

Him Hath God Exalted

Charles Spurgeon's "The Exaltation of Christ," his first sermon after the Surrey Gardens disaster, opened into six sessions

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..."

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-10

Charles Haddon Spurgeon Pastor, New Park Street Chapel, London, age 22

New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, London November 2, 1856 · about 41 minutes read aloud

On Sunday evening, October 19, 1856, a false cry of “Fire!” in a London music hall set off a crush that killed seven people who had come to hear a 22-year-old preacher named Charles Spurgeon. For two weeks he could barely think, pray or open his Bible. Then, walking in a friend’s garden, one text broke through: Philippians 2:9-11. On November 2 he climbed back into his own pulpit, told his church he could not preach, and preached anyway.

This study opens that sermon, “The Exaltation of Christ,” in six sessions. It is short, raw and full of Victorian language. It is also one of the clearest pictures in church history of what Christ’s throne means to someone whose world has just caved in. Scripture is the authority here, not Spurgeon, and not this study.

If your group did Week 1, you met Spurgeon in passing: the preacher critics called “vulgar,” the Surrey Gardens disaster, his long fight with depression. You do not need Week 1 to use this one. Every heart has a lock. This week’s key is a name above every name.

Each session moves the same way. **What Was Said** summarizes that part of the sermon with quotes, word for word. **Into the Text** sets out the passages in full with a short commentary and, where the Greek or Hebrew opens something up, a word study. **Go Deeper** gives cross-references, a Bible story, a moment from church history and a book. **Hold It Carefully** names the real tension and where faithful Christians disagree. Then five questions for the room and one thing to practice before you meet again.

A 60 TO 75 MINUTE PLAN FOR GROUPS

5 min

Welcome and pray

Ask one person to pray for the group by name. Read any care note in the session aloud before you begin.

4 to 7 min

Read it aloud

Each session names one stretch of the sermon to read aloud. Ask a strong reader to prepare it ahead of time, or pass it around paragraph by paragraph. Read slowly. Victorian sentences are long; let them breathe.

5 min

What was said

Read the summary and the quotes aloud. Ask: what line stopped you?

20 min

Into the text

Read each passage aloud, a different voice each time. Read the commentary. Stop after each passage for one minute of response.

10 min

Hold it carefully

Read it through. Let people disagree, with Spurgeon and with each other, in the spirit of Acts 17:11.

15 min

Discuss

Pick three questions if time is short. The last question is usually the one that matters.

5 to 8 min

Practice and pray

Read the practice aloud. Name who will do it. Say the memory verse together. Close in prayer.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

THE SERMON

Spurgeon preached this sermon on Sunday morning, November 2, 1856, at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark. It was printed as No. 101 in *The New Park Street Pulpit*, volume 2. The Spurgeon Center's web text leaves out several sentences of the first paragraph; its scan of the original printing and the Christian Classics Ethereal Library text have them.

QUOTES

Every quote from the sermon matches the printed text word for word, with its old spelling kept ("honour," "to-day," "thy"). The printed sermon has no paragraph numbers, so this study numbers its 23 prose paragraphs in order. Hymn verses count as part of the paragraph they sit in. "¶ 9" means the ninth paragraph. Quotes from *The Saint and His Saviour* and from Susannah Spurgeon come from the *Autobiography*, volume 2.

SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is quoted from the ESV. Spurgeon quoted the King James Version, often from memory. When his wording differs from the

CHECKING CLAIMS

The history around the sermon was checked against primary sources: the New Park Street church book, Susannah Spurgeon's account,

ESV, or from the King James itself, the study says so.

Spurgeon's own account, and the newspaper reports reprinted in his *Autobiography*. "Listening with Discernment" lists the main claims in and around the sermon and how each one holds up.

FOR LEADERS

Sessions 1, 3 and 5 touch death, trauma, depression and suicide. Read the care notes aloud. Session 6 speaks about hell and predestination. Spurgeon's word-picture of the cross in paragraph 12 is graphic; preview it. A free audio reading of the whole sermon runs 41 minutes (see Sources) if your group would rather listen than read.

Is Christ's Kingdom Safe?

Seven dead, a young preacher carried out of the hall, two weeks in the dark, and the one question that brought him back.

SERMON	READ ALOUD	MEMORY VERSE
Paragraphs 1 to 4	Paragraphs 1 to 3	Philippians 2:9-11

A CARE NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This session tells the story of a crowd crush in which seven people died, and of the weeks of depression that followed for the preacher. If it stirs up a trauma of your own, or if you are in a dark place right now, tell someone you trust today. If you are thinking about suicide, or you are worried about someone who is, call or text 988 (the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in the U.S.) at any hour. You can also chat at 988lifeline.org. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

Leaders: read this note aloud before the reading. Someone in your group may have lived through a crush, a fire, a shooting or a sudden death in a crowd. Afterward, check in privately with anyone who went quiet.

WHAT WAS SAID

On Sunday evening, October 19, 1856, Charles Spurgeon stood up to preach in the Music Hall of the Royal Surrey Gardens in London. He was twenty-two. His own chapel on New Park Street could not hold the crowds, and the new hall seated about 12,000. During his prayer, voices cried "Fire!" and "The galleries are giving way!" There was no fire. In the rush for the stairs, seven people were crushed to death and twenty-eight were taken to hospital. Spurgeon did not know anyone had died until he was led from the pulpit. He was carried out, in his own words, "more dead than alive."

For two weeks he could not preach. His twin sons were one month old. His wife, Susannah, later wrote that "reason seemed to totter on her throne." The newspapers turned on him. Then, walking with her in a deacon's garden in Croydon, he stopped at the foot of the steps and said, "Dearest, how foolish I have been! Why! what does it matter what becomes of me, if the Lord shall but be glorified?" He recited Philippians 2:9-11 from memory.

On Sunday morning, November 2, he stood in his own pulpit again. He told his church he could not preach, only "make a few remarks." He forgave whoever started the panic. He promised to go back to the hall. Then he

read the text that had carried him out of the dark and asked the question under it: when everything shakes, is Christ's kingdom safe? (§ 1 to 4)

“I almost regret this morning that I have ventured to occupy this pulpit, because I feel utterly unable to preach to you for your profit.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · § 1

“God forgive those who were the instigators of that horrid act! They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · § 1

“Oh, Spirit of God, magnify thy strength in thy servant's weakness, and enable him to honour his Lord, even when his soul is cast down within him.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · § 2

“It matters not what shall become of us: God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · § 3

What happened on October 19, 1856?

The New Park Street church book records it plainly. Just after the pastor began his prayer, “a disturbance was caused (as it is supposed, by some evil-disposed persons acting in concert), and the whole congregation was seized with a sudden panic.” People fell on the stone steps of the north-west staircase and were trampled. Seven died. Twenty-eight were taken to hospital. The same entry says the pastor was “entirely prostrated for some days” and returned to the pulpit on November 2.

How many were there? The church book says about 7,000. Dr. Alexander Fletcher, in a statement printed with a sermon he preached soon afterward, said no fewer than 12,000, with thousands more outside the gates. The inquest returned a verdict of accidental death. No account names who raised the cry. Years later Spurgeon wrote, “I hope there was no concerted wickedness at the bottom of the sad event; though there may have been a love of mischief aiding at the first.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the
earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Spurgeon could have preached on suffering, on providence, or on the seven who died. He chose none of them. He said he could not speak of the disaster at all. He preached the throne instead. That is the first lesson of this sermon. When your mind is full of one terrible night, the way out is not always to stare harder at the night. Sometimes it is to look up at the one thing the night could not touch.

Notice the first word: “Therefore.” The exaltation is the answer to something. Verses 5 to 8 tell the story of the Son who emptied himself and went down to the cross (Session 4). God lifted him because he went down. A preacher who had just been dragged through the lowest night of his life found in that one word a promise: the way down is not the end of the road.

WORD STUDY: “HIGHLY EXALTED” AND “BESTOWED”

“Highly exalted” is *hyperypsōsen*, the verb *hypsōō* (“lift up”) with *hyper* (“above, beyond”) fixed to the front. It appears nowhere else in the New Testament. Paul had to reach past the ordinary word for “exalt” to say what God did. “Bestowed” is *echarisato*, from *charizomai*, “to give freely, as a gift.” It shares a root with *charis*, grace. The name above every name was not seized. It was given.

