present spiritual blessings empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:3, Psalm 104:15, Romans 5:1, John 4:14, Romans 8:15-17, Hebrews 12:22-24, Hebrews 10:19-22

Topics: "Comfort in Mourning", "Holy Spirit", "Joy in Christ"

Description

In 'The Oil of Joy for Mourning,' C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound comfort and joy that Christ imparts to those who grieve. He reveals how believers are spiritually nourished at the feast of divine grace and how the Holy Spirit anoints them with joy amid trials. Spurgeon encourages mourners to embrace the present blessings of atonement, adoption, and prayer, assuring them of God's abiding love and the transforming power of His Spirit.

Transcript

"The oil of joy for mourning." Isaiah 61:3.

MOURNERS in Zion ought to be doubly comforted, for here, in this gracious promise, is a second gift of Divine Love to them—a second exchange of loss for gain. The varied expressions of this choice Scripture show the manifold loving kindnesses of the Lord to His afflicted and the plentiful devices of wisdom by which He ministers consolation. It was not enough to give the sorrowing ones, "beauty for ashes"—He must add an oil with which to enhance the beauty and take away, not only the ashes, but the mourning which lay beneath them! This, also, illustrates the exceeding fullness of the blessings which are stored up in the Lord Jesus—in Him we have everything which heart can wish—a rich variety of joyful blessings never to be exhausted! It also shows us the marvelous fitness of our Lord Jesus, since solely because of His coming as the Anointed of the Lord, there is healing for the wounded, liberty for the captives, eyes for the blind, comfort for mourners, beauty for the disfigured and oil for fading countenances! He meets every need of the soul and fills the heart to overflowing with contented gratitude. Let it be repeated and gratefully remembered that all these good things come by the Anointed Savior alone. There can be no traffic with Heaven except by the crimson road of the atoning blood! No channel for Divine Favor except by the Christ of God on whom the Spirit of the Lord forever rests! To Him be Glory forever! Blessed be His name—He is the channel of Divine Grace and in Him is no straitness or shallowness! A Divine riches of glory flows to us by Christ Jesus—

"Immortal joys come streaming down, Joys, like His griefs, immense, unknown." If our Redeemer were not what He is, what would we do? But being what He is, there is no necessity which He cannot supply, there is no grief which He cannot relieve and there is no right desire which He cannot satisfy. Let us drink of the river of His fullness and sing to His praise!

Notice, also, at the outset of our present meditation, the effectual way in which the blessings which Jesus brings are bestowed upon mourners. We have often heard doubting ones say, "Yes, there are promises, but we cannot reach them. We know that there are abundant consolations and rich and free comforts, but we do not feel their power, nor dare to take them to ourselves." Now, in this place we see the condescending Lord, Himself, applying the oil of joy in exchange for mourning! His own right hand pours the precious oil upon the bowed head—He, Himself, causes the face to shine and banishes woe! A man may lie bleeding on the battlefield and there may be liniments close at hand, but in his weakness and agony he may be quite unable to bind up his own wounds, or reach the cordials—he may die because he is not able to stretch so much as a finger to help himself to remedies which lie by his side! It is an unspeakable mercy that our Lord gives His Grace to us in such an effectual manner that His mourners actually obtain the help they need! He is a very present help, a real Comforter—the oil of joy is not shown us in an unbroken alabaster vase, nor merely offered to us in a vial, but it is actually and effectually applied to the soul!

