

# It is God who justifies the ungodly....

excerpted from "All of Grace" by C.H. Spurgeon

No, this book does not come to make a demand on you, but to bring you something. We are not going to talk about law and duty and punishment, but about love and goodness and forgiveness and mercy and eternal life.

I come in God's name to bring you a free gift that will be your present and eternal joy to receive.

Do not refuse the Lord Jesus who knocks at your door, for He knocks with a hand that was nailed to the tree for such as you are. Since His only and sole objective is your good, incline your ear and come to Him.

I have heard that men who hate the doctrines of the Cross bring the charge against God that He saves wicked men and receives to Himself the vilest of the vile. *"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"*. (Romans 4:5) See how this Scripture accepts the charge and plainly states it!

He makes those just who are unjust. He forgives those who deserve no favor.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus did not come into the world expecting to find goodness and righteousness, but to bestow them upon those who do not have them.

This is a miracle reserved for the Lord alone. God, the infinitely just Sovereign, knows that there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. Therefore, in the infinite sovereignty of His divine nature and in the splendor of His ineffable love, He undertakes the task not so much of justifying the just as of justifying the ungodly.

He has set up a system by which, with perfect justice, He can treat the guilty as if he had been free from offense.

Though altogether undeserving, I am treated as if I had been deserving. I am loved with as much love as if I had always been godly, whereas before I was ungodly.

You have lived on this fair earth, full of the blessings of God's presence, and all the while you have shut your eyes to the clear evidences of His power and Godhead. You have lived as if there were no God. Though meeting with the people of God, you have never met with God yourself.

You have lived without any love for God in your heart or regard for His commands in your life. Well, you are just the kind of person to whom this Gospel is sent, this Gospel that says that God justifies the ungodly.

The salvation of God is for those who do not deserve it and have no preparation for it.

If any of you are perfectly righteous, you desire no justifying. You feel that you are doing your duty well and almost putting heaven under an obligation to you. What do you want with a Savior or with mercy? What do you want with justification?

In any case, I have no Gospel to preach to the self-righteous, no, not a word. Jesus Christ Himself did "not come to call the righteous" and I am not going to do what He did not do. If I called you, you would not come.

Rather, I ask you to look at that righteousness of yours until you see what a delusion it is.

Believe that the only people who need justification are those who are not just in themselves. They need something to be done for them to make them just before the judgment seat of God.

However, to make him just who is unjust, that is work for infinite love and mercy. To justify the ungodly is a miracle worthy of God, and it is.

Suppose a man of generous spirit were to resolve to forgive all those who were indebted to him. It is clear that this could only apply to those really in his debt.

However, the most generous person cannot forgive the debts of those who do not owe him anything.

Pardon, therefore cannot be for you who have no sin. Pardon must be for the guilty. Forgiveness must be for the sinful. It would be absurd to talk of forgiving those who do not need forgiveness or pardoning those who have never offended.

Do you think that you must be lost because you are a sinner? This is the reason you can be saved. Because you realize that you are a sinner.

The law is for the self-righteous, to humble their pride. The Gospel is for the lost, to remove their despair.

It is a wonderful thing to be justified, or made just. If we had never broken the laws of God, we would not have needed justification, for we would have been just in ourselves. He who has always done the things that he should have done, and has never done anything that he should not have done, is justified by the law. However, I am quite sure that you are not one of that sort. You are too honest to pretend to be without sin, and therefore you need to be justified.

If we have sinned against God, it is God's power to forgive, for the sin is against Himself. That is why David said in Psalm 51:4 "*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight*", "for then God, against whom the offense was committed, could put the offense away.

What we owe to God, our great Creator can remit if it so pleases Him. And, if He remits it, it is remitted. No one but the great God against whom we have committed the sin can blot out that sin. Therefore, let us see that we go to Him and seek mercy at His hands.

With no other reason for it but His own infinite goodness, He has prepared a glorious way by which He can make scarlet sins "*as white as snow*". He can remove our transgressions for us "*as far as the east is from the west*". He says, "*Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*".

Believe it, for it is certainly true that the great God is able to treat the guilty with abundant mercy. Yes, He is able to treat the ungodly as if they had always been godly.