2 SAMUEL 18:32-33

³² The king said to the Cushite, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” And the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.” ³³ And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Spurgeon opens with this scene (¶ 3). He quotes it in the King James wording: “Is the young man Absalom safe?” A battle has just decided whether David keeps his kingdom. The messengers arrive. David asks one question, and it is not about the war. His mind runs straight to the one he loves. Spurgeon says the Christian’s

mind works the same way. Nations can wreck and empires crash, and the first question is, “Is Christ’s kingdom safe?”

Read the whole story and you will see the other side of it. David’s grief for Absalom was so great that Joab had to warn him he was about to lose the loyalty of the men who had saved his life (2 Samuel 19:1-8). Love that fixes on the wrong object can cost you everything. Spurgeon borrows David’s instinct and gives it a better object. Absalom was dead. Christ is alive and on the throne. When your heart runs to him first, it runs to the one place that has not fallen.

PSALM 42:5-6

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation
⁶ and my God.
My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

Spurgeon’s opening prayer asks God to help him honour Christ “even when his soul is cast down within him” (¶ 2). That is the language of this psalm. The psalmist is far from the temple, taunted by people who ask, “Where is your God?” (42:3). He does not pretend he is fine. He talks to his own soul. He asks it a question, gives it a command, and makes it a promise.

Then verse 6 does what Spurgeon did. “My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you.” Not “therefore I remember what happened.” He remembers God. Two weeks after the Music Hall, Spurgeon refused to preach on the disaster and preached on the exalted Christ. He was not hiding from his grief. He was doing what the psalmist did: turning the eyes of a crushed soul toward the only one who could lift it.

WORD STUDY: “CAST DOWN”

The Hebrew verb comes from *shāḥaḥ*, “to be bowed down, brought low, to crouch.” The soul in Psalm 42 is doubled over. Hold that picture next to Philippians 2:10. One day every knee will bow to Jesus. A soul that is already bowed low with grief is not far from that posture. It only needs to be turned toward him.

LUKE 23:33-34

³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Spurgeon called the panic a “horrid act” and the deaths “murder” (¶ 1). Then he said, “They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul.” He forgave people whose names he never learned, who never asked, and who were never caught. That is how Jesus prayed on the cross. He prayed for men who were still at work with hammers and dice.

Forgiveness in both cases does not call evil good. Jesus did not say, “Father, it does not matter.” Spurgeon did not say it was an accident he could shrug off. They named the wrong, and then they released it to God. That is what forgiveness is: handing the debt to the only judge who will never get it wrong (Romans 12:19).

GO DEEPER

CROSS-REFERENCES

Genesis 50:20 (“you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good”); Romans 8:28; Psalm 43:5; 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (“we despaired of life itself”); 2 Samuel 19:1-8.

A BIBLE STORY

1 Samuel 30:1-6. Raiders burn Ziklag and carry off every family. David’s own men speak of stoning him. The next line is one of the strongest in the Old Testament: “But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.” No one else strengthened him that day. He found strength where Spurgeon found it, in God himself.

CHURCH HISTORY

A year later Spurgeon told the story himself in *The Saint and His Saviour* (1857). “My Bible, once my daily food, was but a hand to lift the sluices of my woe.” Then, in the garden: “On a sudden, like a flash of lightning from the sky, my soul returned unto me.” He said the name of Jesus was “like Ithuriel’s spear, bringing back my soul to its own right and happy state.” In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, Ithuriel is the angel whose spear forces every disguise back into its true shape. “I was a man again,” Spurgeon wrote, “and what is more, a believer.”

A BOOK

C. H. Spurgeon, *The Saint and His Saviour* (1857). The book where he first told the garden story, in his own words, while his “soul is warm with gratitude for so recent a deliverance.”

HOLD IT CAREFULLY

I Accidents are not verdicts

Some Christians in every generation treat a disaster as God’s judgment on the people it hits. Spurgeon refused. Five years later, after the Clayton Tunnel railway crash of August 25, 1861, killed twenty-three people, he preached “Accidents, not Punishments” from Luke 13, where Jesus asks whether the eighteen killed by the tower in Siloam were “worse offenders than all the others.” Jesus answers, “No.” Spurgeon wrote that he had “many times used the great calamity” at the Music Hall to teach “that accidents are not to be regarded as Divine judgments.” He added, “I would not tell a lie to save a soul.” When tragedy strikes, the Christian’s first word is not an explanation.

2 Not talking about it is a season, not a rule

Spurgeon said he would make “no allusion to that solemn event, or scarcely any” (¶ 1). Two weeks out, that was wisdom. He said himself that he would have to fall silent if he let the scene come back to mind. That is not a rule for every grief forever. The Psalms are full of people who say exactly what happened to them, in detail, to God. Some people need to tell the story many times before it loses its grip. Let each person choose when to speak and when to look up.

3 One moment, and a lifetime of scars

The turn in the garden was sudden. The healing was not complete. Susannah wrote that he “carried the scars of that conflict to his dying day.” Twenty-five years later, at Portsmouth in 1881, a packed room and some confusion as he walked to the platform left him “entirely unmanned,” his head in his hand, feeling unable to preach. He preached anyway. Both things are true: God can break a fetter in an instant, and a body can remember a trauma for decades. Neither one is a failure of faith.

4 Forgiving is not excusing

Spurgeon softened his judgment about motive (“It may not have been so much by the malice of men”) and kept his judgment about the act (“that horrid act”). Forgiveness does not require you to decide the other person meant no harm. It does not require trust, reunion or silence about what happened. It requires you to give up revenge and leave judgment to God.

DISCUSS

- 01 Spurgeon opens by telling his church he almost regrets coming (§ 1). Why tell them that instead of hiding it? What does it do for a congregation to hear its pastor say it?
- 02 “Is Christ’s kingdom safe?” (§ 3). When your own life is shaken, what question do you ask first? What does your first question show about what you love?
- 03 Spurgeon forgave people he could not name (§ 1). What makes forgiving a faceless wrong hard in a different way from forgiving someone you know?
- 04 Psalm 42 talks back to its own soul. What do you tell yourself on your worst days? What would you want to tell yourself?
- 05 Spurgeon was lifted in a moment and carried scars for the rest of his life. How can a church make room for both the sudden rescue and the long recovery?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Write Philippians 2:9-11 on a card and put it where you will see it first each morning. Before you check the news or your phone, read it aloud once. Before the group meets again, ask one person in it, by text or in person, what they are carrying this week, and listen without fixing it.

The hall was full of screaming. The throne was not shaken.

One of Our Family

Why a weary Christian cheers when Christ is crowned: he is our brother, our captain, and our head.

SERMON	READ ALOUD	MEMORY VERSE
Paragraphs 5 to 8	Paragraphs 6 to 8	Hebrews 2:11

WHAT WAS SAID

Spurgeon's first point is that the plain fact of Christ's exaltation is a comfort. It is "a very bottle of cordial" (a medicine) "to the lip of the weary Christian." He says bluntly that it means nothing to someone who does not belong to Christ (§ 5).

He gives three reasons it reaches a believer. First, kinship. A father is thrilled when his son climbs because the boy is his. Jesus is a real man, "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh," no different from us "save only sin." He is "the Elder Brother" of God's family (§ 5 to 6). Second, a shared cause. The common soldier who stood beside the Duke of Wellington felt honoured when the Duke was cheered, because he had held his place in the line. Wellington had beaten Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 and had died four years before this sermon, in 1852 (§ 7). Third, union. Christ and his people are one body. When the head is crowned, the hands and feet share the glory. Christ sits in heaven as their "forerunner" and "representative" (§ 8).

Then the warning. For someone who does not know Christ, his exaltation is not good news. He is "exalted to judge." Spurgeon means it as a door, not a wall. The sentence ends, "unless you repent and turn unto God with full purpose of heart."

"this is a very bottle of cordial to the lip of the weary Christian, that Christ, after all, is glorified."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · § 5

"It is the Elder Brother of the great one family of God in heaven and earth; it is the Brother to whom all of us are related."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · § 6

"Little was the work I did, and poor the strength which I possessed to serve him; but still I aided in the labour;"

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the words he gives to the ordinary Christian soldier · § 7

“Believer! he is the pledge of thy glorification; he is the surety of thine acceptance; and, moreover, he is thy representative.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 8

INTO THE TEXT

HEBREWS 2:10-12

¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

Spurgeon’s “Elder Brother” is not a sentimental phrase. Hebrews says it outright. The Son of God is “not ashamed to call them brothers.” Read that slowly. He is not ashamed of the ones who ran, the ones who doubted, the ones who were sitting in the Music Hall that night and the ones who fled down the stairs.

