

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF FAITH.

A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, APRIL 24TH, 1892,

DELIVERED BY

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▲ AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

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“Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”—*Matthew xv. 28.*

I HAVE frequently spoken to you concerning the faith of this Canaanitish woman, of the way in which Christ tried it, and of the manner in which, at length, he honoured it, and granted all that the suppliant sought. The story is so full of meaning, that one might turn it this way, and that way, and the other way, and always see jewels in it. But now I am going to use it with only one end and aim, namely, to encourage those who have faith enough to seek Jesus, but have not yet, to their joy and peace, been quite able to find him.

This woman had come to her last word. I do not see what more she could have said. When Christ had likened her to a dog, she had consented to it, and said, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” She had come to her last word, and now Christ gives her his best word. It is his way, sometimes, to make us wait till we are completely exhausted, and can say and do no more; then he comes in with the fulness of his divine power, and gives to us what we have importunately sought at his hands. Our extremity is his opportunity.

I. The first remark which I shall make, and enlarge upon, is that FAITH ALONE CAN KEEP A SOUL SEEKING AFTER CHRIST UNDER DISCOURAGEMENT. Other causes may send us a certain distance along the road, but only faith will bring us to the goal of assured rest.

That which made this woman seek the Saviour was, first of all, parental love. She loved her daughter. She longed to have the devil cast out of her, that her daughter might not be so grievously vexed. That started her going, and carried her some way towards the blessing; but she would have stopped short of the boon she desired if she had relied upon natural love alone.

Her earnestness also to a large extent urged her forward. When she desired healing for her daughter, she meant what she said. When

she cried, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" it was with a shrill and piteous voice. She could not bear to be refused. Nobody ever came to Christ who pleaded more from the heart than did this poor Canaanite. She was not an idle repeater of forms of prayer. Her prayer leaped, red-hot, from her soul—"Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" But her earnestness alone would not have upheld her under the ordeal through which she was called to pass. It would have given way if she had not had the believing conviction that Christ could heal her daughter, and that he would do so.

Her humility also helped her greatly. Had she been a proud woman, she would have stood upon her dignity when she was called a dog; but humility came to her help, and she did not resent even the harsh word the Lord used, but still pleaded for her poor child. Now, parental love and earnestness and humility are good things, but they are not enough to enable a soul to cling to Christ, and never let him go. Something more is needed.

This Canaanite was a very sensible woman, wise and prudent. She knew how to turn the hard words of Christ into arguments in her own favour. She would not be put back. If he had not answered her, she would have pleaded with him again. When he did answer her, and say that it was not meet to give the children's bread to dogs, she found even in that dry bone some little marrow on which to feed her heart. But wise as she was, and prudent as she was, she would not have held out to the end, and obtained the blessing she desired for her daughter, if it had not been for her faith.

We may be quite sure that the one thing specially noteworthy in this woman's case was her faith, first, because *we have Christ's word for it*. He said unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith!" He did not say, "Great is thy love to thy child;" nor, "Great is thy earnestness;" nor, "Great is thy importunity;" but he put his finger on the power that had urged her forward, and he said, "O woman, great is thy faith!" And not in this case alone did Christ trace the blessing to faith, but in nearly every instance where a suppliant obtained favour from him, faith was the medium of securing the mercy. Faith is mightier than all other available forces.

Besides this, *we know that faith supports the other graces*. If other graces can help a soul to plead with Christ, they all owe their power to faith. If it had not been for the faith which she had to support it, parental love would not have helped this woman much. If it had not been for faith, she would not have been earnest and importunate. Faith supplies the strength of the other graces; and, whatever they do, it is faith that works through them. Faith is the master-power. Faith hangs on to Christ in the dark, it holds to a silent Christ, it holds to a refusing Christ, it holds to a rebuking Christ, and will not let him go. Faith is the great holdfast that hooks a soul on to the Saviour.