Let us now come to the consideration of this second of the three great blessings bestowed upon the mourners in Zion—and may we all enjoy a portion thereof while we meditate thereon. In working out the metaphor we shall observe

that—

I. OUR LOVING LORD BRINGS HIS MOURNERS TO SIT AT A FEAST.

This is clearly intended, for oil was largely used by Orientals upon festive occasions. The oil which makes man's face to shine was associated with the bread which strengthens man's heart, and the wine which makes glad the heart of man,

(Psa 104:15), because these are the chief provisions of a banquet. Before the feast, or during the entertainment, the guests were refreshed with perfumed oil which would be either poured upon the head, or furnished for anointing the face. It was part and parcel of a great feast. Hence we read of those who "drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with their chief ointments." Therefore our first thought is this, that the Lord Jesus brings mourning souls to a feast of love at which they sing, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, You anoint my head with oil." How great will be our joy if we can feel that our Lord has brought us into His banqueting house and that we are now reclining there! Now, to all Believers, this is truly the case. Our hunger now is relieved, for He satisfies our mouth with good things. That fierce, wolf-like hunger which we once felt, is gone forever, for it is written, "He that eats of this bread shall never hunger." Our craving, all-consuming thirst is ended, for he that drinks of the water which Jesus gives him shall never thirst! Many of Zion's mourners are sitting under the Word, longing for Divine Provision and praying, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." The bread is theirs and a Voice cries to them, "Eat, O Friends! Drink, yes drink abundantly, O Beloved!" Your deadly famine of heart is gone and the spiritual hunger which you now feel is a pleasant appetite which gives a zest to heavenly food—an appetite which you long to have increased to the utmost! Even at this moment, though you feel a blessed hunger and thirst after righteousness, you are filled with royal dainties. You are no longer starving in the

streets, nor famishing under the hedges and in the highways, but, by Divine Grace you have been sweetly compelled to come in and you are at this moment the guests of the table of boundless mercy where the name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth, so that all around you the oil of gladness is shedding a Divine Perfume! You are no longer feeding the swine, but resting at the Father's table—the oxen and the fatlings are killed and you are actually at the supper. Believe this and act accordingly!

And what a feast it is! For who is your Host? The Lord of Life and Glory, Himself, ordains "the feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined." "The King sits at His table." It is His table and He sits at it! It is a great thing to dine with a king, but what must it be to be daily eating bread at the table of the King of kings? Let the joy bells ring in your soul at the very thought, for you are already come to the great feast which the King has made for His Son! He comes in, Himself, to see the guests!

It is the feast of the universe. There never was such another and there never can be its like! It is the antepast of the great Supper of the Lamb. What provisions are put upon the table! Men do eat angels' food when they come here. Yes, they eat viands better than the bread of angels, for the body of Christ has become the meat and the drink of His mourners. Poor Souls, you feast upon Incarnate Deity! Speak of oxen and of fatlings? These are poor types compared with the wondrous provision of celestial Grace with which the Infinite Jehovah has loaded the table of the Covenant! And all these things are yours. You may have as much as you will. There remains no need to eat bread by weight, or to drink water by measure—He will satiate your soul with fatness and nothing shall be withheld from you! Ought you not to bless Him that you are now a guest at such a table and that such food is at this very moment spread before you?

Think of your fellow guests. Look around you and inspect the company. Remember where you were a little while ago—you were strangers and foreigners, yes, you were as dogs in the street! Where are you now? You are permitted to sit with the children of God, with the saints of the Most High! Does it not bring the water into your eyes to think that you—you who long refused to come and despised the feast of Grace—are, at last, brought in? No, not only are you sitting here at the feast of love with God's people, but the saints above are your comrades—for "you are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." We sup with the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of martyrs and the holy Church throughout all the world! Now, also, have we fellowship with angels. We have come unto Mount Zion and to an innumerable company of angels. Better still, we have fellowship with Jesus. "Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant," is the center of the whole! It is His wedding feast and we are glorifying Him by partaking of His Father's bounty. We cannot at this moment actually put our heads upon Jesus' bosom as John did, nor need we wish for that visible and physical delight, but our heart rests upon His breast and enjoys an unspeakable bliss in so doing! Jesus, Immanuel, we are safe in Your arms, and our heart is at perfect rest in You! We are even now abiding in You, while at Your Passover we keep the feast. We are feasting with the great Father, Himself, for, Beloved, when the glorious Sacrifice becomes a meat offering, God Himself delights therein and partakes with us in the satisfaction made by His Son! Oh, the satisfaction which God the Father finds in Jesus! It is a theme upon which we dare not attempt to speak,