Then look at what he quotes in verse 12. It is Psalm 22:22. Psalm 22 opens with “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and it ends with the sufferer singing in the congregation among his brothers. Spurgeon will come back to Psalm 22 in Session 5. The brother who was forsaken is the brother who now leads the singing.

WORD STUDY: “FOUNDER”

The Greek is *archēgos*: a pioneer, a trailblazer, the one who goes first and opens the road for others. Hebrews uses it again in 12:2 (“the founder and perfecter of our faith”). He was made “perfect through suffering,” which does not mean he was ever sinful. It means he completed the road, all the way through suffering to glory, so that the “many sons” could follow him on it.

EPHESIANS 5:29-32

²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Spurgeon says we are “of his flesh and of his bones” (¶ 8). He is quoting Ephesians 5:30 in the King James Version: “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” The ESV reads only “because we are members of his body.” The longer words are missing from the earliest Greek manuscripts, including Papyrus 46 and the great codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and nearly every modern translation leaves them out. They echo Adam’s words over Eve in Genesis 2:23, “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”

Spurgeon’s point stands either way, because verses 31 and 32 make it for him. The union between Christ and his church is like a marriage: two become one. Christ “nourishes and cherishes” his church the way a person cares for his own body. When he is crowned, it is not a stranger’s honour. It is the honour of the one you belong to.

EPHESIANS 2:6-7

⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Spurgeon tells the believer to look at Christ on his throne and “think that thou art exalted too in him” (¶ 8). Paul says it in the past tense. God has already “seated us with him.” That is not a feeling. It is where God counts you to be. The weary Christian in the Music Hall crush, the one with no seat and no strength, was already seated in heaven in Christ.

Verse 7 tells you why. God did it to show “the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness.” Your seat is a display case for his kindness, forever.

WORD STUDY: “WITH HIM”

Paul builds his verbs with the prefix *syn-*, “with.” *Synēgeiren*: raised up with. *Synekathisen*: seated with. Verse 5, just before, has *synezōopoiēsen*: made alive with. Three “with” verbs in a row. Everything that happened to Christ in his rising and his enthronement happened with his people in it.

HEBREWS 6:19-20

¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Spurgeon calls the exalted Christ our “forerunner” (¶ 8), and this is where the word lives. A forerunner goes ahead so that others can follow. Jesus did not go into the presence of God to leave us outside. He went “on our behalf.” The anchor of your soul is not in your circumstances. It is fixed behind the curtain, where he is.

WORD STUDY: “FORERUNNER”

Prodromos appears only here in the New Testament. It is built from *pro* (“ahead”) and *dromos* (“a running, a course”). It was used of scouts and advance troops sent ahead of an army. Jesus is the scout who has already reached the far country, and he is not coming back without the rest of the company.

GO DEEPER

CROSS-REFERENCES

Romans 8:17, 29 (“the firstborn among many brothers”); John 20:17 (“my brothers ... my Father and your Father”); 1 Corinthians 12:26-27; Colossians 3:1-4.

A BIBLE STORY

Genesis 45:1-15. Joseph, now second only to Pharaoh, clears the room and weeps. “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.” The exalted brother does not use his throne against the brothers who betrayed him. He uses it to feed them. Hold that picture beside the exalted Christ.

WHAT SPURGEON WAS QUOTING

“Prince of the kings of the earth” is Revelation 1:5 in the King James. “My beloved is mine, and I am his” is Song of Solomon 2:16. “Bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh” adapts Adam’s words in Genesis 2:23. In the garden at Croydon, by his own account in *The Saint and His Saviour*, he praised Christ as “the Brother born for adversity,” from Proverbs 17:17: “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

A BOOK

Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ* (IVP, 2015). A short, warm book on who Christ is, his ascension, and our union with him by the Spirit.

I Brother, and also Lord

Spurgeon holds both: the Christian “reverences him as God” and “admires him as the man-Christ” (¶ 5). Calling Jesus our brother can shrink him if we forget the other half. When John saw the exalted Christ, he “fell at his feet as though dead” (Revelation 1:17). The same hand then touched him and said, “Fear not.” Keep the closeness and the awe together.

2 Union is not merger

Spurgeon’s language gets very strong: “parts and portions of his very self” (¶ 8). That is Victorian devotional speech, and it reaches for something true. Scripture’s pictures are a body and a marriage. In both, the parts are joined and still distinct. A believer is united to Christ. A believer does not become divine. The creature stays a creature, loved and seated with him.

3 Honour by association can turn into credit

The soldier illustration can slide into claiming a share of the victory. Spurgeon’s own soldier guards against it: “it was but a mean part that I played.” Paul says the same: “neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:7). We share the joy of the victory. We do not share the credit for it.

4 The warning is part of the comfort

Spurgeon tells the unbeliever that Christ is “exalted to judge you and condemn you” (¶ 8). That sounds harsh in a sermon of comfort. It is honest. The same throne is refuge or terror, depending on whether you know the one who sits on it. Spurgeon does not end the sentence with a threat. He ends it with an open door: repent and turn to God.

DISCUSS

- 01 Spurgeon calls Christ’s exaltation “a very bottle of cordial to the lip of the weary Christian” (¶ 5). Has it ever felt that way to you? What was going on in your life?

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- 02 Of Spurgeon's three bonds, brother, captain and head, which do you feel most? Which feels most distant? Why?
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- 03 The ordinary soldier says, "I did but maintain my rank" (¶ 7). What does holding your place in the line look like in your week?
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- 04 Hebrews 2:11 says he "is not ashamed to call them brothers." Who do you know who needs to hear that he is not ashamed of them?
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- 05 Spurgeon closes this section with a warning to people who do not know Christ (¶ 8). How do you speak about judgment to a friend without hiding it and without swinging it like a club?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Name one person in your church whose faithful work goes unseen: the one who sets up chairs, the one who prays, the one who shows up. This week, tell them in one or two sentences what their faithfulness has meant to the whole line. Next time, open the meeting by reading Ephesians 2:4-10 aloud together.

The head is crowned. The hands and feet share the glory.

The Root of Sorrow

One long paragraph about praise, scorn and self, from a young man the papers had just called an impostor.

SERMON Paragraph 9	READ ALOUD Paragraph 9	MEMORY VERSE Galatians 2:20
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A CARE NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

In this paragraph Spurgeon says he longs “to die to self,” and that “to die were bliss, if it were for Christ.” He means dying to selfishness, and being ready to suffer for Jesus. He is not talking about wishing to die. If you are depressed, lines like these can land differently. If you have any thoughts of ending your life, call or text 988 (the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in the U.S.) at any hour, or chat at 988lifeline.org, and tell someone you trust today.

Leaders: read this note aloud before the reading.

WHAT WAS SAID

This session is one paragraph (¶ 9), and it is the heart of the sermon. Spurgeon names a fourth thing a Christian needs to enjoy Christ’s exaltation: “entire surrender of one’s whole being to the great work of seeking to honour him.” Then he tells his people something personal. He has “concentrated all my prayers into one”: that he may die to self and live wholly to Christ.

Those were almost the words he had spoken to his wife in the garden at Croydon a few days before: “my one prayer shall be, that I may die to self, and live wholly for Him and for His honour.” The sermon is his garden prayer spoken in public.

Then he turns to praise and scorn. The press had spent two weeks calling him a charlatan. Spurgeon’s answer: send every compliment to Christ, and the insults lose their grip too. “I have found,” he says, that when he leaned on praise he felt the enemy’s arrows keenly, but when he treated praise as worthless, contempt could not reach him either. “I do think that the root of sorrow is self.” He ends by telling the reviled, the poor, the despised and the tempted to sit down, lift their eyes, and see Christ on his throne.

“I have now concentrated all my prayers into one, and that one prayer is this, that I may die to self, and live wholly to him.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 9

“smite the soldier for his Captain’s sake; ay, strike, strike; but the King ye cannot touch”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 9

“I do think that the root of sorrow is self.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 9

“Sit down now, O reviled one, poor, despised, and tempted one; sit down, lift up thine eyes, see him on his throne”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 9

What the papers were saying

On October 25, 1856, six days after the disaster, *The Saturday Review* wrote that Spurgeon’s success “is simply of the vulgarest and most commonplace type” and that the only honest thing was “to hold up Mr. Spurgeon to the world as a very ordinary impostor.” A popular daily paper called him, in its opinion, “nothing more than a ranting charlatan.” A gentleman asked the magistrate at Lambeth to investigate, and suggested that whoever gathered such crowds might be liable to “a still graver charge.”

