



Christ, the Refuge of Sinners

A sermon preached by George Müller at Kensington Baptist Chapel, Stapleton Road, Bristol, on Sunday morning, March 28th 1897, on the occasion of the Chapel anniversary.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” - I Tim i., 15

In the first part of this statement - "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" - it is recorded that it is a "faithful saying" - not a questionable saying, or one that is exposed to the shadow of a doubt! We, who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, should make it habitually our business to show by our life and love for God that we believe implicitly in the truth of the statement that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! Therefore, our business is to be faithful witnesses for the truth of the Gospel!

It is next stated that "it is worthy of all acceptance." It is worthy, therefore, to be received by us; it is our duty to receive this statement that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Now what do we say regarding this? Do we individually all of us set our seal to this by receiving it implicitly? There are very many here at present who do so. I question not that there are hundreds here present who do so - who have received this statement of God's Holy Spirit that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! But my heart's desire and prayer is that every one of you, without exception, may receive this statement. There is no other Saviour but Jesus Christ, and we must receive this truth into our hearts. There is no other way regarding the salvation of our souls but through Him! O let us lay this to heart!

And then we have to consider that "He came into the world," not that He was born into the world! This is particularly to be noticed. If it had been stated that He was born into the world, it would have been true so far as regards His human nature. Mary was His mother according to His human nature; but the divinity of our Lord Jesus is referred to here. Our Saviour was really and truly a man as much as we are; but He was really and truly God as God the Father. It would have been quite true if it had been stated that He was born into the world to save sinners. But here, however, the divinity of our Lord is pointed out to us! He is the Creator of everything that exists; the Builder, the Upholder, of everything that exists. But as the divinity of our blessed Lord is here referred to, it was necessary that He should be really and truly divine as the Father of our souls! That He should be human was necessary in order that, in our form and state, He might fulfil the law of God which we have broken times without number, and thus work out the righteousness in which we can now find ourselves, but which by nature we cannot of ourselves obtain, for we have nothing of our own. Of our own righteousness we cannot be accepted by God! In the Word of God it is compared to filthy rags. By God's love, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to all those who trust in Him for salvation; and solely on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, poor sinners - old and young - male and female - rich and poor - educated or uneducated - any and everyone trusting alone in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation shall be accepted!

Now, it was necessary that He should be human in order that, as a human being, born under the law, He should fulfil the law of God which we have broken times without number, by action, by word, by thought, by feeling, by desire, by purpose, and by inclination! But the righteousness of Christ shall be put to our account - shall be reckoned to our account! We shall ourselves be considered as if we had fulfilled the law of God, if we put our trust in Christ!

Further, it was necessary that He should be really and truly human in order that our sin might be punished in the person of the substitute - that punishment might actually be borne by the person who was to be our substitute - even the Man Christ Jesus! And therefore the substitute, in order to make a real atonement for our sins, must bear this punishment, in our room and stead.

But this is only one side of the truth. The other side of the truth is this; He was truly divine as the Father; and it was necessary to give value to the righteousness entrusted to Him and imputed to us, and also to give value to the atonement, that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself hung upon the cross and shed His blood for the remission

of our sins! A mere human being might have been crucified; but this human being would merely have been punished himself through the death of crucifixion. This, however, would not have given value to the blood that was shed. It must be the blood of the God-man, Christ Jesus! This very blood which was shed is called the "blood of God" - for He was truly God as well as man - was shed for the remission of our sins; and it was just this which gave the value to the blood, for it was to be efficacious in the salvation not merely of one sinner, nor a thousand, nor a million poor sin-sick souls; but an innumerable company were to be saved by this blood - the blood of that blessed Jesus who took our sins - my sins, your sins - upon Him. Therefore the blood, to be of value, must be the blood of the God-man, Christ Jesus! This is the valuable part - the all-important fact to be remembered by us! - Christ's blood can save us from all sin! And we can only be saved through Him who shed His precious blood for our ransom and regeneration!

