

The Great Things God Has Done for His People

by William Gadsby

The sermon emphasizes the great things God has done for his people, including predestination, the covenant of grace, and the atonement through Christ's death.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 23:5, Psalm 126:3, Isaiah 55:3, Luke 5:31, John 6:37, John 17:6, Romans 3:19, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:5, Ephesians 1:5, Hebrews 9:22, 1 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Salvation Theology", "Spiritual Redemption"

Description

William Gadsby preaches about the great mysteries of salvation that many struggle to comprehend, including God's saving power for even the worst sinners, the method of salvation through God's electing love, and the role of God the Spirit in revealing and maintaining salvation in the hearts of believers. He emphasizes the need for true surrender and acknowledgment of one's sinful state before experiencing God's compassion and love. Gadsby highlights the importance of being part of God's spiritual family, predestined for eternal life, and the necessity of being brought out of spiritual captivity to truly understand and appreciate the great things God has done for His people.

Transcript

"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." (Psalm 126:3)

There are three things in the great mysteries of salvation that many professors of religion seem almost alarmed at. One is that God really saves sinners. If a minister of Jesus Christ is led to describe a sinner half as he really is, for to the bottom of him he never can, he shocks their delicate minds, and they are almost paralyzed, and call it the high road of licentiousness to suppose that God saves such naughty sinners as those; whilst a poor soul under the quickening, enlightening, teaching energy of God the Spirit, fears that his case is desperate, and if God sends a minister of truth, who hits upon such a desperate case, and points it out as one that the Lord has in hand, the poor creature is astonished, and wonders where he has been; for he never heard that. Another branch of truth that men seem almost alarmed at, is the method that God takes in saving those sinners. If we come to trace salvation to its spring-head, God's electing love--"O! This is horrifying. We must not talk about election in these polite days. If we believe in it, we must put other words for it, and say, 'The Lord's people,' and 'The Lord's family,' and 'The pious;' but never talk about 'election;'" and thus the doctrine of God's discriminating, electing love is discarded. And then another branch of divine truth, that men seem alarmed at, is the power of God the Spirit in making this salvation known to the conscience, and bringing it with divine power and majesty to the heart and

maintaining it there as the poor sinner sojourns in this wilderness. Some people are alarmed at all the three, and some only at the last; some of them will chatter about election till their tongues almost cleave to the roof of their mouth; but if you insist upon vital godliness, the power of God the Holy Ghost in the conscience producing a corresponding conduct, they will call you an enthusiastic legalist. And thus divine things are set at nought on one hand or the other. But God will vindicate his own honour, and "make bare his arm," and bring his loved ones at some period or other to adopt the language of our text: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

No doubt the psalmist had in view, in the first instance, God delivering Israel out of a dreadful national captivity; and here we are told of them that they were "like them that dreamed," and they began in wonder to "laugh" in the sweet enjoyment of God's dealings with them. But Israel of old being a typical nation and God's spiritual family being amongst that nation, the Lord has something more in view than this; he has in view a spiritual captivity, that his people are delivered from; and when delivered from it, and brought feelingly and experimentally to know it, then they sing, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Now from this passage, as far as God shall assist me, I shall consider,

I. Who the us are, who have any right to adopt the language of our text, and say, "The Lord hath done great things for us."

II. Point out some few of the great things that God has done for them.

III. endeavour to notice that whenever God makes manifest these "great things," or a measure of them, in their hearts, it is sure to make them glad. "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