Spurgeon later wrote that he did not see any of it while he was ill: “I was not aware of the ferocious assaults which were made upon me by the public press.” He read them after he had recovered. When he preached this paragraph, he knew exactly what was being said.

INTO THE TEXT

PHILIPPIANS 1:20-21

²⁰ as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Spurgeon quotes verse 21 inside his own prayer: “For me to live is Christ.” Paul wrote it from prison, not knowing if he would be released or executed. His one hope was that Christ would be honoured “whether by life or by death.” That is Spurgeon’s “one prayer.”

Keep reading, because Paul does not stop at verse 21. “My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account” (1:23-24). Paul chooses life, for the sake of the people who need him. Surrender to Christ does not make a believer eager to leave. It makes him willing to stay and serve.

WORD STUDY: “HONORED”

The ESV’s “honored” translates *megalyntēsetai*, from *megalyō*, “to make great, to magnify.” The King James reads “Christ shall be magnified in my body.” Spurgeon’s opening prayer asked God to “magnify thy strength in thy servant’s weakness” (¶ 2). A believer’s body, weak or strong, is a lens that makes Christ look as large as he really is.

GALATIANS 2:20

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Spurgeon prays “that the life I live in the flesh may not be my life, but thy life in me” (¶ 9). That is this verse. Notice what Paul keeps. “It is no longer I who live,” and in the same breath, “the life I now live.” The old self-ruling “I” is crucified. A new “I” goes on living, by faith, loved by name: “who loved me and gave himself for me.” Dying to self is not the erasing of a person. It is the dethroning of one.

WORD STUDY: “CRUCIFIED WITH”

Synestaurōmai is in the perfect tense: an action completed in the past with a result that still stands. “I have been crucified with Christ” and I remain so. The same verb is used in the Gospels of the two criminals crucified with Jesus (Matthew 27:44). Paul places himself on the cross beside him.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:3-5

³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

The church in Corinth was ranking its preachers. Paul refuses to let their verdict, good or bad, run his life. He does not even trust his own verdict about himself. There is only one court that matters. Spurgeon says the same thing with a Victorian flourish: “ye have laid the praises at my door; go, lay them at his” (¶ 9).

Notice how the passage ends: “Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” Paul is not cold to praise. He is waiting for the right praise from the right mouth, at the right time. That frees you from the flatterers and from the critics at once.

WORD STUDY: “HUMAN COURT”

The Greek is *anthrōpinēs hēmeras*, literally “a human day.” Paul sets “a human day” of judgment against “the day” when the Lord comes (3:13). Every newspaper, comment thread and group chat is holding a human day. It is not the last one.

PSALM 97:1-2

¹ The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad!
² Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

Spurgeon ends the paragraph with the words he wants a despised believer to say: “I care not what happens so long as it is written, ‘The Lord reigneth’” (¶ 9). This psalm is one of the places it is written. Look at verse 2. The throne is surrounded by “clouds and thick darkness.” You cannot always see what God is doing. You can know what his throne stands on: righteousness and justice. Spurgeon could not see why seven people died. He could still say who reigns.

CROSS-REFERENCES

John 3:30 (“He must increase, but I must decrease”); Matthew 16:24-25; Matthew 5:11-12; 2 Corinthians 12:10; 1 Peter 4:14.

A BIBLE STORY

Numbers 12:1-16. Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses. Moses says nothing in his own defense. The narrator explains: “Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.” God answers for him. Then Moses prays for Miriam’s healing. Meekness is not weakness. It is strength that leaves its defense to God.

CHURCH HISTORY

Spurgeon’s garden prayer became a life. Thirty years later, in 1887, he warned that his own Baptist Union was drifting from Scripture and left it. The scorn that time came from friends and fellow ministers. The man who told his church in 1856 to lay the praises at Christ’s door had to do it again at fifty-three.

A BOOK

Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (15th century). A small old book about the freedom of forgetting yourself in love for Jesus. Read it slowly, a few lines a day.

HOLD IT CAREFULLY

I Is the root of sorrow really self?

Spurgeon overstates for effect. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35), and there was no selfishness in him. Paul tells the church to “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). Grief over real loss is love, not self. Spurgeon himself wept for weeks over seven people who died. Read his line more narrowly and it is true: the sting that comes from wounded pride, from lost praise and public scorn, grows from self. Sort the two. They need different medicine.

2 **“Self-annihilation” is the wrong word for the right thing**

Spurgeon speaks of “that sweet feeling of self-annihilation” (¶ 9). The phrase comes from the devotional language of his day. Scripture never asks you to annihilate yourself. Galatians 2:20 keeps the “I”: “the life I now live.” Christ does not erase you. He dethrones your self-rule and raises you to new life. This matters most for people who already despise themselves. For them, “die to self” can sound like permission to keep hating who they are. It is the opposite. It is a call to stop being your own god, and let God love you.

3 **Armor against slander, not against correction**

Spurgeon pictures scorn bouncing off: “let your arrows rattle on my mail” (¶ 9). Against lies, that is right. Against true correction, it is dangerous. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Proverbs 27:6). The same armor that turns slander can turn away a word you need. Ask someone who loves you which arrows to let through.

4 **When praise was never the danger**

Many readers are not tempted by praise because they never receive any. For them the lesson here is not “despise the flatterer.” It is 1 Corinthians 4:5: “each one will receive his commendation from God.” The praise you did not get from people is not the praise you were made for.

DISCUSS

- 01 Spurgeon says he has “concentrated all my prayers into one” (¶ 9). If you had to reduce your prayers to one, what would it be?
- 02 Which cuts you deeper: losing praise, or receiving scorn? What does your answer show about where you have been living?
- 03 “Smite the soldier for his Captain’s sake ... but the King ye cannot touch” (¶ 9). How does it change an attack on you to remember it cannot reach Christ?

04 "I do think that the root of sorrow is self." Where is that true? Where is it not? Read John 11:35 before you answer.

05 How do you tell slander you should shrug off from correction you should take to heart? Who helps you tell the difference?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

This week, when someone praises you, say thank you, then privately hand it up: "This is yours, Lord." When someone criticizes you, ask one trusted friend, "Is any of this true?" Come back ready to share one thing you learned.

They can strike the soldier. They cannot touch the King.

The Way Down

Why Christ was exalted: slander, spitting, thorns and nails, and a road to heaven that runs down-hill.

SERMON Paragraphs 10 to 12	READ ALOUD Paragraphs 11 and 12	MEMORY VERSE Philippians 2:8
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WHAT WAS SAID

Spurgeon's second point hangs on one word: "Wherefore." God exalted Christ because he humbled himself. Spurgeon is careful here. This speaks of Jesus' human nature. As God, he "needed no exaltation; he was higher than the highest." The one who stooped in human flesh is the one who was lifted, and he was lifted as a man (¶ 10).

Then Spurgeon makes his hearers watch. They hear the crowds call Jesus "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber" and say "he has a devil, and is mad." They see the spitting, the hair torn out, the nails, and they hear the cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Every one of those shames, he says, became part of the crown. The thorns turn into jewels, the nails into a sceptre, the wounds into royal purple. "He suffered and he reigned" (¶ 11 to 12).

Then he turns it toward his people. "If Christ was exalted through his degradation, so shalt thou be." Count your steps to glory by the ones that seem to go down. Read the slanders of your enemies as applause from heaven. "If thou hast the hardest to bear, thou shalt have the sweetest to enjoy." A preacher two weeks out of the valley tells his church that the valley is the road (¶ 12).

"the black, the bitter seed brought forth a sweet and glorious flower which blooms for ever."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 11

"Each of the thorns becomes a brilliant in his diadem of glory; the nails are forged into his sceptre, and his wounds do clothe him with the purple of empire."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 12

"O Christian! sit down and consider that thy Master did not mount from earth's mountains into heaven, but from her valleys."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 12

“The way to heaven is down-hill.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 12

INTO THE TEXT

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This is the “Wherefore” behind Spurgeon’s text. He quotes it in the King James: “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant” (¶ 10). Follow the steps down. He did not grasp. He emptied himself. He took a servant’s form. He was born a man. He humbled himself. He obeyed. He died. And not any death: “even death on a cross.”

Now look at verse 5. Paul did not write this to settle a theology debate. He wrote it to a church with a quarrel in it. Two women who had worked beside him were not getting along, and he pleads with them “to agree in the Lord” (4:2). The deepest passage about the person of Christ in Paul’s letters is aimed at a church fight. The way down is not only how Jesus got to the throne. It is how his people get along.