And now, dear friends, how precious is this thought! Yes, how precious! The law has been fulfilled! I am a poor, wicked, hell-deserving sinner - you, and I, too, are poor miserable sinners under the law; yet, if you put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, God will accept and receive you through the righteousness of Christ which is put to your credit, reckoned to your account, imputed to you!

The Lord Jesus Christ has made an atonement for every one of our numberless transgressions, for all our sinful ways, sinful words, wicked thoughts! That blessed, precious, adorable, loving Saviour has made an atonement for every one of our sinful words as well as sinful actions! Yes! He has made an atonement! And not only was this atonement to be for every one of our sinful thoughts, unholy desires, ungodly wishes and inclinations, but the Lord Jesus Christ made the atonement to the full! And thus it comes that the poor sinner is saved! O How precious! How comforting to our sin-sick souls!

Now, the next point that we have especially to consider is this: He came into the world to save SINNERS! Yes, my dear friends, sinners! It does not say that He came into the world to save EXCELLENT people, or those who are very good, or those who are only moderate sinners! Then I must go to hell, for I was a great sinner for the first twenty years of my life. For several years I was pursuing the pleasures of the world - the vanities of the world - the vices of the world! These were what I followed! And yet I went to the University to study for a clergyman! Yes! that was the intention - to make me a clergyman. I attended the Classical Schools; and for nine years after I entered the University, and attended the examinations to become a clergyman - I say for nine years, from the time that I was ten and a half till I was nineteen and a half - and still preparing for a clergyman, I was living far from God! For six years - from the time that I was fourteen till I was twenty years of age - I never read one single chapter of the Bible - not one single verse! I read the Hebrew and the Greek New Testament, and had the Bible in my own language, but I never read it!

This was the state in which God found me! There was nothing for me but hell - nothing but hell! I knew nothing of that wondrous cross until God opened my eyes, when I was twenty years and five months old, and showed me what a wicked young man I was, and that I was deserving of nothing but hell! But, blessed be His Name, He also showed me from this precious Book that even such a wicked, hell-deserving sinner as I was could be saved from my sins through the blood of Christ and through the atonement which had been made for poor sinners!

Now, I had not your privileges. I had never in my early life heard the Gospel till I was twenty years and five months of age! I had never heard of a real trusting Christian in my life! No doubt there were many; but I had never heard or seen one! And yet I was one of a number of students in the University who were preparing to become clergymen!

About this time I was led to a little prayer meeting which was held in the house of a tradesman. There were about a dozen or fifteen citizens in the room; and here I, for the first time, heard of Christ. I entered the house of this tradesman as dead in trespasses and sins, and as utterly reckless and careless of divine things as any person in existence. I came away from that little prayer meeting a happy young man - a happy believer in Christ! There were at this time twelve hundred and sixty students in the University; but only three of them were believers in Christ, and I became the fourth! This was the state of things in which I was found when I attended that little prayer meeting, and where for the first time I heard the name of Jesus! Merry company - worldly company - was

all that I cared about. I met with nothing but disappointment. Instead of finding happiness in these things, I met with nothing but disappointment.

At last I thought I would travel a great deal and find if that would make me happier. God led me. I travelled for forty-three days in succession - day by day for forty-three days; and I saw some of the most beautiful scenery that is to be found under the canopy of heaven. After the lapse of several weeks, I become so sick and tired and surfeited with travelling that I could pass the most beautiful scenery without looking at it.

But three weeks after I had found Jesus in this little prayer meeting I became a truly happy man; and I have had true, real happiness now for seventy-one years and five months!

This real, true happiness, my friends, I desire for everyone of you who is without it; and it is for that reason that I am standing here this morning to bear witness for the Lord Jesus Christ! How many of you have this real, true happiness which I have found in the Lord Jesus Christ?