Faith is thus powerful because of its effects. *Faith enlightens, enlivens, and strengthens*. It is written of some of old that "They looked unto him, and were lightened." Faith sheds a light upon many things, and lets us see that even if Christ has a frown on his face, he has love in his heart. Faith looks right into the heart of Christ, and helps us

to perceive that he cannot mean anything but mercy to a seeking soul. Faith also enlivens, and when the heart begins to faint, faith brings its smelling bottle, and revives it. David said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed." Believing is the cure for fainting, and you must do one of two things, either believe or faint. Faith is thus a great help to one who is seeking Christ, because it both enlightens and enlivens the soul. Faith also strengthens. It makes the lame take the prey. Beloved, it is because faith thus enlightens and enlivens and strengthens, that it is the grace most useful to a soul that is seeking to lay hold upon Christ, and yet cannot get a comfortable look at his blessed face.

Moreover, *faith lays hold on Christ*. It is like the Greek Antisthenes, who went to a philosopher to learn; but he was a dull scholar, and the philosopher bade him go away. The next time the class met, Antisthenes returned, and the philosopher thereupon sent for a man with a club to drive the stupid scholar away; but he was overcome by his scholar; for Antisthenes said, "There is no club that was ever made that is heavy enough to drive me away from you. Here I mean to stay, and learn whatever you can teach me." Oh, may we have a faith like that, a faith that will say to Christ, "I will not go away from thee. There is no threatening in thy Book that can drive me from thee. I can but perish if I stay with thee, and if I go from thee, I must perish; therefore I will abide with thee evermore, and learn all that thou wilt teach me"! Faith is like the Greek in the days of Xerxes, who seized the boat with his right hand. When they chopped off the right hand, he seized it with his left hand; when they cut off the left hand also, he laid hold of the boat with his teeth, and did not let go till they had severed his head from his body. Soul, if thou canst lay hold on Christ with thy right hand, or with thy left hand, it will be well with thee. Cling to Christ, and say to him with that holy boldness that is the result of faith, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Faith, then, holds on to Christ.

Further, I would say that *faith does this best without help*. How often we try to assist faith! We want faith to have some works, some prayers, something or other of our own to help it. It is as if somebody were to try and help me to walk by giving me a big chair to carry. I should not walk so well with the burden, as without it. Have you never heard this parable concerning faith? She had to cross a stream, and the current was strong, and there came one to her who said, "O faith, I will help thee! Come with me up the river till we find a place where we can ford it." Faith said, "No; I was bidden to cross the river here." So another came, and said, "I will build a bridge for you, that you may go over the river with ease;" and he laid a few stones, but not much ever came of it. Yet another said, "I will go and find a boat." But there were no boats about; therefore they asked faith to wait till they built a boat for her. What did she do? She took off her vestments, and plunged into the water. "Thank God," said she, "I can swim;" and so she swam across, and reached the other side without boat, without bridge, and without ford. That is what I should like to see every sinner here do—begin to swim. Do not wait for help. Cast yourself into the stream

of everlasting love. Believe in Christ Jesus, and have no more confidence in the flesh, with its bridges and its boats. Commit thyself to the stream of eternal grace, and swim across. Faith can enable you to do it. Nothing else can. Take that lesson home to yourselves, you who are seeking the Saviour at this time.

The only thing that will help you to follow after Christ till you find him, is faith. All your groaning and moaning will not help you. All your doubting and your trembling will be of no avail; your feeling that you are too vile to be saved, and that faith would be presumption in such a sinner as you are, will not aid you. But believe that Christ can save you, and trust to his power and love, and he will save you. Come to him as this woman of Canaan came, with her importunate cry, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," and he will have mercy on you even as he had upon her. Believe, believe, believe! Thou wilt never come into light by doubting and fearing. The way to liberty lies through this one door of faith. Therefore believe and live.

Thus much upon our first remark, that faith alone can keep a soul seeking after Christ under discouragement.