WORD STUDY: “FORM” AND “EMPTIED”

“Form” is *morphē*, used twice: “the form of God” (v. 6) and “the form of a servant” (v. 7). Paul puts the two side by side on purpose. The one who truly had God’s form truly took a servant’s. “Emptied himself” is *ekenōsen*, from *kenōō*, “to empty.” Notice how Paul explains it: “by taking.” He did not empty himself by subtracting his deity. He emptied himself by adding a servant’s nature and a servant’s death. Spurgeon says it this way: he “wrapped his Godhead in mortal flesh.”

ISAIAH 53:10-12

- ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
- ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
- ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Seven centuries before Philippians, Isaiah wrote the same logic. “Therefore I will divide him a portion ... because he poured out his soul to death.” Therefore, because: the exaltation answers the humiliation. The song began in 52:13: “Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.” Then it went down into the grave before it came back up.

Spurgeon calls the link between Christ’s shame and his glory “a strange yet mystic link” (§ 11). Isaiah shows it is not random. The servant is exalted because his suffering was for others. “He shall bear their iniquities.” The crown is the reward of a finished rescue.

HEBREWS 12:1-3

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

Spurgeon's "bitter seed" and "glorious flower" (¶ 11) are verse 2 in a picture. The cross, then the seat at the right hand. "For the joy that was set before him" he endured. The joy did not cancel the cross. It carried him through it.

Verse 3 is Spurgeon's instruction almost word for word: "O Christian! sit down and consider" (¶ 12). The reason to consider Jesus is practical. It is so "that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." A tired believer does not need a new technique first. He needs a long look at Jesus.

WORD STUDY: "DESPISING THE SHAME"

Kataphronēsas means "thinking little of, treating as not worth weighing." Crucifixion was designed to shame. Jesus felt its full weight and refused to let it define him. The cross was meant to say "cursed and worthless." He looked past it to the joy and the throne. That is the posture Spurgeon urges on the slandered believer: feel it, and do not let it name you.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Spurgeon quotes this passage when he says the martyrs who suffered most have the greatest "eternal weight of glory" (¶ 12). Paul is not a man with light troubles. A few chapters later he lists beatings, shipwrecks, hunger and a stoning (11:23-27). He calls all of it "light" and "momentary," not because it did not hurt, but because of what it weighs against.

Verse 18 is the whole sermon in one line. Spurgeon could not preach on what he had seen in the Music Hall. He preached on what he could not see: Christ on the throne. That was not escape. It was the only way to carry what he had seen.

WORD STUDY: "LIGHT" AND "WEIGHT"

Paul sets *elaphros*, "light," against *baros*, "weight." The Hebrew word for glory, *kābôd*, comes from a root meaning "heavy." Paul, a Hebrew who wrote in Greek, plays on it. Affliction is light. Glory is heavy. Put them on a scale and the affliction flies up.

GO DEEPER

CROSS-REFERENCES Matthew 23:12 ("whoever humbles himself will be exalted"); James 4:10; 1 Peter 4:13; Matthew 11:19 and John 10:20 (the slanders Spurgeon quotes: "a glutton and a drunkard," and "He has a demon, and is insane"); Romans 8:17-18.

A BIBLE STORY 1 Samuel 1 to 2. Hannah is childless and mocked year after year by her rival. At the temple she prays so hard that the priest thinks she is drunk. God hears her. Her song afterward is the Old Testament version of Philippians 2: "The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts" (2:7).

CHURCH HISTORY Susannah Spurgeon, who walked beside her husband in the Croydon garden, went down her own valley. After surgery in 1869 she lived much of her life as an invalid. From her sickroom she started a Book Fund in 1875. By her death in 1903 it had sent about 200,000 theological books to poor pastors. Spurgeon's line fits her: "he who descends into the mines of suffering, shall find unbounded riches there."

A BOOK Ray Rhodes Jr., *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon* (Moody, 2018). The story of the woman who held the household together through the Surrey Gardens night and long years of pain of her own.

I Suffering is not a ladder

Spurgeon says Christ “was exalted because he suffered,” and “so shalt thou be.” Handle this with care. Christ’s suffering was unique. It was perfect obedience and it paid for sin. Our suffering earns nothing. What joins our story to his is not merit but union: we are heirs with Christ “provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:17). Suffering is not holy in itself. Christ in it is.

2 Not every slander is applause

“Read the slanders of thine enemies as the plaudits of the just” (¶ 12). Jesus’ promise in Matthew 5:11 has limits built in: when people speak evil against you “falsely on my account.” If the criticism is true, it is not applause. It is a gift that stings. If it is false and it is for Christ, Spurgeon is right: rejoice.

3 The way down is humility, not staying in harm

Spurgeon’s charge to go on “through floods, through fire, through death” is a call to courage for the sake of Christ. It is not a call to stay in danger. If someone is hurting you at home, at work or in a church, getting safe is not a failure of faith. Paul let himself be lowered over a wall in a basket to escape (2 Corinthians 11:32-33). Humility bends the knee to God. It does not bow to abuse.

4 Victorian word-painting

Spurgeon describes the cross in vivid detail: “his feet too, gushing gore” (¶ 12). Preachers of his day painted pictures like this on purpose, to make people see. For someone who has seen real violence, it can land hard. A leader can read around a line without dimming the point: the one who was shamed is the one who is crowned.

DISCUSS

- 01 “The black, the bitter seed brought forth a sweet and glorious flower” (¶ 11). Name a bitter seed in the story of Jesus. What flower grew from it?

-
- 02 “The way to heaven is down-hill” (¶ 12). What does going down look like in a world that measures everything by going up? Get specific.
-
- 03 Paul wrote Philippians 2:5-8 to a church with a quarrel (4:2). Where does your family, group or church need this mind right now?
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- 04 Spurgeon tells his hearers to read slander as applause (¶ 12). When is that true? When is it dangerous?
-
- 05 Hebrews 12:3 says to “consider him” so you do not grow weary. What happens in you when you actually stop and think about what Jesus went through?
-

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Do one hidden downward thing this week: a task beneath your title, an apology you have put off, a place at the back of the line. Tell no one what you did. Next time, share only what it taught you.

He did not mount to heaven from the mountains. He came up from the valley.

God Also

Christ did not crown himself. Man did not crown him either. The hand that crowned him is not finished.

SERMON	READ ALOUD	MEMORY VERSE
Paragraphs 13 to 16	Paragraphs 14 to 16	1 Peter 5:6-7

A CARE NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This session speaks about depression plainly. Spurgeon tells people who “cannot raise” their “poor depressed spirits” that Christ felt the same helplessness. If you are depressed, you are not a lesser Christian. Talk with a doctor or a licensed counselor, and tell someone you trust. If you have any thoughts of suicide, call or text 988 (the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in the U.S.), any time of day or night, or chat at 988lifeline.org.

Leaders: read this note aloud. After the reading, let the silence sit before anyone speaks.

WHAT WAS SAID

Spurgeon’s third point is the one who did the exalting: “GOD also hath highly exalted him.” He reaches for the news. Eight weeks earlier Alexander II had been crowned in Moscow, and in the Russian rite the emperor takes the crown and sets it on his own head. “Christ did not crown himself,” Spurgeon says. God did. And “the hand that put the crown on Christ’s head, will one day put the crown on ours” (§ 13).

Man did not exalt Christ either. Man “hissed him, mocked him, hooted him,” took up stones, then used nails. Spurgeon tells his people to set that black picture beside the bright one. Man dishonoured him. God exalted him. So when everyone speaks ill of you, lift your head. “The servant should not be above his master.” He quotes a hymn: “I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame, / For he’ll remember me.” Then: “God will remember me, and highly exalt me after all, though man casts me down” (§ 14 to 15).

Then the most tender part of the sermon. Some of you cannot lift your own spirits. People tell you, “Oh! you should not feel like this.” Spurgeon quotes Proverbs, that the heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger does not share it, “and I will improve upon it, ‘nor a friend either.’” In deep sorrow, he says, we all share one thing: helplessness. So did Christ. On the cross he prayed Psalm 22: “I am a worm, and no man.” And while he could not lift a finger to crown himself, “then his God was crowning him” (§ 16).

“Christ did not crown himself.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 13

“Sometimes you cannot raise your poor depressed spirits.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 16

“It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 16

“Art thou so broken in pieces, Christian? Think not that thou art cast away for ever;”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 16

Which emperor?