When I came home from that little prayer meeting - now more than seventy years ago - I found myself lying peacefully on my bed blessing and praising God for what He had been doing for me! No believer I conversed with; no-one said to me, "Now, mind! you must give up the card-table, and the theatre, and the ballroom, and all those evil ways in which you have been going on." No! but God had given me spiritual life - spiritual instincts - spiritual desires. But I said to myself on that first evening after I came from that little prayer meeting, "I shall never go any more to the ballroom, or play cards." And I have never been to the ballroom or played cards since. The whole life became different. All at once it became different, because now I was no longer dead in trespasses and in sins. I had now obtained spiritual life, and joyfully and gladly surrendered myself to God, Who had done so much, so very much, for me. And thus I became unspeakably happy.

And I have, my dear friends, been most unspeakably happy ever since, which is now for seventy-one years and five months.

O what a glorious idea - how simple! how precious! - that through the Gospel of glad tidings preached to us, and coming to, and trusting alone in Jesus, sinners - great sinners, old sinners - may be saved!

After the Apostle had been making this statement that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he says "Of whom I am chief!" This is not a mere formal expression; it is what St Paul meant; he considered himself a very great sinner - the greatest sinner: and Paul called himself the chief of sinners! This is not the only passage in which he refers to himself; but, again and again, in his Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles, he speaks of himself as a very great sinner.

Then comes the next verse which follows the text: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

I am now ninety-one years and six months of age, with the prospect of heaven - very near heaven - very near the end of my earthly pilgrimage! Still I am able to work every day, and all the day long. I preach five or six times a week besides; and am able to do it! But although in my ninety-second year, speaking after the manner of men, there is the prospect of being taken away, yet I am unspeakably happy!

And it is unspeakably happy to be able to help one another trusting in Jesus! Never forget that Jesus came to save sinners - such a sinner as I was! But you must accept salvation in God's appointed way. It is through Jesus alone that you can be saved! If sinners in their own way seek to bring themselves to heaven, they will bring themselves to hell! Hell! HELL! Yes, they will bring themselves to hell by their good works - by their own righteousness! Sinners can be alone saved by trusting in Jesus for salvation, for He is Lord! That is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, in showing to Paul - formerly named Saul, the great persecutor - that as the Lord had saved Paul, a great sinner as he was, so our Saviour thereby showed to every sinner under heaven at any time afterwards that

no one need despair of the possibility of obtaining forgiveness! This is a most vital and precious truth! "For this cause I obtained mercy!" That means, "I have obtained forgiveness, for this very cause that, in me, the greatest sinner, the chief of sinners, Jesus Christ might show those "all long-suffering."" That means, "How much He is now suffering, because what He is ready to do for sinners is not immediately and completely taken advantage of." That certainly does not mean such as are not particularly great sinners. But that He is willing to forgive the greatest sinner. Paul was willing to become a sample - a pattern - so that not a single individual hereafter might have ground for saying, "I am too hardened a sinner! I have lived too long in sin! My sins are too great and too many to bear! I cannot expect forgiveness!" Nothing of the kind! Paul is here given as a sample - a pattern - a specimen - of what God is willing to forgive, and what the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to do in regard to any and every sinner. But that is by "simply trusting in Him" Who has paid the penalty of sin for us by the shedding of His own blood.

O, my friends, how precious! Yes, how precious! Perhaps there is one here present who says, "My mother has wept over me - begged me, with many a tear running down her aged cheeks, to alter my course and become different; but I am a wretched, guilty sinner, and have continued in my sin up to now!" Ah, my friends! Guilty as you may be - though you could stand against the tears of your poor, dear, aged mother, who has wept over you times out of number - yet even you shall be forgiven if you seek for forgiveness through the righteousness and love of the Lord Jesus Christ!

O how precious! Yes, how precious! Saul was forgiven in order that not a single individual under heaven might say, "I am too old - too great a sinner - too hardened - my sins are too many." Nothing of the kind! If you only seek salvation through Jesus Christ, you may obtain mercy. How unspeakably precious!