but this we know—the Lord rests in His love. He smells a sweet savor in the Person and work and Sacrifice of His dear Son. If we love Jesus, so does the Father! And if we rest in Jesus, so does He! And if we would glorify Jesus, so would the Father! Thus are we brought to feast with God, the Judge of all, when we come to "the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel." Here the oil of joy is

most befitting. Is it not most natural and proper that it should be poured out at such a festival?

We cannot linger, but must pass to the next observation, which is this—

II. BEING AT A FEAST, IT IS BECOMING THAT WE SHOULD HAVE PRESENT JOY.

Hence the text speaks of "the oil of joy for mourning"—the mourning was present enough, the joy should be equally so. At feasts, the perfume poured upon the heads of the guests was a seemly and appropriate thing. It suited the feast, it made the guests feel at home and it gave refreshment all around as the delicious perfume sweetened the air. Come, Beloved, we have at this moment reason for joy—let us use it! Let every child of God feel that he has the oil of joy in the fact that he possesses present blessings. Our best things lie on the other side of the Jordan—we are looking for our full bliss at the coming of our Lord, but we have much in the present. The oil of joy is on our faces now, our locks are even now bedewed with the sacred anointing—and it will be well for us to turn our thoughts towards that Truth of God!

For, first, let all Believers recollect that we have today the joy of the Atonement—"By whom also," says the Apostle, "we have received the Atonement." The Atonement will be no more ours in Heaven than it is now. "We have redemption by His blood." Our sin will be no more put away in Glory than it is at this moment, for our iniquity is even now cast into the depths of the sea! Our Substitute has finished transgression and made an end of sin. And having believed in Him, we know that for us the full Atonement is already made and the utmost ransom forever paid! "It is finished." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Having believed, we know that our sin is as far removed from us as the east is from the west! We also know that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and that it covers us from head to foot. This is a Divinely sweet ingredient of the oil of joy which now distils upon us from the head of our glorified Aaron and perfumes even those who are as the skirts of his garments!

Besides that, my Brothers and Sisters, at the present moment we live in the love of God. It may not be at this moment sensibly shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, but still, "the Father Himself loves you." If you are a Believer in Christ, He will not love you more when you are in Heaven than He loves you now, for He loves you Infinitely at this instant! You are even now, "accepted in the Beloved." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Infinite love, eternal love, unchanging love, almighty love is the present possession of the children of God! Hence comes our safety, hence comes the certainty of the supply of all our needs—hence, indeed, flow all our joys! At this moment, despite our spirit depression and soul battling and heart strife, the Lord has set His love upon us and rests in that love! Should not this make our faces shine?

At this time, too, we possess the Divine Life within us. Having believed, we have been regenerated and the Spirit of God dwells in us! Yes, within these mortal bodies does the Godhead dwell! He has made our bodies to be the temples of the Holy Spirit. And what a favor is this, for this indwelling is the witness of the Spirit within us, the perpetual seal of Divine Grace. God has put into us a new life, a life like His own—He has created in us a superior principle, unknown to flesh and blood, for we are not born-again of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God! A supernatural life has been implanted in us which cannot die because it is born of God! We have this and we know it—and because of it we greatly rejoice.

And not only so, but because we are the sons of God, we are heirs according to the promise, since it is written, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Is not this oil to make the face shine? What better delights can your imagination conceive than the Divine joys of Adoption? O, you

mourners, have you not here the oil of

joy?

Further, we have the present joy of a high calling involving the exercise of sacred functions. You are at this hour, Beloved, as many of you as believe in Him, made kings and priests unto God! You are consecrated to the service of Him who has bought you with a price. The mark of the blood is upon you and "you are Christ's." At this moment you are a living sacrifice bound with cords to the horns of the altar. Your Lord has sent you into the world, even as the Father sent Him

into the world, to proclaim His Truth and to do His will among the sons of men. Is not this cause for delight? Does not your Divine vocation anoint you with the oil of gladness?