II. Secondly, FAITH IS EXCEEDINGLY DELIGHTFUL TO CHRIST. What he said to this woman began with an exclamation, as if he was struck with something in her that delighted him. He said, "O woman, great is thy faith!" Notice that he spoke of her faith, and of that alone. He knew about her love; he knew about her earnestness; he knew about her humility; but he said nothing at all about them: his one word of commendation was for her faith, "O woman, great is thy faith!" That is what my Lord is looking for now. He comes round and looks at you, who are sitting in these pews, to see whether you have faith in him. There are several thoughts suggested by this, that should encourage you who are seeking Christ.

He can spy out the beginnings of faith. "If thou hast faith as a grain of mustard seed," he will see it, and he will accept it. If thou hast only now begun to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and to trust him, though thy faith be feeble as a babe that cannot stand, but can only cling to its mother's breast, Jesus will see the beginnings of it. He is "the Author" as well as "the Finisher of our faith." Be thou comforted, then, concerning that tiny trust thou hast in him.

Still, he is greatly pleased when he sees great faith. When a great sinner says, "I believe that he is a Saviour great enough to save me;" it brings joy to the heart of Christ. When an old sinner says, "I believe that his precious blood can take away the sin of seventy or eighty years;" the Lord's heart is gladdened. Christ loves a great faith. He deserves great faith, and when he gets it he is highly pleased. "O woman," said he, "great is thy faith!"

He is so delighted with faith, that *he passes by other things for it.* If that woman's ears had been hung with rings, and her neck had been decked with pearls, and her hands had been covered with diamonds, he would not have cared about her ornaments and her beauty. He sees something that he prizes more than any of these things; therefore he says to her, "O woman, great is thy faith!" He is charmed with that choice decoration of her heart. By that

treasure "The king is held in his galleries." Christ may say of faith, "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thy eyes." When we can but look straight to Christ, and trust in him, he is charmed and carried away by our faith.

Why does Christ think so much of faith?

One reason is, because *faith glorifies him*. He thinks much of it, because it thinks so much of him. Faith believes him, faith trusts him, faith lives upon him. He is "the chiefest among ten thousand" and the "altogether lovely" to faith. Therefore, because faith highly esteems Christ, Christ highly esteems faith.

Next, he loves faith because it is *God's appointed way* in which we are to receive blessing. God might have appointed ordinances as the vehicle of grace; but, instead thereof, he has made faith to be the medium of salvation. If thou believest, thou shalt be saved. He that by faith lays hold on Christ, has laid hold on eternal life. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." To the awakened sinner our word is still, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Since God has put faith into so eminent a place, our Lord Jesus Christ loves to see it; he takes delight in that which pleases his Father.

Another reason why he loves it is, because *faith is the signal which permits the train of mercy to come to us*. Whenever unbelief holds up its arms, the train of almighty grace stands still. Of a certain place it is said, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Their doubt blocked the way. But when faith lowers the signal, the great Driver of heaven's express says, "That road is clear," and he delights to see it, and drives right ahead. Oh, if thou canst but let that signal go down, showing that the line is clear of all obstructions, Christ will surely come to thee! He is glad to come wherever he can bring a blessing, and he rejoices when faith reveals to him a clear road.

Besides, *faith has open arms for embracing Christ*. When he comes to our door, and finds it locked, he stands there till his bitter lament is "my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." But when he comes and the door is open, the poor sinner is so taken up with his beauty that he never thinks of shutting him out. "Oh," says the seeking soul, "if the Lord would but come in!" And as surely as Christ finds the door thus open, he comes in, and dwells there; and makes that heart and that house happy with his divine presence. Christ loves faith because faith gives him a hearty welcome; faith receives him; faith embraces him.

Oh, I would to God you would think of this and exercise faith in the Lord Jesus! May you see that nothing delights Christ like a sinner believing in him, that nothing gives him more joy than to have a saint resting completely upon him without doubt or fear!