This brings before us the point that whilst yet in the body we may know that we are forgiven sinners. We may know that God has forgiven us, and reconciled us to Himself. Do all here present enjoy this knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins? This is what I desire regarding everyone here. I have not the shadow of a doubt that there are a vast number here present who do know and enjoy the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins. But do you all? I have enjoyed the knowledge of the forgiveness of my sins. I have not the least doubt. I am as certain that I shall go to heaven as if I were there already. But I deserve nothing but hell. I am a believer, however; and the Word of God declares that God so loved the world that He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us, so that every believer in Him should have everlasting life - that we might go to heaven. Now, I do believe in Him. Therefore it is certain that I shall be in heaven. The Word of God declares concerning the Lord Jesus that He is the Saviour of sinners; that all who believe and trust in Him for salvation shall obtain the remission of their sins - that is, the forgiveness of their sins. The 43rd verse of the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles states this emphatically: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Therefore I know that my sins will be forgiven through faith in Christ; and that I shall go to heaven if I trust in the Lord Jesus!

Then, again, we may know that our sins are forgiven even whilst we are here. It is not a matter of indifference to us whether we know it or not. It is of vast importance to us that we should have knowledge of this fact even here, for there is no real state of enjoyment in God without knowing that we are accepted in Him - that our sins are blotted out by the atonement which the Lord Jesus has made for us!

And now, my dear friends, I would therefore affectionately press this point upon every one of you who are believers in Christ. If you have not the knowledge that your sins are forgiven, I would earnestly and lovingly entreat you to give yourselves no rest until you know Christ; and if you trust in Christ alone for salvation, then, according to the passage which I have just quoted, it is certain that your sins are forgiven. Therefore, we may have peace in God, and thus be strong in the Lord, for the joy of the Lord is our strength in the proportion in which we are working for, and loving and trusting in, God. We are dead to the world, and to all its evil influences, if we are thoroughly trusting in Him!

O, my dear friends, it is of the utmost importance to us to know that we are forgiven, to know that we have obtained mercy. What says the Apostle? "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first" - in ME,

such a great sinner, the Lord Jesus might make a beginning - to show, first, the vastness of His long-suffering - the degree of His long-suffering - the extent of His patience - for all those who should hereafter believe in Him. O! What a comforting thought to a poor heavy-laden sinner! No poor sinner now need despair of salvation - of being forgiven! What a precious thought! O so precious!

Then one word more. Life everlasting! Yes! Life everlasting! An eternity of happiness! A participation in the rivers of pleasure at the right hand of God! Having been washed in the blood of Christ, we are no longer dead in trespasses and sins. We are purified from sin - spiritualised! And O, what a glorious thought: that this spiritual life in us through the gift of the Holy Ghost is everlasting! It is not fully developed yet! It will be fully developed when the Lord takes us to Himself - fully developed through the praise and honour and glory of God! O how precious is this blessing! Every one here present this morning may obtain it! Here is a specimen before you of a guilty image - forgiven, and made a happy man! I have had this happiness now for seventy-one years and five months! And what God did for me, He is willing and ready to do for any and everyone who will accept Christ. O, accept Him now!

I have travelled in forty-two countries in my missionary labours; but I think I may say that of the many millions of human beings with whom I came into contact who were deserving of hell, none of them were so deserving of hell as myself - the greatest sinner! This being so, I can assure you the only way to find acceptance in Christ is to trust in Him for full, complete forgiveness all your life! To every one of you who has not obtained these blessings of which I have been speaking, I have come here this morning as a witness for Christ, for what the blessed Lord did for me He is as willing to do for you. Trust Him; and I am sure you will be happy. Amen.

The logo for Müllers is written in a large, elegant, black cursive script. The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'M' at the beginning and a 's' at the end. The overall style is classic and handwritten.

Müllers is a working name of the
The George Müller Charitable Trust is a limited company registered in England and Wales
Registered Charity no. 1066832 Company no. 3471812
Registered Office: Müller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol BS6 6DA
Tel: 0117 924 5001 Email: admin@mullers.org