Alexander II was crowned Emperor of Russia in Moscow on September 7, 1856, eight weeks before this sermon. In the Russian coronation rite, the new ruler took the Imperial Crown from the Metropolitan’s hands and placed it on his own head. Spurgeon’s picture was current news: an absolute monarch had just crowned himself. The King of kings did not.

INTO THE TEXT

ACTS 2:32-33

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

Peter preaches this at Pentecost, seven weeks after the crucifixion, in the city where it happened. He sets Spurgeon’s two pictures side by side. Three verses later he finishes: “God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (2:36). You crucified him. God exalted him. That is ¶ 14 in one sentence.

Notice who does the lifting. “God raised up.” Jesus was “exalted at the right hand of God.” He received the Spirit “from the Father.” Every verb of honour comes from above. Spurgeon’s whole third point is here: Christ did not climb. He was lifted.

WORD STUDY: "EXALTED"

Hypsōtheis is from *hypsoō*, "to lift up," the same verb Paul strengthens with *hyper* in Philippians 2:9. Jesus used it for his own death: "when you have lifted up the Son of Man" (John 8:28), and "I, when I am lifted up from the earth" (John 12:32). The word points both ways at once. He was lifted up on the cross, and lifted up to the throne.

PSALM 22:6-8

- ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
⁸ "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

The psalm is titled "A Psalm of David." It was first a real man's cry. Then Jesus took its first line on his lips on the cross: "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (Mark 15:34). And the mockers at the cross used almost the words of verse 8: "He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him" (Matthew 27:43). Spurgeon reads the whole psalm as Christ's own prayer from the cross (¶ 16), and he offers that reading with care: "if I read it rightly."

Whatever you decide about that, look at what the psalm allows. A man who is "a worm and not a man" in his own eyes is still praying. Spurgeon's point is that the lowest words in the psalm were spoken by the one God was about to crown. Feeling like a worm is not proof that God has cast you off. It may be the posture he lifts from.

WORD STUDY: "WORM"

The Hebrew is *tôla'at*. The same word forms part of the phrase for crimson or scarlet dye in the tabernacle instructions (for example, the "scarlet yarns" of Exodus 25:4), because the dye came from an insect. It is a small, crushed thing. Spurgeon, a few minutes earlier, said Christ's wounds clothe him "with the purple of empire." The worm is dressed in royal color.

PROVERBS 14:10

¹⁰ The heart knows its own bitterness,
and no stranger shares its joy.

Spurgeon quotes this from memory (“the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith”). The King James reads, “The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” Then he adds his own line: “nor a friend either.”

Proverbs is admitting something true. There is a loneliness in grief that no one else can fully enter. Spurgeon is not scolding friends. He is warning against the friend who tells you how you ought to feel. “It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act” (¶ 16). Job’s friends sat well for seven days and then began to explain. Good friends keep sitting.

1 PETER 5:5-7

⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Here is Philippians 2 for the rest of us. Christ humbled himself and God exalted him. Now: “Humble yourselves ... so that at the proper time he may exalt you.” The same hand. The same pattern. The timing is his.

Then look at verse 7, which in Greek is part of the same sentence. Humbling yourself includes handing him your anxieties. Pride carries its own worries because it will not admit it cannot. A humble person throws them on God. The reason is not a technique. It is a fact about him: “he cares for you.”

WORD STUDY: “CASTING”

Epiripantes is from *epiriptō*, “to throw upon.” It appears only one other time in the New Testament, in Luke 19:35, when the disciples throw their cloaks on the colt for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem. The picture is physical. You do not set your worries down politely. You throw them on him, the way you throw a coat over a donkey’s back.

CROSS-REFERENCES

John 13:16 (“a servant is not greater than his master”); Psalm 3:3 (“my glory, and the lifter of my head”); Matthew 27:39-44; Psalm 22:22-31 (the psalm ends in praise); Revelation 1:5-6.

A BIBLE STORY

2 Samuel 9. Mephibosheth, lame in both feet, calls himself “a dead dog.” King David seats him at his own table “like one of the king’s sons.” He could not raise himself. He was raised. That is the grace Spurgeon offers the Christian who cannot lift his own spirits.

CHURCH HISTORY

Spurgeon never pretended to be free of this. In *Lectures to My Students* (1875) he gave a lecture called “The Minister’s Fainting Fits.” It opens: “Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down.” He spoke “by most painful experience,” and he named causes in the body as well as the soul: “Certain bodily maladies ... are the fruitful fountains of despondency.”

A BOOK

Zack Eswine, *Spurgeon’s Sorrows* (Christian Focus, 2014). A short, gentle book for anyone living with depression, or loving someone who is, built on Spurgeon’s own words.

HOLD IT CAREFULLY

I Friends are not the problem

Spurgeon’s “nor a friend either” is a word against bad comfort, not against friendship. “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17). In the Croydon story, the friends were a wife who walked with him and a deacon who opened his house. They did not tell him how to feel. They stayed.

2 Depression is not only spiritual

This sermon offers a spiritual comfort, and it is real. It is not the whole answer, and Spurgeon did not think it was. He named bodily causes in his own lecture. A doctor, a licensed counselor, sleep, medication and time are gifts from the same God who crowned Christ. Using them is not unbelief.

3 Exalted at the proper time

Spurgeon says, “God will remember me, and highly exalt me after all, though man casts me down” (¶ 15). That is a promise, and 1 Peter adds the timing: “at the proper time.” For Spurgeon, part of it came quickly. Within three weeks he was back at the Music Hall. Many faithful people wait until the last day (Hebrews 11:39). The promise holds either way. Its date is God’s.

4 Is Psalm 22 Christ’s or David’s?

Both. The title gives it to David. The Gospels put its first line in Jesus’ mouth (Mark 15:34), and Hebrews 2:12 hears his voice in verse 22. Christians have long read the whole psalm as his. That is good news for you. The psalm was a man’s prayer before it was Christ’s, so it can be yours too.

DISCUSS

- 01 “Christ did not crown himself” (¶ 13). Where are you tempted to crown yourself: to defend, promote or justify yourself?
- 02 Spurgeon tells us to set the black picture of what people did to Jesus beside the bright picture of what God did (¶ 14). How does holding both help when people misjudge you?
- 03 “Some say to you, ‘Oh! you should not feel like this’” (¶ 16). What have Christians said to you when you were low? What helped? What hurt?
- 04 Spurgeon says that in deep sorrow we all share “a sense of helplessness” (¶ 16). Why is helplessness so hard to admit, especially at church?

-
- 05 While Jesus could not lift a finger, “then his God was crowning him” (¶ 16). Where is God at work in your life right now in a way you cannot yet see?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Choose one person who is low right now. Do something for them that needs no explanation and carries no advice: a meal, a ride, a note, a text that says, “Praying for you. No need to reply.” Leave the lifting to God.

He could not lift a finger. God was crowning him.

Every Knee

Look up: the crowned Christ, a world that bows willingly or unwillingly, and a preacher who could say no more.

SERMON	READ ALOUD	MEMORY VERSE
Paragraphs 17 to 23	Paragraphs 17 to 19, then 22 and 23	Isaiah 45:22

A NOTE FOR LEADERS

This last stretch includes two hard subjects. Spurgeon speaks plainly about hell (¶ 19, 22), and he quotes Romans 9 on God’s sovereignty (¶ 21). Christians hold different views on how God’s sovereignty and human choice fit together. Let people ask honest questions. Keep the focus where Spurgeon keeps it: every knee will bow, so bow now.

WHAT WAS SAID

Spurgeon says he can say little more. He asks his people to look, not at the streets of gold or the white-robed crowds, but at Christ. He quotes Thomas Kelly’s hymn: “The head that once was crowned with thorns, / Is crowned with glory now.” Then he paints the scene. The pomp of empires dissolves “like the white mist of the morning.” Angels and saints cast their crowns before him. Even the lost acknowledge his Godhead (¶ 17 to 19).

He looks forward to a “latter-day glory” when every knee bends to Christ willingly. And he insists that even now, every knee bows, “though not willingly, yet really.” The scoffer’s insult dies before it is halfway to the stars. The rebel still runs on the track God marked. He quotes Romans 9 and a hymn he credits to Luther: “He everywhere hath sway, and all things serve his might.” (The hymn is Paul Gerhardt’s; see “Listening with Discernment.”) “Go on, reviler! God knoweth how to make all thy revilings into songs!” (¶ 20 to 21).