I. Now what persons are these? Who are the us? They are God's spiritual Zion--that family he has predestinated to eternal life, "predestinated to the adoption of children," (Eph. 1:5) "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son," (Rom. 8:29) and brought, by his spiritual power and grace, to know their own ruined condition and the mercy of God in Christ Jesus towards them--who have felt themselves in captivity and felt themselves brought out of it. Some people tell us that there is no cause now-a-days for a sinner to have "the letter" brought into the conscience, no cause for a law-work in their hearts. But that is a heaven that was invented in Italy; it is not God's heaven, it is a kind of purgatorial heaven. For God has solemnly declared that "the law was given that every mouth might be stopped and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. 3:19) And if God's law does not stop your mouth, is not brought to your conscience, does not destroy all your false projects, and bring you in guilty and condemned at the feet of the Lord--if you never feel that, I believe you will be damned, as sure as God is in heaven. Let your profession be what it may, let you be as tall as you may in a profession of religion, you will never enter into God's blessed place above, if you have never been brought to know your ruined condition below. Why, you might as well talk about a man praising a physician, as one who had cured him of a disease, when he never had an illness in his life; you might as well talk about a man speaking of a skillful surgeon, who had set his bones, when he never had a broken bone since he drew breath. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Luke 5:31) I do not mean that all God's people are led into the same depth in this. Here the Lord works as a sovereign; but the law must stop their mouths, the law must bring them in guilty, the law must make them feel that they are in bondage, that they are "under tutors and governors," and under such tuition that they are bound by the ties of the law either to fulfill it or be damned by it, and that they cannot fulfill it, and that therefore they can feel no ground of hope upon law principles.

Now when the Lord the Spirit brings a poor soul to this, he finds himself in dreadful captivity. I cannot exactly say how it is in London; but I know in our way we have a great many who begin in election, and go on with election, and never get one step either below or above high-seasoned election; and if you ask them what they know about "the plague of their own hearts," or what they know about "the sentence of death," "O! They do not meddle with such low things as that; they live upon high ground." Ah! And the devil will never disturb you there. If God does not, you will find that such an arrogant presumptuous profession is nothing more nor less than the devil's chariot to carry men to hell in delusion; and, if God does not upset them and bring them to know their ruined condition, they will never enter into the mysteries of God's blessed kingdom, that kingdom that stands in God's own power. But now, when a poor sinner feels the bondage of the law and feels "the sentence of death," he finds himself in a captivity, from which he cannot deliver his own soul. He feels himself without might and without power, and feels the truth of what God says, that he is "not sufficient of himself" (2 Cor. 3:5) so much as "to think" a good thought, or to pray; as says the apostle, "We know not what to pray for as we ought." (Rom. 8:26) I often think, why what fools the disciples and apostles were to the great men of our time; for they have found out how to pray for themselves and to make prayers for other folks for a thousand years to come; but the disciples asked the Lord to teach them how to pray, and the apostle was brought to confess that he was "not sufficient of himself" and did not know even how to pray "as he ought." And so God's people will be brought to this, when the Lord brings them to know their spiritual bondage and captivity. And then, when he brings peace to the conscience and pardon to the heart, and sets the soul at liberty, then they are the people that can say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

II. But having thus gone over this description, let us look now at some of the great things that God has done for us.

And we must take into the account each glorious Person in the one undivided Jehovah,--God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. For in the "great things," that the eternal Trinity has done for the church of God, each distinct Person has a solemn part, a part that redounds to the glory of all and the blessedness of them that are brought to trust in God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as one blessed Triune Jehovah, hath entered into a solemn covenant before all worlds to bring an infinite number of mortals to glory.

In this solemn contract, this covenant of grace, the eternal Trinity took a survey of all their sins, and all their weaknesses, and all their misgivings, and all their backslidings, and all their temptations, and all their besetments, and all their slips, and all their falls, and all their tumblings, that this body would have from the beginning to the end of time; and in this immortal covenant God made provision to meet it all, and so to meet it as to be glorified in saving them all from all the horrors and consequences of sin.

Now is that not a "great thing?" Why, if we make a provision, as we think, for our children, and make it over to them, one gets proud and profligate, sets up to be a gentleman, and soon destroys the provision; and the others do the same thing in some other way; so that by and by the mistaken provision we made for them has been a kind of means of leading them into deeper ruin than they would have been in if they had been obliged to work for every penny they have. But our God made no mistake of that nature.

One "great thing" he did in his council and covenant was to make the provision sure--"the sure mercies of David;" (Isa. 55:3) certain mercies, "ordered in all things." (2 Sam. 23:5) Why, he saw all thy temptations, before ever thou didst. When he gave thee to Christ, he saw all thy besetments, all thy bewilderments, all thy hard-heartedness, all thy darkness, all thy coldness, all thy barrenness; and in the eternal purpose of

his grace, he made such a provision for thee that it is not possible for Satan himself to drive thy poor bewildered soul into any place where God's provision will not reach thee and be sufficiently powerful to bring thee out.