With this we have special privileges. There is one privilege I prize at this moment—I cannot tell you how much. It is this—the liberty to pray, the power to pray, the promise that I shall be heard! Take the Mercy Seat from me and poverty, faintness and anguish would seize my soul! As long as there is a Mercy Seat and a torn veil, and the Voice that bids me draw near and tells me that if I wait upon the Lord I shall renew my strength, I have a joy worth worlds! What? Have you lost a child? Is your property melting before your eyes? Does health decline? Do friends forsake? Yet the Throne of Grace is accessible—fly there and lose your grief! There burdens are light. There crosses bud with crowns and tears sparkle into diamonds! Come here, you mourners, even with the load of your doubts and fears—supplication will quicken you and for mourning you shall obtain the oil of joy!

Time would fail me if I were to go through the whole catalog of the sources of the Christian's present joy. Ah, you worldling, you know and we confess it is true, that our chief joys are yet to come! But notwithstanding, we have enough today to make us more than a match for you! You may display your present mirth and carnal delight if you will—and laugh at us who weep now—but we can endure your ridicule with calm complacency because we have a secret peace and a deep fathomless repose of heart which make us even now as far from envying you as an angel from envying a mole! We are not of all men the most miserable, but of all men the most blessed! Our eternal hopes revive us amid the sorrows of this fleeting life. The harvests of Heaven shale out and drop golden grain from above, upon which we feed even now! To have Jesus for our Brother, God for our Father and the Spirit to be our Comforter is a better portion than the richest, the proudest, or the most famous of worldlings can possibly possess! The oil of joy is not made in the presses of earth—it drops upon us through the golden pipes of the sanctuary, flowing from the sacred olive trees which the Lord has planted! Passing on from that observation, we would offer a third, which is implied in the text, namely, that—

III. THIS JOY COMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This is clear, since evermore when we read of oil we have before us in Scripture the Divine influence of the Holy Spirit. The first part of the Chapter before us runs thus—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because the Lord has anointed Me." The oil with which Christ was anointed was the Holy Spirit—and the oil of joy with which we are anointed is the same Spirit! It is He who gives us joy in the Lord!

The Holy Spirit brings joy to Believers thus—first, He clears the understanding and enables us to comprehend the deep things of God. Many poor souls know but little of the precious gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon them. As yet, though they are the Lord's elect, they are not aware of it. Though they are the redeemed of the Lord, they perceive it not. There is the Light of God about them and yet they

cannot see, for their eyes are not yet opened beyond the power to see men as trees walking. Let us be grateful if we have passed beyond this stage. Through Infinite Mercy the Holy Spirit has visited some of us and while He has painfully made us see our ruin, He has also most blessedly led us to comprehend something of the remedy—and has enabled us to understand with all saints what are the heights and depths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge! We have an anointing so that we know all things. Now are the mysteries opened and the hidden things laid bare and, therefore, we have joy in the Lord, for our renewed understanding floods our heart with rivers of delight!

The Holy Spirit also gives us joy as He enables us to exercise an appropriating faith. You that have faith, do you bless God sufficiently for it? Do we not fail to adore the Divine Mercy which has worked this Grace in us? We ought to blame ourselves when we find our faith to be weak, but we must never commend ourselves when faith is strong. The weakness of faith is ours, but the strength of faith comes of the Holy Spirit and of Him alone. Let us bless Him that He has enabled us to take to ourselves what the Lord Jesus has provided, so that now we do not only see His Grace to be excellent, but we grasp it as our own! Here is oil of joy for us, indeed!