Thus have we considered two points; first, that the only way to keep a soul seeking Christ under discouragement is by faith; and, secondly, that nothing pleases Christ like believing on his name.

III. The third point is that FAITH WILL, BEFORE LONG, GET A KIND ANSWER FROM THE LORD JESUS. This poor woman, at the first, received no reply to her petition, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou

Son of David!" Then, when Christ did speak to her, he gave her what seemed to be a rough answer. But, after a while, these notes of heavenly music sounded in her ear, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt!"

Now, someone here probably says, "I have been praying ever so long, and I have received no cheering reply." Well, if thou believest in Jesus, thou shalt have a good reply before long. If thou canst but hold on to Christ, determined to plead with him till he answers thee, he will answer thee kindly ere long. But keep on believing that he can and will give thee what thou needest, and thou shalt not be disappointed. "Oh," says one, "you do not know who I am! I am an outcast." So was this woman. She was a Canaanitish woman, yet she obtained a blessing from Christ; and thou shalt get one, too, if thou dost follow her in her faith. "Oh, but I do not think that I am fit!" Did Christ ever say to you that you were a dog? He did as good as tell this woman that; yet she held on to him by faith, and prevailed. "Oh, but I have prayed in vain for such a long time!" So did she. She prayed, and for a while she received no answer. "Oh, but I feel worse after I have prayed!" So did she; for instead of getting a comfortable answer, she heard Christ say, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." You cannot be in a worse plight than she was. "But the devil troubles me," you add. The devil also troubled her. She pleaded about her daughter, who was possessed with a devil; and she kept on pleading and believing. She meant to have Christ. I exhort you to come to the same holy determination. Oh, that Almighty grace might help you so to do; for in so doing you will surely get an answer of peace! You will get a comfortable answer before very long, probably much earlier than you have reckoned upon.

Remember that *Christ delays in order to increase your faith*. Your faith will grow by exercise: therefore he tests it that you may use it, and that thus it may become stronger.

Christ delays in order to increase the blessing itself. While we wait, the blessing becomes bigger, and our hands become stronger to hold it when it does come. You may be sure that our blessed Lord will give you a comfortable answer; for do you not know that he has been sustaining you while you have been pleading, and as yet have received no answer? Did you ever notice, when Joseph's brethren went down into Egypt, that he made himself strange to them, and spoke to them roughly, and put them in prison? But in spite of that, there was one thing he did: when they went back to Jacob, he filled their sacks for them. He would not smile upon them, but he would not starve them; and at last, it is said, "Joseph could not refrain himself," and he "made himself known unto his brethren. He was obliged to show his love at last; but even before he did that, he always filled their sacks for them. Christ will deal with you in like manner; while you are waiting, he will not let you die. Oh, in what wonderful ways did the Lord support me when, through weary years, I was seeking his face! I could not say that I had any comfort that I dared to call my own, and yet there flowed into my soul, somehow, a secret power that enabled me still to hope, and still to hold on; for that I now

desire to bless his name, and I tell it for the encouragement of any who may be in soul-trouble as I was. Keep on seeking his grace, dear friend. Believe still; for he must give you a comfortable answer one of these days.

Consider well that *it is contrary to his nature to refuse to bless*. He is brimful of love; and if he does put a sinner back for a while, it is only because it is right and kind and wise to do so. But his heart yearns over every seeking sinner. He wants you more than you want him. He longs after you. He desires to bless you. He must do so; it is his nature so to do.

He must give you a comfortable reply before long, again, for *it is contrary to his glory to refuse*. If he allowed a seeking sinner to die, where would his truth be? Has he not said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"? Our friend, Dr. Barnardo, announces that in his refuges no homeless boy will ever be rejected: that no destitute child shall ever be turned away. Suppose somebody could prove—which, of course, they cannot do—that scores of destitute children were turned away, all confidence in him would be destroyed. And if it could be proved that Christ ever cast out a single soul that came to him, it would take away his honour and his glory. We could never believe him any more. Perish the thought of such a thing!