Is not this a "great thing," a matchless thing? It was this that made David so sweetly and solemnly sing, "Although my house be not so with God, yet he that made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." (2 Sam. 23:5) David's house "not so with God!" Not how? Why, if you read the context, he is speaking about a "morning without clouds," without anything that seems gloomy, when the sun arises upon it, and about the "tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after the rain;" and he says, "My house is not so."

Poor creature! He felt clouds and darkness, and often sharp biting frosts that seemed to nip the tender herb. There seemed no sweet going forth of faith, of love, of prayer, of thanksgiving; there seemed a bewilderment in the conscience. But, says he, this is my salvation and all my desire--new covenant blessings stand sure, "ordered in all things (not in one thing only) and sure." This is the strength of divine grace, when God is pleased to give it to a poor sinner to realize such immortal blessings; and this is one of the "great things" that God the Eternal Trinity in Unity has done for his people.

But we must come to retail it out a little. I am a kind of retail preacher; as a friend of ours, who lived in a country place, used to say, "I like to hear our friend, when he retails it out. Sometimes our parson wholesales it, and we poor folks cannot go to a wholesale shop; it suits me to have it retailed out, for those are the shops we poor folks can go to." And so the people of God are continually brought into such a state that they want to have it retailed out in little parcels, as we may say, that God may be glorified and themselves made glad through his grace.

1. Then if we endeavour to look a little at this blessed covenant, we first of all notice that "herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son, and chose us in his Son;" so that in the purpose and councils of God, God fixed Christ and the church in his eternal heart together, the church in Christ and Christ in the church, and God in Christ and Christ in God. And thus the church was made the special charge and care of God the Son before the world was; and, I speak with reverence, God the Father looked to Christ to bring them all to heaven. "Thine they were and thou gavest them me." (John 17:6) And "all that the Father giveth me shall"--shall what? Have a chance of coming? No, not so. Have an offer of mercy? No, not so. Have conditions proposed to them--easy terms? No, nor so either. Well, then, how is it? "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." (John 6:37) Unbelief says they shall not, and pride says they shall not, and the devil says they shall not, and their hearts say they will not, for they love sin, and after it they will go; but God has taken his stand and Christ has taken his stand upon eternal fixtures, and God and Christ have said, "They shall come." Yes, poor souls! And when he comes with invincible power to the heart, he will make them glad to come as poverty-stricken sinners, and be glad to be made partakers of the riches of his Son; and "him that cometh," says Christ, "I will in no wise cast out." This is the reason why the apostle so sweetly sums up: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places,"--where? "In Christ." (Eph. 1:3) When God created man, he created him holy, in his own image; and it appears he put man in the care of this holiness and this image; he gave the key into his own hands, and man unlocked the door of his heart and let the devil in and all that was holy out, and God will never trust to man again while the world stands. No; he has secured all spiritual blessings "in Christ," and given him the key of the house; and he opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7) "It pleases the Father that ALL fullness" should dwell there; (Col. 1:19) and therefore there is nothing but emptiness anywhere else. And

he is said to be "full of grace and truth;" (John 1:14) and "of his fullness we receive, and grace for grace." (John 1:16) So then the Father, in his great part in this solemn economy of salvation, gave his Son to be the Head and Representative of the church, the grand repository of heaven; and God locked up his honour, his truth, his grace, and "all spiritual blessings" in the heart of Christ, and Christ pledged his honour to save all securely, and to magnify all the honours of God in making this mystery known by the power of his Spirit to the hearts and consciences of his people. And this is a "great thing," that God has done for them.

2. But it will not do to enlarge, and therefore we will proceed to notice what Christ has done for them. There is a great deal said about Jesus Christ in our day. "What a merciful Christ he was," they say, "to come and die for sinners!" But some people tell us that such is the nature of his death, that after all it may be the means of damning us deeper than we should have been damned if he never had died. Why, what an awful thing that is to say? I recollect a minister saying to me some years ago, "You do not love sinners as you ought to do, or else you would preach to them universal offers and universal proffers?" "Indeed," said I. "Let me ask you one thing. Will any sinner that ever gets to heaven be saved by your universal offers and universal proffers?" "No," he said, for he was a sort of a Calvinist, "they will not." "Well, what will become of the rest?" "Ah!" Said he; "they will have a deeper damnation, because they rejected the offers of mercy." "So that is the method you take," said I, "to show you love sinners; as if they could not be damned deep enough, but you will damn them the deeper by your universal offers, when you admit that they cannot be saved the more for your preaching to them? What an awful way that is! It is not according to the riches of God's grace that he has ordained in the salvation of the church."