The Spirit also, very graciously, sanctifies us, and this is joy. It is a part of His work to discover sin in us and to excite a holy hatred of it. He burns in our soul like flames of fire consuming evil. Now, the destruction of sin is the destruction of sorrow and, as a child of God grows in likeness to Jesus, he grows in solid peace of mind. If you will follow your doubts and fears to their roots, you will find that they grow from the dunghill of your sins—and when the Lord cleanses out the evil of our hearts and creates a new spirit within us, the oil of joy perfumes the soul and we are glad in His salvation.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit graciously quickens His people and what a wonderful effect quickening has upon our joy! Whenever we are slothful in the things of God, we miss the delights of healthy spiritual life and, before long we mourn. But when the Holy Spirit comes and makes us feel lively and energetic and sensitive, then we begin, also, to rejoice in the Lord and the power of His might within us works in us a leaping of holy joy! Those who not only have life, but have it more abundantly, are a highly favored people and know how to exult in the Lord! Beloved, long for no joy but that which the Holy Spirit gives you! Thank God for the comforts of this life, but do not let them become your idols, as they will be if they become your exceeding joy. Draw from the upper fountains, fill your pitcher at the eternal springs—ask neither for the cinnamon nor camphor of this world's gardens, but let your chief spices be the fruit of the Spirit which are joy and peace through believing! We may now, in the fourth place, remark that—

IV. THE JOY WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US IS A GREAT PRESENT GIFT.

I once heard a person say, very wickedly, indeed, as I thought and still think, that sin could do the Believer no harm. But he added, "Except that it destroys his comfort." I thought, "Well, that is a terrible 'exception,' indeed! That surely is quite enough to fill us with holy fear! If anything robs the Christian of his joy, surely the loss is great enough to set him upon his watch tower!" Yet I fear that many Christians do not consider this. They dream that it can be well with their souls when the joy of the Lord is gone, but, Brothers and Sisters, it is not so! The healthy condition of a child of God is a state of peaceful rest in the Lord. It is amazing how full Scripture is of comfort for mourners because the Lord's objective is that the mourner may be comforted. "Comfort you, comfort you, My people, says your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem." Our Lord desired that we might have His joy fulfilled in ourselves and He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled." "Rejoice in the Lord always," said the Apostle and, as if that were not enough, he added, "and again I say, rejoice."

Hear me, you mourning ones—the maintenance of a cheerful, happy frame of mind is of the utmost importance to you, and that for many reasons which may be drawn from the metaphor of oil.

Oil is refreshing, and so is holy joy. It puts new life into the soul and renews its youth like the eagle's. When the man is faint with long pursuing, he revives if he perceives he already possesses present blessings in which he may rejoice. The joy of the Lord is our strength!

Oil was intended to also make each guest agreeable to his neighbors. When his head was anointed with the sweet perfume, those round about him were gratified. Happy Christians are pleasing to those about them—and thus they become a means of attracting souls to Jesus. We ought to be so happy that others ask, "From where have these men their joys?" If so, you can clearly see why we should exchange our mourning for the oil of joy. It would be evil to frighten men from the glad tidings by drawing long faces and using doleful tones.

Besides, Brothers and Sisters, you all know how weak you are in the service of God if your heart runs down into despondency. But when holy joy comes back, you feel that you could face a lion, or the old roaring lion, himself! Joy makes us brave. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Give me the joyful Christian for his Master's service, for he will break through a troop and leap over a wall!