It is contrary to his word to refuse any seeker, and Christ will keep his word. "Come unto me," saith he, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If Christ does not give you rest when you come to him, what is his promise worth? My friend, Dr. Pierson, sent me, the other day, an imitation of an American banknote, which they call a "greenback" over there, and on one side of it were these words, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." A splendid note that! It had our friend's name on the back, "Arthur T. Pierson"; and he said to me, when he sent it, "If the Lord does not pay you, I will, for I have endorsed the note." I shall never have to look my brother Pierson up, and tell him that the note he endorsed is of no value. There it stands, and stands for ever. God will keep his word. I know it; and I want you poor sinners to know it, too. He cannot run back from his own promise. His word is his bond. To every honest man it is so; but to the thrice-holy God his oath and his promise bind him eternally.

Let me add that, if Christ does not give a comfortable answer to you who believingly seek him, *it is contrary to his custom*. Here are many of us who have known our Lord now for forty years, and we can say that his custom is to hear our prayers, and according to our faith, so is it unto us. Come along, thou blackest sinner out of hell! Come, and wash in the fountain filled with blood, and thou shalt be cleansed, as surely as ever Christ died! Come along, thou lowest, meanest, most self-aborred, most self-condemned of humankind! Come thou, and look to him, and trust in him; and if thou dost not find peace at once, yet be sure that thou shalt have it before long. "The morning cometh." It is not for long that Christ's mercy can be restrained. He must break forth, like Joseph, weeping over his brethren. He must manifest himself to you in love, and tenderness, and kindness. I will be bound for him any day that it shall be so.

IV. Lastly, we come to a very glorious thought, FAITH GETTING CHRIST'S WORD HATH ALL THINGS. Listen to the text again: "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Christ's word was a *comforting word*. How the look on this woman's face must have altered when Christ talked to her so! When he answered her never a word, she doubtless had a long and sorrowful face, and probably the big tears stood in her eyes; but now that he began to talk in another strain, how happy she felt! The woman was no more sad. So it is even to-day. One word from Christ can comfort you, even if they talk about putting you into an asylum because you are so melancholy. One word from my Master shall be as the balm of Gilead to your wounds. He will bind up your broken heart. He will comfort you, and speak peace to you, as he did to her. It was a comforting word.

It was also a *commending word*, "O woman, great is thy faith!" She had never been praised like that before. I have no doubt that her husband had praised her. What good husband is there who does not praise his wife, even as it is written of the virtuous woman, "Her husband also, and he praiseth her"? but his praise had never been so sweet as this word from the Lord Jesus. I have no doubt that her daughter had called her all the sweet names she could think of; for she loved her child, and it is only natural to believe that her child loved her. But now, when Christ looks her in the face, and says, "O woman, great"—"ah!" she may have thought; "he is going to say, 'Great is thy sin,' or else, 'Great is thy noise.'" What astonishment must have been hers when he said, "Great is thy faith"! He gave her a gold medal for her faith, ay, something even better than that, she was put in the class called "Highly commended." "O woman, great is thy faith!" It was a commending word; and she needed it.

Next, it was a *commanding word*. Notice that, well. Listen to it: "Be it unto thee." He speaks like a king. And if the Lord now speaks his gracious word with power, as I pray that he may, he will say, "Minister, comfort that woman, who puts her trust in me." He will say, "Ordinances, comfort those weary ones. Bread and wine, be sweet to the taste of those poor troubled ones." He will say, "Prayer-meetings, be a joy to those poor tried ones." It is a commanding voice with which the Lord of hosts speaks, when he says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned."