Then the appeal. You will bow one day, willing or not. Bow now. “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.” He prays, “Make us all the willing subjects of thy grace.” And he ends: “God bless you, my friends, I can say no more but that” (¶ 22 to 23). Two weeks after the worst night of his life, a 22-year-old preached a short sermon, and it ended in an invitation.

“O! hide your heads, ye monarchs; put away your gaudy pageantry, ye lords of this poor narrow earth!”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 19

“Go on, reviler! God knoweth how to make all thy revilings into songs!”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 21

“Make us all the willing subjects of thy grace, lest afterward, we should be the unwilling slaves of thy terror;”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 22

“God bless you, my friends, I can say no more but that.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon · ¶ 23

INTO THE TEXT

ISAIAH 45:22-23

²² “Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.

²³ By myself I have sworn;
from my mouth has gone out in righteousness
a word that shall not return:
‘To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

Paul did not invent “every knee should bow.” He took it from here. In Isaiah, the LORD, the one God of Israel who shares his glory with no idol, swears: “To me every knee shall bow.” Paul writes that every knee will bow “at the name of Jesus.” He takes words God spoke about himself and says them about Jesus. There is no higher claim a Jewish apostle could make.

Look at the order in Isaiah. First the invitation: “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!” Then the oath that every knee will bow. Spurgeon ends his sermon in the same order. Every knee will bow. Bow now, while bowing is salvation.

WORD STUDY: "CONFESS"

In the Greek translation of Isaiah that Paul's churches read, verse 23 says every tongue will *exomologēsetai*, "confess," to God. Paul uses the same verb in Philippians 2:11: every tongue will *exomologēsetai* that Jesus Christ is Lord. He quotes the same line of Isaiah again in Romans 14:11: "every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

REVELATION 5:11-13

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

This is the scene Spurgeon asks his people to look at (¶ 17 to 19). Notice the three places in verse 13: "in heaven and on earth and under the earth." They are the same three places as Philippians 2:10. John saw what Paul promised.

And look at who is worthy: "the Lamb who was slain." Not the Lamb who avoided being slain. The wounds are still there in heaven, and they are the reason for the song. Spurgeon's thorns turned to jewels and his nails turned to a sceptre (Session 4) are this verse in Victorian dress.

PSALM 2:10-12

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Spurgeon quotes verse 12 in his final appeal (¶ 22) in the King James wording: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” The psalm is first a warning to kings who plot against God’s anointed. Spurgeon aims it at every “iron-sinewed sinner” in the room.

Do not stop reading before the last line: “Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” The Son whose anger is a warning is the same Son who is a refuge. The psalm does not tell you to run from him. It tells you to run to him.

REVELATION 19:6-7

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.” ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

Spurgeon longed for the day when the whole earth would bend its knee “willingly.” This is that day. The multitude is not forced. It roars “Hallelujah!” And the church is not dragged to the wedding. “His Bride has made herself ready.”

Verse 8 adds how: “it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure.” She makes herself ready, and the clothes are a gift. That is what a willing knee looks like. Every heart has a lock, and Jesus is the key. The heart that opens to him is the knee that bows before the day it has to.

WORD STUDY: “MADE HERSELF READY” AND “GRANTED”

Hētoimasen heautēn is active: she prepared herself. The next verb, *edothē*, “it was granted,” is passive: something was given to her. John holds both in two lines. The Bride works, and her readiness is grace. Spurgeon’s prayer, “Make us all the willing subjects of thy grace,” asks for exactly that.

GO DEEPER

CROSS-REFERENCES

Romans 14:10-12; Revelation 4:10-11 (the elders cast their crowns before the throne); Matthew 25:31-46; Psalm 72:10-11, Isaiah 49:23 and Isaiah 60:6 (the sources of Spurgeon’s “kings shall bring presents,” “queens shall be the nursing mothers” and “the dromedaries,” all in the King James wording).

WHAT SPURGEON WAS QUOTING

“The head that once was crowned with thorns” is by Thomas Kelly (1820). The line Spurgeon credits to Luther, “He everywhere hath sway, and all things serve his might,” comes from Paul Gerhardt’s German hymn “Befiehl du deine Wege,” in John Wesley’s English translation, “Commit Thou All Thy Griefs,” where it reads “Thou everywhere hast sway, / And all things serve Thy might.” The long quotation in ¶ 21 is Romans 9:19-23 in the King James, quoted from memory with small changes.

CHURCH HISTORY

“I shall preach there again yet,” Spurgeon had said in ¶ 1. He kept his word. Morning services at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall began on November 23, 1856, three weeks after this sermon, and ran until December 11, 1859. He preached only in daylight there, so that no one could raise a false alarm in the dark. The hall that saw his worst night sheltered his church for three years. He left when the owners opened the gardens for Sunday entertainment. The building burned down in 1861.

A BOOK

Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A New Biography* (1984). A readable life of Spurgeon, including the Surrey Gardens years, the Tabernacle and the Downgrade Controversy.

HOLD IT CAREFULLY

I Willing and unwilling knees

Some readers take Philippians 2:10-11 to mean that everyone will finally be saved. Spurgeon did not. He read it as universal acknowledgment, not universal salvation: some will confess Christ as Lord in torment. Most of the church through its history has read it the same way, and Jesus’ own warnings stand behind that reading (Matthew 25:46). The point for today is urgency. Every knee will bow. The only question is whether it bows now, willingly, as a child, or later, unwillingly, as a rebel.

2 Sovereignty and the scoffer

Spurgeon held the Calvinist view of God's sovereignty, and ¶ 20 to 21 show it: even rebels run "in the very track" God marked before eternity. Christians in other traditions read Romans 9 differently, and have for centuries. All agree on two things Spurgeon holds together. God rules, and people are responsible. He finishes his sermon on sovereignty by pleading with sinners to bow. He did not think God's rule made his appeal pointless. He thought it made it hopeful.

3 A happy era coming?

Spurgeon says, "I do believe there is a happy era coming," a "latter-day glory" when the whole earth bows willingly (¶ 19 to 20). Some Christians expect the gospel to win the world before Christ returns. Others expect the world to grow darker until he comes. The Bible leaves some of the order of last things for us to hold with an open hand. It leaves no doubt about the end: every knee will bow.

4 Hell in a sermon of comfort

Modern readers flinch at "dragged with chains of vengeance down to hell" (¶ 22). Spurgeon thought it would be cruel to comfort the believers in the room and say nothing to the ones outside. Read the tone as much as the words. His last sentence is not a threat. It is a blessing: "God bless you, for Jesus' sake!"

DISCUSS

- 01 Spurgeon tells his people not to look at the streets of gold but at Christ (¶ 17). When you picture heaven, what do you see first? Where is Jesus in the picture?
- 02 "Every knee does virtually bow, though not willingly, yet really" (¶ 20). Where have you seen God use people who opposed him?
- 03 "God knoweth how to make all thy revilings into songs!" (¶ 21). What reviling in your life, or in your church's story, has God turned into a song?

-
- 04 Isaiah 45 says “Turn to me and be saved” before it says “every knee shall bow.” Why does the invitation come first?
-
- 05 Spurgeon ended, “I can say no more but that.” After six sessions in this sermon, what is the one thing you would say to someone who has not yet bowed the knee to Jesus?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Bow. Before the group ends, kneel together if you are able, and pray Philippians 2:9-11 aloud. This week, pray by name every day for one person who has not yet bowed the knee to Jesus, and ask God for one open door to speak with them.

Every knee will bow. Blessed are those who bow now.

Listening with Discernment

How to receive a sermon, a podcast, or this study without swallowing it whole or spitting it out.

ACTS 17:11

¹¹ Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

The Bereans checked the apostle Paul, and Luke calls it noble. A sermon from 1856 by a famous preacher deserves the same treatment: eager reception and careful checking, both at once. Spurgeon would ask for nothing less.

HEBREWS 13:7-8

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Here is how to read a great preacher of the past. Remember him. Look at how his life turned out. Imitate his faith, not every opinion, illustration or turn of phrase. Then verse 8 puts him in his place. Spurgeon was a man of 1856. Jesus Christ is the same in 1856 and today. The preacher changes. The one he preached does not.

ECCLESIASTES 7:10

¹⁰ Say not, “Why were the former days better than these?”
For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

Old sermons carry a glow. The language is grand, the preachers were giants, and it is easy to decide the church was better then. The Preacher warns against it. The church of 1856 had its own blind spots, cruel newspapers

and frightened crowds. Read the past for what God did in it, not as an escape from the present he has put you in.