How gloriously does sacred joy lift us up above the sorrows of the world! No, more—how it lifts us up above earth's joys! The man who has once drunk the old wine of the Kingdom does not desire the new and sour wine of earth. He who knows the joy of the Lord will despise the joy of the world. Earthly comforts are small concerns to the heavenly mind. He receives them gratefully as matters of ordinary gifts from his Father's hands, but his heart cries, "The Lord is my portion, says my soul." He who has eaten the white bread of Heaven has his mouth put out of taste for the black bread of earth. He who has feasted at God's table and had the oil of joy poured upon his head by the Holy Spirit has risen above the fascinations of the hour! What can charm a man who has gazed on the beauties of Jesus? What can delude us into idolatry when we have once beheld the Glory of the Lord? The joy of the Lord is a grand safeguard. Earnestly could I wish that all God's people were flooded with it—there would then be no fear of angry tempers, harsh speeches, or murmuring words. Full of the joy of the Lord, deeds of injustice in trade or of grasping at the world would be disdained by you! Suffering would be endured with patience and labor performed with diligence! Railing would never be returned for railing, nor proud looks given to the poor. The joy of the Lord makes a man so calm, so quiet, so heavenly, that he lives above the world. What a grand life is that of Abraham! He has his trials and some of them are intense, but he walks along the

road of history with an almost noiseless tread, gliding along as though all were smooth! The record says, "It came to pass that the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things"—and yet in the previous pages we read of trials with Lot, with Hagar and Ishmael—and the grand ordeal with Isaac! Faith made his trials blessings, and his inward joy, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all the rods of his afflictions. The same road is open to us and we have the same reasons for walking in it since the God of Abraham is our God forever and ever! He who can live by faith shall have a constant supply of the oil of joy poured upon him by the Holy Spirit—and his mourning shall flee away. Our last observation is—

V. THE JOY WHICH GOD GIVES HIS PEOPLE IS BEST SEEN AND FREQUENTLY BEST FELT IN FELLOWSHIP.

We began with noting that oil is connected with festivity. Sweet spices are for banquets where men feast together. Oh mourners, you will often find your souls made joyous when you assemble with your Brothers and Sisters! Bread eaten in secret is sweet and morsels behind the door are delicious, but still, the choicest and most abundant provisions are brought forth when the king's household gather around his table and realize that "they, being many, are one bread." Speaking personally, my happiest times are spent with my Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the high festivals, when the multitude keep holy day. Draw a circle around my pulpit and you have hit upon the spot where I am nearest Heaven! There the Lord has been more consciously near me than anywhere else. He has ravished my heart while I have been trying to cheer and comfort His mourners. Many of you can say the same of your pew where you are known to sit—it has been a Bethel to you and the Lord Jesus has revealed Himself to you in the midst of His people. Let us remember what delightful times we have had in prayer together. We have come into the sanctuary heavy of heart and while one Brother after another has approached the Throne of Grace for us, we have been unburdened and helped to joy in God till the Prayer Meeting has seemed to be a Heaven below, an antepast of the eternal meetings above! Thus the oil of joy is poured out in the assembly of fellowship.

Ofttimes, also, when we have been singing together some delightful hymn, in a lively, feeling manner, we have felt as if we could leap with delight and so the oil of joy has streamed upon our heads. Have you not often cried with the poet—

"I would begin the music here, And so my soul should rise! Oh for some heavenly notes to bear My passions to the skies!"

Yes, that is the oil of gladness given at the festival of praise among the sons of God—who would not be there?

A joyous influence has also been within the house when Believers have met to talk with one another concerning the things of God in simple, pious conversation. Alas, how little is there of such speaking, one to another, especially among wealthy Christians. A Christian man remarked to me the other day that when he was a boy the good old Christian people were constantly talking upon the Doctrines of Grace and other things which concern the Kingdom of God, but there is little of this now. The staunch old men of the last generation knew what they believed and discerned between things that differed—they were, perhaps, a little too severe in their judgments—but still they did converse on Divine things and were refreshed thereby! But now we are so very charitable that we are afraid to talk to one another about the things of God, for fear we should differ! It should not be so, for when Christ is the subject and God's people converse together, their hearts burn within them with sacred delight, and the oil of gladness is poured upon their heads! Holy fellowship brings heavenly joy—the conversation of saints with each other is the source of unnumbered delights.