In addition to being a commanding word, it was a *creating word*. Why, it was the very word that God himself used when he made the light! He said "*Be, light.*" He said to the earth, "*Be,*" and it was. He said to the heavens, "*Be,*" and they were. The word is a fiat. In the Latin it is precisely that, a *fiat*. So here, that same mighty voice says, "Be it unto thee. Be it unto thee." O God, send forth a fiat at this moment to some poor weary heart! Create light; create joy; create peace. He can create all of these in your heart now. Oh, that

he might do it by the power of his almighty grace! The faith of this poor Canaanite thus obtained for its reward a creative fiat from the lips of Christ.

Further, it was *a complying word*. You see all these adjectives begin with the same letter: it was a comforting word, a commending word, a commanding word, a creating word, and a complying word. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt—just as you please, whatever you wish for, and in the way you wish to have it." Christ capitulates to a conquering faith. Nothing ever conquered him yet but faith. His love is stronger than death. Death could not conquer Christ, nor could all the powers of hell. But here he surrenders at discretion to a soul that can vanquish him by believing. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Do you want more joy? Do you want full salvation? Do you want perfect rest? Behold, he says to each of you who can and do believe in him, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Thus, lastly, this word became *a completing word*; "her daughter was made whole from that very hour." From that very hour she was well again. Christ finished that work speedily. He was not long about it. It does not take so long to save a soul as it does for a lightning flash to be visible. You pass from death to life in an instant. When lost, ruined, condemned, the man casts himself at Christ's feet, immediately he is saved. It is not the work of hours, or weeks, or years, when you trust to the finished work of Christ. All that required time, Christ has accomplished. All that now has to be done, can be done in a moment. When a man is thirsty, it does not take him long to drink when the water is there. Remember the invitation with which the Scriptures almost conclude, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The water of life is there; take it. When a man is hungry, it does not take him long to eat when the bread is on the table. God can now give you, who came to this Tabernacle afar off from him, grace which shall enable you to be made nigh at once. He can bring you immediately out of the blackness of sin, and make you on the instant whiter than snow. Make David's prayer your own, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Believe my Lord and Master. Oh, why do you not believe him? Artful doubts and reasonings cease! I would now take the hammer and the nails, and fasten my unbelief and fear to Christ's cross. Hang there, ye thieves, and die! You destroy men's souls, ye doubts and reasonings! Come here, simple faith, thou who hast no wisdom! A mere child thou art, but; O simple faith, thou hast the key of the kingdom! Come, and welcome, into my heart. Will all of you not also believe, and trust in Christ, even now? If you do, you shall be saved. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." God bless you! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew xv. 21—39.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—560, 599, 550.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.*

MATTHEW XV. 21—39.

JESUS had been in conflict with Scribes and Pharisees. He never liked such discussions, and though he was always victorious in every controversy, it grieved his spirit.

Verse 21. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

He was glad to get away, and made a journey over the hills to get at as great a distance as possible from these cavillers.

22. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came.

A Syro-Phœnician woman, one of the old, condemned race living in Tyre and Sidon.

22. A woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David.

You remember the son of David, that is Solomon, was well known in Phœnicia; for the men of Tyre and Sidon cut down the cedars for Solomon, and Hiram helped him in the building of the temple. There had always been a remembrance of this lingering among the Sidonians; so this woman called the Saviour the Son of David.

22. Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

“Have mercy on me.” The mother identifies herself with her child. When we pray for our children, that is the right way to pray. Intercessory prayer never prevails until we bear the object of our prayer upon our heart, and ask for the blessing we desire for them as a favour to ourselves.

23. But he answered her not a word.

Answers to prayers may be delayed; but delays are not always denials. Christ’s silence must have been a great trial to the poor woman; but our Lord knew with whom he was dealing.

23. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

Ah, these disciples made a grand mistake! She did not cry after them; she cried after him; but so they understood it: therefore they said, “Get rid of her; she disturbs us; when we are in the street, we can hear her cry. Send her away; for she crieth after us.” Ah! poor disciples, she was not so foolish as to cry after you; she was crying after your Master. If any here have come only to hear the preacher, they have made a great mistake; but if you have come for a word from the Master, I pray that you may be gratified.