Now the Lord Jesus Christ, in his rich mercy, undertook to stand accountable and responsible, as the Surety of the family of God, and to have all laid upon him that was chargeable to them; and he bore it, and will communicate to them all that can flow from his blood and love, that can crown God's brow and honour his name; and thus he stood the glorious Head and Representative of the church of the Most High, to the honour of God and the blessedness of all them that are brought by rich grace to believe. But he must be something in his own person beside essential Godhead; for essential Godhead could not accomplish this. The law demanded blood for blood; essential Godhead could not bleed. "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth;" essential Godhead could not do that. Essential Godhead could not shed blood, could not die; yet "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." (Hebrews 9:22) And yet such is the measure of the "great things," that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for his people, that it is emphatically called "his dying," and his blood the blood of God. "Yes," say you, "but I do not believe it was the blood of God." Well I do in my very soul believe it; not that Godhead could bleed, but that the Person who did bleed was God and man, and therefore the Godhead in union with the manhood made the one Person Immanuel, and it was his blood. If you want a simple argument upon the subject, suppose, when I go home tonight, some person was to stab me, and I was to be bleeding in the street, you would say, "Why, yonder lies Gadsby bleeding." Now my soul could not bleed, you know, and that is what makes the person, is it not? But then you take me as a man, and cry, "He is bleeding;" all that can suffer and bleed is suffering and bleeding. And as it respects Immanuel, the God-man Mediator, all that could suffer and bleed and agonize and die in him did suffer, bleed, agonize, and die; and the Godhead gave immortal validity to the atonement, so that it is emphatically called the blood of God: "God purchased the church with his own blood."

The Lord Jesus Christ, then, the Second Person in the glorious Trinity, in order to accomplish this "great thing" that he was going to do, took up a life to be able to die, took our nature into union with his personal Godhead, and became really man, truly and verily man as well as truly and verily God, that he might be

able to wade through all the miseries that sin and the devil had heaped round his elect, and to go after them, and bear their sins in his own body and soul on the tree, that they might be set for ever free. And thus his sacred Majesty stooped to bear their weakness and infirmities, and to take their sins upon him. Hence it is said he was "made sin for us." (2 Cor. 5:21) Why, that is a strange saying, for he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," (Heb. 7:26) and "guile was not found in his mouth." (1 Pet. 2:22) "Made sin?" Aye, he was made murder, and made adultery, and made fornication, and made theft, and made treason. "Shocking!" Say you. "How can that be, if he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners?" Because he was made so by solemn contract and solemn transfer. The murder, the adultery, the fornication, and the abominations of David, and Solomon, and Peter, and all God's elect were transferred and placed to his account, and he acknowledged the debt. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not," said he; these things would not do,--"to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:5-7) And Paul tells us roundly that "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." (Heb. 10:10) And this was a "great thing" that Jesus Christ came to die. Look at him as the Babe of Bethlehem; look at him as a traveler without house or home; look at him hunted by Satan forty days and forty nights in the wilderness under all the iron tyranny that devils could inflict upon him, when he had too much work to do, too much solemn engagement with all the powers of hell to have a moment's time either to eat, drink, or sleep for forty days and forty nights; and this was all in espousing the cause of the church, in doing a great work for his people. He fought their battle manfully, he vanquished all their foes; but at length his blessed Majesty was brought to be in a solemn agony, and he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. 26:38) Good John Berridge has a solemn view upon this subject:

"How his eyes astonished are!

Sure they witness huge despair!

On his face what sadness dwells!

Sure he feels a thousand hells!"

Aye he did--a million hells. Poor child of God! All the hell thy sins have merited was poured into his soul, and all the hell that all the millions of the elect of God ever merited was poured into his holy soul. And had he not been God as well as man, humanity could not have sustained the load and rolled it over. But immortal Godhead supported humanity under the weight of wrath; his holy soul endured it, and he died "the just for the unjust to bring us to God," (1 Pet. 3:18) and so to accomplish a salvation, rich and free, as extensive as the necessities of his people, as deep as their miseries can possibly be. Has he not done "great things" for us?