SEVEN HABITS FOR LISTENING WELL

I **Put the sermon in its week**

Spurgeon was twenty-two. His twin sons were six weeks old. Seven of his hearers had been killed two weeks before, and the papers were calling him a charlatan. Read every sentence as spoken by that man, in that week.

2 **Translate the Victorian, keep the meaning**

“Cordial” is a restoring medicine. A “brilliant” is a cut diamond. “Mail” is armor. “Thee” and “thou” are the old intimate forms. Do not dismiss a line because the words are old, and do not admire it only because they are grand. Ask what he meant, then ask if it is true.

3 **Sort the timeless from the time-bound**

The Duke of Wellington, the Russian emperor, the “latter-day glory,” the language of “self-annihilation”: these belong to 1856. Christ’s exaltation, the way down, the God who crowns the helpless, and the call to bow: these belong to every century.

4 **Check his Bible against the Bible**

Spurgeon quoted the King James Version, often from memory, and sometimes blended two verses into one. Look up every verse he uses. It is not disrespect. It is how you learn which words are God’s and which are the preacher’s.

5 **Check his sources too**

He credits a hymn to Luther that Paul Gerhardt wrote. Great preachers misremember. The mistake does not touch his point, and noticing it does not make you his judge.

6 **Honor the man without making him the text**

Hebrews 13:7 says to imitate the faith of your leaders. It does not say to adopt their every view. You can love Spurgeon and still disagree with him on the order of the last days or on Romans 9.

7 Watch the fruit

Does reading this make you bow to Christ more gladly and treat hurting people more gently? That is the Spirit's fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). If it makes you harsher with the depressed or prouder of your theology, you have read it wrong.

THE HISTORY, CHECKED

HOLDS UP

matches primary sources

NEEDS NUANCE

partly true, or true in a narrower sense

NOT SUPPORTED

no good evidence, or it points the other way

This was Spurgeon's first sermon after the Surrey Gardens disaster Title; ¶ 1

HOLDS UP

The church book records that he was restored "so as to be able to occupy the pulpit in our own chapel on Sunday, November 2nd." His own account in *The Saint and His Saviour* names this text as the one he preached when he " essayed again to preach."

"The last fortnight" ¶ 1

HOLDS UP

October 19 to November 2, 1856, is exactly fourteen days.

Seven people died ¶ 1

HOLDS UP

The church book: seven dead and twenty-eight taken to hospital. The inquest returned a verdict of accidental death.

Not "so much by the malice of men, as some have asserted" ¶ 1

NEEDS NUANCE

The church book and Dr. Alexander Fletcher both believed the cries were planned. Spurgeon later wrote, "I hope there was no concerted wickedness." No account names who raised the cry.

The size of the crowd Context

NEEDS NUANCE

The church book says about 7,000. Fletcher said no fewer than 12,000, with thousands more outside. The hall was built to seat about 12,000.

"I shall preach there again yet" ¶ 1

HOLDS UP

Morning services at the Music Hall began November 23, 1856, and ran until December 11, 1859.

Spurgeon was 22 Context

HOLDS UP

Born June 19, 1834, at Kelvedon, Essex.

The press turned on him Context

HOLDS UP

The Saturday Review (October 25, 1856) called him "a very ordinary impostor." A daily paper called him "a ranting charlatan."

"Of his flesh and of his bones" ¶ 8

NEEDS NUANCE

Ephesians 5:30 in the King James. The earliest manuscripts, including Papyrus 46, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, lack the phrase, and the ESV reads only "members of his body."

The emperor of Russia crowns himself ¶ 13

HOLDS UP

Alexander II placed the crown on his own head at his coronation in Moscow on September 7, 1856.

Paul spoke of “a crown of glory which fadeth not away” ¶ 13

NEEDS NUANCE

A blend of two verses. Paul’s crown in 2 Timothy 4:8 is “a crown of righteousness.” “A crown of glory that fadeth not away” is Peter’s (1 Peter 5:4, King James).

Psalm 22 is Christ’s own prayer from the cross ¶ 16

NEEDS NUANCE

Jesus cried its first line on the cross (Mark 15:34), and Hebrews 2:12 hears his voice in verse 22. Reading the whole psalm as his is an old Christian reading, which Spurgeon offers “if I read it rightly.”

Luther wrote “He everywhere hath sway, and all things serve his might” ¶ 21

NOT SUPPORTED

The lines are from Paul Gerhardt’s “Befiehl du deine Wege,” in John Wesley’s translation, “Commit Thou All Thy Grievs.”

Turn the same tools on this guide. If you find an error, tell the person who gave it to you. Spurgeon would. He once said, “I would not tell a lie to save a soul.”

APPENDIX B

Memory Verses

One for each session. Say it together at the end of your meeting, and carry it through the week.

SESSION 1 • PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

SESSION 2 • HEBREWS 2:11

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

SESSION 3 • GALATIANS 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

SESSION 4 • PHILIPPIANS 2:8

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

SESSION 5 • 1 PETER 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

SESSION 6 • ISAIAH 45:22

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

A PRAYER FOR THE GROUP

Father, you crowned your Son when men had hissed him, mocked him and nailed him. Nothing that happens to us can move that crown. Thank you.

Lord Jesus, you did not climb to glory from the mountains but from the valley. Teach us the down-hill road. Make us glad when you are exalted, even when we are not.

Holy Spirit, magnify your strength in our weakness. Where our souls are cast down within us, lift our eyes to the throne.

We pray for everyone who has lived through a crush, a fire, a crash or a sudden death, and carries it in their body still. Heal what can be healed. Carry what cannot. Send them friends who will sit with them and not explain.

We pray for those who are depressed tonight, in this room and outside it. Keep us from telling them how they ought to feel. Make us present, patient and practical. Lead them to good help, and lift them at the proper time.

We pray for pastors and leaders who are being slandered, and for those who are being rightly corrected. Give the first courage and the second humility, and give all of us the wisdom to know which is which.

We forgive the ones who have hurt us, even the ones whose names we never learned. We leave their judgment with you.

We pray for the people we love who have not bowed the knee to Jesus. Turn them to you and let them be saved. Make your Bride ready.

In the name of Jesus, the name above every name. Amen.

SOURCES

Sources and further reading

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Christian Classics Ethereal Library, *Spurgeon's Sermons*, vol. 2 (1856), Sermon 101. ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons02.xlvii.html

Spurgeon Gems, Sermon No. 101 (modernized text). spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs101.pdf

Audio reading: "The Exaltation of Christ," C. H. Spurgeon, Koelsch Broadcasting Productions, 41:20. sermonaudio.com/sermons/4300291757

HISTORY

C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography, Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records, by His Wife and His Private Secretary, vol. 2 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1897 to 1900), chapters 49 to 51: Susannah Spurgeon's account of the garden at Croydon; Spurgeon's account from *The Saint and His Saviour* (1857); the New Park Street church book entry for October 19, 1856; Dr. Alexander Fletcher's statement; *The Saturday Review*, October 25, 1856; Spurgeon's own recollections; Mr. Shindler's account of the 1881 Portsmouth service, from *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*; the resumption of services on November 23, 1856. archive.org/details/spurgeonsautobio02spuruoft

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C. H. Spurgeon, "Accidents, not Punishments," *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 408, as quoted in the *Autobiography*, vol. 2.

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"Susannah Spurgeon," Wikipedia (marriage; the twins, born September 20, 1856; the Book Fund).

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"Clayton Tunnel rail crash," Wikipedia (August 25, 1861).

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Hymnary.org: “Commit Thou All Thy Griefs” (Paul Gerhardt, “Befiehl du deine Wege,” trans. John Wesley); “Give to the Winds Thy Fears”; “The Head That Once Was Crowned with Thorns” (Thomas Kelly, 1820).

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“A Case for the Longer Reading at Ephesians 5.30?” Evangelical Textual Criticism (blog), October 2016 (manuscript evidence for Ephesians 5:30).

SCRIPTURE

ESV text from BibleGateway (biblegateway.com, version ESV). King James wording, where the study notes it, from BibleGateway (version KJV).

HELP

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (U.S.): call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org.

RECOMMENDED READING FROM THIS STUDY

C. H. Spurgeon, *The Saint and His Saviour* (1857)

C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography, vol. 2

C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (1875)

Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A New Biography* (1984)

Zack Eswine, *Spurgeon's Sorrows* (2014)

Ray Rhodes Jr., *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon* (2018)

Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ* (2015)

Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

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