Lastly, the Communion Table has been to many of us, above all other places in the world, the palace of delight. There are certain of us who never forget the ordinance for a single Lord's-Day, and years of experience bear witness to the value of this means of Grace! It is marvelous that so few, even among Christians, are regular in their attendance at that thrice blessed Supper. A young girl said to me the other Sabbath, "Jesus seems so near when we are at the Table." And she was quite right. The emblems used at the Supper so vividly bring our Lord before us that we think only of His passion, of the blood that was shed and of the body which was made to suffer for our sins. Then are we borne away with grateful emotion and feel as if we had reached the very gate of Heaven! While we drink the wine and eat the bread, the oil of gladness is poured upon us by our Lord Himself! You who neglect that ordinance are losing a great

privilege and besides that you are neglecting a solemn duty. May the Lord convince you of your negligence and bring you to delight in that ordinance which is the joyful means of communion with Himself.

Now, all this while I have been talking to God's people and you will say, "Have you not a word to say to the sinner?" Well, I have all the while been speaking to the sinner, too, because all this is for you if you repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! If you will come and have it, the Table is spread and loaded for you. No, more—"the Word is near you, even in your mouth." What? Is the Bread of Life in your mouth and will you not eat it? Poor, hungry, empty, needy sinner, can you reject what God, Himself, puts into your mouth? If angels will rejoice when you repent, depend upon it there is also joy in store for you! Come then to Jesus, just as you are! Bring no money with you, bring no fitness with you, bring no fancied goodness with you—bring your sins and lay them before your Lord. Bring your hard heart, your lack of feeling, your lack of Divine Grace and just come and find all that you need in Christ, who is waiting to bless you! When I was a child I remember how at a school festival the children were instructed to bring their own mugs with them. Now that showed the poverty of those who gave the treat, but my Master does not want you to bring anything! He supplies everything. Come as you are, with nothing about you except your needs and your willingness to be saved! When an empty, guilty, lost, undone, ruined creature is coming to a great, blessed and mighty Savior, all he has to think of is the love which invites him and the greatness of the Redeemer who will receive him! Come here, then, all you who mourn because of sin, or mourn that you cannot mourn, and, by believing in Jesus you shall obtain the oil of joy and the days of your mourning shall be ended!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: MARK9:20-41.

This miracle is one that shows the transforming power of the Savior in a remarkable fashion.

20-21. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming. And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. A terrible case.

22-25. And oftentimes it has cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if You can do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes. And immediately the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, You dumb and deaf spirit, I charge you, come out of him, and enter no more into him. That is one way in which Christ cures. When He drives the devil out of a man, He adds, "Enter no more into him." I believe in the final perseverance of the saints, because I believe in the Omnipotent ejection of Satan out of men when Christ speaks the word, "Come out of him, and enter no more into him."

26-29. And the spirit cried, and convulsed him sorely and came out of him: and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said, he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And He said unto them—According to another Evangelist, it was from lack of faith. Howbeit, He added—

29. This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. God does not give us everything in answer to one prayer. It may be necessary for some blessings that the prayer should be reiterated—that it should deepen—that it should grow into an aching. It may be even necessary, in order that a blessing should come, that fasting should be used with prayer in order to show the intense eagerness and

earnestness of the petitioner. Now notice the 38th verse.

38. And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Your name, and he follows not us: and we forbade him, because he follows not us. John in this case was like a good many people at the present day. You notice it. They could not cast out the devils, themselves, and when they found somebody else that did it, they forbade his doing it because he did not follow with them. I have known learned, eloquent, respectable ministers who cannot save sinners. And they hear that certain poor, illiterate, uneducated men have snatched sinners like brands from the burning—and they forbid them to do what they cannot do themselves. It is insanity—that would stop any man from doing what God enables him to do! And we ought to be the very last to forbid others from doing it.

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. These people were dissenters, we may say—a sort of outsiders. And John puts forth the whole power of his

Apostolic authority to put them down—and then Jesus Christ puts forth the full power of His Divine Authority to give them liberty to go on!

40-41. For he that is not against us is on our side. For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward

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