And all to give them a chance of being saved,--according to some people. I do not know that I hate any thing more in my soul than to hear that. It makes Jesus Christ so little, that he should do so much, and after all only get us a chance of being saved. Why, if a man is set up in business, you see how often it happens that he fails in it; and if man cannot manage the paltry things of time and sense without being insolvent, what will he do with eternal realities? And if you come a little closer, when God "made man upright" and he had no sinful nature, what did he do with his innocency? Why, he lost it all. And yet poor presumptuous man has the vanity to think you and I could manage the chance of being saved. What an insult it is to the Lord Jesus Christ, to fix the eternal honour of God upon chance, and that chance to be managed by a poor sinful creature who is tumbling into half a dozen holes every hour of his life. No, no. Thanks be to God for immortal realities certainties. What is said concerning what Christ has done? He has

"put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" he has "finished transgression and made an end of sin;" (Dan. 9:24) he has "redeemed us from all iniquity;" he has "redeemed us from the curse of the law,"--from destruction and from the power of the devil; he has "obtained eternal redemption for us;" (Heb. 9:12) he has "redeemed us to God." To the honour of the Eternal Trinity, it is said, not that the redeemed shall have a chance, but that the redeemed shall "come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10) The Lord Jesus Christ has done this "great" work, and he is gone to heaven, shouting "Victory;" for "God is gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." He rose from the grave as a demonstrative proof that sin was destroyed, law satisfied, God honoured, his people eternally and everlastingly saved. And the immortal honours of God unite in their salvation; and therefore he ever lives at the right hand of the Father to make intercession.

And in order that there might be this great work and this great wonder carried on manifestively, Christ is manifested as the Shepherd to gather his sheep in and to feed them when they are in; as the captain, to fight their battles for them; and as the High Priest to plead their cause, bear them upon his shoulders and present them before God with the plate of "Holiness to the Lord" (Exodus 28:36) as they stand complete in him and he is their Surety ever to represent them before God; as it is said, "He is entered into heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24) in his Surety capacity. He is a Prophet, to teach and instruct us, as well as our Priest, to atone for and to bless us; and he is a Husband, to sympathize with us, and (as it is written so it stands firm) as a Husband he "gave himself" for his wife, "that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, and that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" (Eph. 5:25-27) as he is the Rearward, to bring up the rear. (Isa. 52:12) I have often thought good John Bunyan made a little mistake when he said there was no armor for the back, because then the enemy would soon get behind and shoot between our shoulders; but, while our Jesus has provided weapons for us to meet the enemy with, he is the Rearward to look after the scouting foe; and he watches over the church night and day, and waters her every moment; and he solemnly declares that he will be "her God and her guide even unto death." (Ps. 48:14) What "great things" these are!

3. But God the Holy Ghost is also engaged in this solemn work of doing "great things." There are two things that God the Spirit keeps his eye upon--the enrollment of God, and the sinner enrolled there. And at the time specified in God's enrollment, when that sinner shall be taken and made willing, the Spirit comes with his power and does it. If it is a Zaccheus in the tree, he must come down. If it is a Peter, busy among his nets and his fish, he must come. If it is a Philippian jailer, lulling his conscience to sleep because he has been giving the apostles a good hearty drubbing, for he thought he had plague enough without being plagued with such fanatics, and he would make them remember coming there, and so he "made their feet fast in the stocks,"--but at midnight the time is come, God puts the cry into his heart, the Holy Ghost makes no mistake, he must cry, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) If it is a Magdalene, who has been a kind of devil's showbox carrying through the streets to delude you, she must come. O! Blessed be God. The Spirit of God laid hold of her heart, and brought her to weep at the feet of Jesus and cry for mercy. And so if it is the dying thief and he is upon the cross, he must come.