* The sermons available for future use are those preached on Lord’s-day and Thursday evenings. These were usually shorter than the morning discourses. The publishers will issue, with the Sermon, the Exposition that preceded it as often as they are able to do so. They believe that readers will value all of these utterances of the beloved preacher who is now with the Lord. They have heard of many sermon-readers who regularly turn to the portions of Scripture expounded by Mr. Spurgeon, and even read the hymns sung at the Tabernacle. Such friends will now have a very full report of the services held there during the late Pastor’s ministry.

24. *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

Christ did what he was sent to do ; he was the Messiah, the sent One. He would not go beyond his mission, so he says, "I am sent." He was sent as a Preacher and a Teacher, not to the Gentiles, but to Israel. He had a larger commission in reserve, and was yet to be a Saviour to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews ; but for the present he was to be a Shepherd to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25. *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me.*

A very short prayer ; but how much there was in it !

26, 27. *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*

It is the faculty of faith to see in the dark. This woman spied out light in what seemed to be a very dark saying. Did Christ call her a dog ? Well, dogs have their privileges when they lie under the table. Even if their master does not throw them a crumb, yet they may take that which falls from his hand. If Jesus would but allow any mercy to drop, as it were, accidentally, this woman would be content.

28, 29. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. And Jesus departed from thence.*

When he had done his business, he was off. Our Lord was a great itinerant ; he was always on the move. He had come all the way to the parts of Tyre and Sidon to help one woman ; and when that one woman had been attended to, he goes back again immediately to his old post by the sea of Galilee.

29, 30. *And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee ; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet ; and he healed them.*

In the prayer-meeting, held by the deacons and elders this morning, before I came in here, one of our friends observed in prayer that there might be many lame, blind, and maimed in the congregation, and he prayed that they might be brought to Jesus. Let us, by faith, bring them to him, and lay them at his feet. Oh, that this word, "He healed them," might be true again to-day !

31. *Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see : and they glorified the God of Israel.*

Oh, for glory to God ! There is no glory to God which equals that which comes from blind eyes which have been made to see ; and from dumb lips which have been made to speak. The glories of nature and providence are eclipsed by the glories of grace. May we see such things to-day !

32. *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat : and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

Ah, dear friends, they were willing to put up with inconvenience to hear the gospel in those days! Three days of sermon-hearing! People want sermons wonderfully short now, and the sermons must be marvellously interesting, too, or else the people grow dreadfully tired. If dinner-time came round, the dinner-bell, at any time, in these days, would drown all the attraction of the pulpit. But here were people that attended Christ's ministry for three days, and they had nothing to eat. He had compassion upon them, and said to his disciples, "I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."

33, 34. *And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye?*

That is the point. It is idle to enquire about how much you want. "How many loaves have ye?"

34, 35. *And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.*

It was a token of Christ's presence and power that they were willing to sit down on the ground. Think of thousands of people taking their places in an orderly way to feed upon seven cakes and a few little fishes! Without any demur, the crowd arranged itself into banquet order at the command of Jesus.

36, 37. *And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.*

They were large baskets, too; not like the small food-baskets mentioned when the five thousand were fed. The word used here is the same that is employed to describe the basket in which Saul was let down by the wall of Damascus.

38. *And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.*

Now, if the women and children bore the same proportion to the men as they generally do in our congregations, there must have been a very large crowd indeed. Why is the number of the women and children not mentioned? Was it because they were so many? or was it because their appetites being smaller than the appetites of men, the men are put down as the great eaters, and the women and children, as it were, thrown into the count? What a mercy it is that the Lord adds to the church daily a vast number of men, women, and children! The Lord send us many more, until we cannot count them!

39. *And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.*

He had taught the people, and fed them; so now he goes elsewhere to carry similar blessings to others also.