And now let us come a little nearer; where were you, and where was I, and what were we doing? Perhaps there is some poor sinner in this assembly tonight who has come here on purpose to have some little ridicule when he gets away, and is pleasing himself with the idea of having a little fun with some of his wicked companions. O! If this is the day of God's power, may the Holy Ghost send an almighty message to your presumptuous heart! Where are you? WHERE ARE YOU? May God the Spirit pursue you, and

bring you to know your ruined condition and perishing state before a heart-searching God! If it is the Lord's time, he will; for the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." (John 5:25) The Holy Spirit keeps his eye both upon God's secret enrollment and the sinner enrolled there, and he never loses sight of him; no, not even if he is going to Damascus with letters to persecute the church. When the set time is come, down he must fall. O that the Lord would quicken some of your dead souls, bring you this night to feel what cursed wretches you are in the sight of God, and make you cry to him as perishing sinners; and then eventually you will know some of the "great things" that God has done for you.

Well, when the Holy Ghost has quickened the dead soul to feel, and enlightened the dark soul to see, then the poor creature sets about amendments. He finds, in some measure, that he is in an awful state, and he begins to try to amend it. He shakes off perhaps his companions in drink, he will begin to be dutiful to his master, and he will set about pleasing God and doing something to make amends for the bad things he has done before. But, strange to tell! Everything that he does God the Spirit discovers to be empty, and vain, and wretched; discovers it to be evil, discovers it to be sin; and all the man's doings, and all his sayings, and all his attempts to help his own soul only make him so much the worse in his state and in his own feeling before a heart-searching God. And then the poor creature thinks he has missed it here and he has missed it there; he will try again, and may do better the next time; but he misses it again. "Well," says some poor soul, "that is the way I have been going on from month to month, and I have always missed it yet, but I hope to manage better soon." I tell you, you will never be right till you have lost that hope. "Lost that hope! What! Must I lose that hope? Why, man, you will drive one mad! What! Must that go--that hope of being able to manage it better?" Yes, that it must. That must go, and you must sink with it; and when that is gone--when all hope is gone, not only that you have not saved yourself, but that you never can, then Christ is preached by the Holy Spirit in the conscience, and the soul is brought to know something of "the hope of Israel," (Jer. 17:13) instead of the hope of flesh and blood. And this is a "great thing" that the Lord does for the poor sinner, to strip him of false hope and false confidence and all that would lead him astray, that he may lead him, as a perishing sinner, to the Lord Jesus Christ and magnify the riches of God's grace in his soul.

"Well," says some poor creature, "I think I have been a lost helpless thing in my own feelings for many a month, and yet I do not enjoy God's salvation." I should question whether you are brought to this. Now is there not a little bit of something, a little secret lurking something at the bottom, that still gives you some hope that a favourable moment will come when you shall manage it a little better? Now just ask your conscience, whether it is not so. ("Yes, say you, "it is.") That must go. I know you will cling to it as long as ever you can. I know you will. It is like a man giving up his life, it is like a man giving up every thing, to give up this; but the Holy Ghost will make you give it up at last, or else you are none of his.

And when he has done this, will he leave you to destruction? "Why," say you, really I am afraid he will; for I have been tempted many times to put an end to my existence. Once, the Lord knows, I had the instrument in my hand, and I think if he had not taken care of me, I should have done it." Well, he will take care of you; though he is hunting you out of all props, and all self, and all false comfort, he will administer true comfort. I have often thought of one occurrence that took place, connected with my own ministry, some years ago. A poor woman in very great distress thought she could go on no longer, and she would know the worst of it; and so she appointed a time in her own mind when she would drown herself; and when the time came she went to the river; but just as she was going to plunge in, it occurred to her, "Why if I drown myself now, the folks at home will not know where I am, and they will hunt everywhere to find me, and they

will waste so much time in looking after me that I shall add to my other sins that of bringing my family to poverty. I will go back and bring my little girl with me another day, and then she can tell them where I am." And so the Lord overruled it for that time. Well, she went again accordingly, and took the child with her, and was just going to plunge in, when she thought, "Why my poor little girl will be so frightened that she will jump in, and I shall drown her too. I will go back, and take some other method of doing it." Well, after this she came to the place where I preached, and God set her soul at liberty, and she was brought to know the blessings of salvation. O! How carefully the Holy Spirit looks after the flock of the Lord! How carefully he guards them, when they have neither power nor intention to guard themselves! So great is his love, so great his compassion, so great his care, that he does these "great things" for them, and eventually they "are glad."

Well, then, this is one of the "great things" he does in the end--he reveals pardon; but it is one thing for people to talk about believing in Christ and having pardon, and it is another thing for them to believe and for them really to have pardon. The Holy Ghost comes and brings into the soul the pardoning love of Christ, removes bondage, gives a sweet quiet in the conscience, and gives the happy song, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;" (Isa. 45:24) "In the Lord have I mercy; in the Lord I am free." Well, by-and-by the poor creature is brought to think, "Now it will be comfortable all the days of my life." But I tell you, if you live long, the Lord will teach you more of Christ. If any one was to ask you what is intended by Christ in all his offices, in all his relations, in his oath and promises, in all his fullness, you would be ready to say, "O!" I do not understand all those divisions and subdivisions. I believe he has pardoned my soul, I believe He has loved me, I feel that I love him, and that is enough for me." O no. You must know more than that; and therefore you shall be brought into straits and difficulties which shall make the offices and relations, the oath and promise and fullness, of Jesus Christ, just suited to your condition. You shall see that what is said about Christ is not like titles of honour given to our noblemen--mere puffs of empty air--but that everything which is said about Christ is essential, real, suited to the honour of God. God will bring his people more or less, to the solemn feeling of necessity--of knowing that they need such a Christ; and then the blessed Spirit makes him manifest to the conscience as "a very present help in time of need." He reveals Christ in the conscience, and goes on from the first moment of his quickening energy, and carries us through this vale of tears, and lands us in ineffable bliss, redeemed through the Lord Jesus Christ, decorated in his righteousness, robed with his salvation, dignified with his honour, and having the dignity of God's glory stamped upon our character, in which we shall shine for ever and ever, to the praise and glory of God's grace. The Lord does these "great things" for sinners--poor, ruined, helpless sinners. "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

And now let me ask you, Do you know anything of this yourself? I will tell you one "great thing" that the Spirit of the Lord will do for a poor sinner who knows anything of these things in reality. There will be times and seasons when you really cannot pray. I do not mean when you cannot say your prayers. God the Spirit will bring you to know that saying prayers and praying are very different things. Your mouth will be so completely stopped sometimes, that, when you are praying, conscience, enlightened and quickened by the Holy Ghost, will say, "You do not feel that," and, "You do not feel that. What a hypocrite you are! You are speaking things to God, and you do not feel them." So that you are completely shut up and confounded, and feel as if you could say nothing but this sentence, "Lord, I am vile!" And you do not feel that, and you so confess before the Lord. Now the Lord sometimes brings a poor sinner to this very point, and the poor creature thinks he can never pray again; but he does pray again. If he lives in the country, he goes moping about the fields, and if he lives in the city, he goes about his work, and sometimes he is looking for some instrument that he wants for his employer, and perhaps he has it in his hand all the time,

and he is so bewildered and confused that he feels fit for nothing. Satan tells him he is going mad, and he looks in the glass to see whether he is looking wild; and he thinks there is not another mortal so wretched as himself. Well; when this is the case, and all things seem so gloomy, the Holy Spirit comes, and comes as a Spirit of prayer, humbles him, and puts a cry into his mouth, till he really feels a majesty in prayer, and a power in prayer; and anon he is drawn forth into energy in prayer, and he can feel that God is owned of him, and he is owned of God, and he says, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." O! What a delightful thing it is, when God the Spirit puts such a word into the mouth of the poor worm of the dust! This is one of the "great things" that he does at times; and THEN "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence to storm Satan's strongholds, and a great blessing comes through the power and energy of the Holy Ghost. But none but the Spirit of the Lord can produce this in the heart of a sinner; and when a sinner is brought here, he knows something eventually of God "having done great things for him."

But I must conclude; my strength tells me that I must.

III. When the Lord makes this manifest in us, it is sure to make us GLAD. Then we can say, joyfully, sweetly, and blessedly, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation and my high tower" (Ps. 18:2)--my ALL. What gladness in the heart when Jesus is thus revealed, and when our souls can sweetly and blessedly triumph in him! "He hath done great things for us whereof we are glad."

May the Lord the Spirit lead you and me to know more of the Gospel of Christ, and to show especial concern for the poor and needy, for his mercy's sake. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-gadsby/the-great-things-god-has-done-for-his-people/>

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