It is said that we hold some kind of theory by which we imagine that sin can be removed from men. We hold no theory; we publish a fact. The grandest fact under heaven is this: Christ, by His precious blood, does actually put away sin.

And God, Christ's sake dealing with men on terms of divine mercy, forgives the guilty and justifies them—not according to anything that He sees in them or foresees will be in them, but according to the riches of His mercy, which lie in His own heart.

It is because the Son of God, supremely glorious in His matchless person, undertook the vindication of the law by bearing the sentence due to me that God is therefore able to pass by my sin.

The Innocent punished! The Holy One condemned! The ever blessed One made a curse! The infinitely glorious One put to a shameful death!

Why did He suffer if not to take the penalty away from us?

If God Himself bows before His own law, what more can be done?

God will spare the sinner because He did not spare His Son.

What is it to believe in Him? It is not merely to say, "He is God and the Savior," but to trust Him wholly and entirely and take Him for all your salvation from this time forth and forever as your Lord, your Master, your all.

*"Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died...Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth"*

My sole hope for heaven lies in the full atonement made on Calvary's cross for the ungodly. I firmly rely on that. I do not have a shadow of hope anywhere else.

We can never be happy, restful, or spiritually healthy until we become holy.

Justification without sanctification would not be salvation at all. It would call the leper clean and leave him to die of his disease. It would forgive the rebellion and allow the rebel to remain an enemy to his king. It would remove the consequences but overlook the cause, and this would leave an endless and hopeless task before us.

Remember that the Lord Jesus came to take away sin in three ways. He came to remove the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and last, the presence of sin.

The Lord knows very well that you cannot change your own heart and cannot cleanse your own nature.

Hear this and be astonished: He can create you a second time; He can cause you to be born again.

All things are possible with God. He can reverse the direction of your desires and the current of your life. Instead of going downward from God, He can make your whole being trend upward toward God.

So it is with an ungodly man; you cannot force him to do what a renewed man does willingly. You may teach him and set him a good example, but he cannot learn the art of holiness because he does not want to. His nature leads him another way. When the Lord makes a new man of him, then all things bear a different mark.

God is gracious; therefore, sinful men are forgiven, converted, purified, and saved. It is not because of anything in them or that can ever be in them that they are saved. It is because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy, and grace of God.

It is because His "*mercy endureth for ever*" that men are not destroyed; because His "*compassions fail not*" , sinners are brought to Him and forgiven.

"*No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit*". "*No man can come to me,*" said Jesus, "*except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*"

Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation. Faith, essential as it is, is only an important part of the machinery that grace employs. We are saved "*through faith,*" but salvation is "*by grace.*"

Our life is found in "*looking unto Jesus*", not looking to our own faith.

Yet the power is not in the faith but in the God in whom faith relies.

The peace within the soul is not derived from contemplation of our own faith. It comes to us from Him who is our peace.

The power lies in the grace of God and not in our faith.

Faith is made up of three things: knowledge, belief and trust. Knowledge comes first.

I need to be informed of a fact before I can possibly believe it. "*Faith cometh by hearing*". We must first hear so that we may know what is to be believed.

A measure of knowledge is essential to faith; hence the importance of acquiring knowledge. "*Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.*"

Search the Scriptures and learn what the Holy Spirit teaches concerning Christ and His salvation. Seek to know God, "*for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*"

Drink deep the doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ, for therein lies the sweetest possible comfort to the guilty sons of men, since the Lord *“made Him to be sin for us...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* Faith begins with knowledge.

Commit yourself to the merciful God; rest your hope on the gracious Gospel. Trust your soul to the dying and living Savior; wash away your sins in the atoning blood; accept His perfect righteousness, and all will be well.

Faith is not a blind thing, for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing, for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an impractical, dreamy thing, for faith trusts and stakes its destiny on the truth of revelation.

Faith is believing that Christ is what He is said to be and that He will do what He has promised to do.

Thousands of God’s people have no more faith than this. They know enough to cling to Jesus with all their heart and soul, and this suffices for present peace and eternal safety. Jesus Christ is to them a strong and mighty Savior, a Rock immovable and immutable. They cling to Him for dear life, and this clinging saves them.

“Oh,” said the devil to Martin Luther, “you are a sinner.” “Yes,” said Luther, “Christ died to save sinners.”

Now when God declares that there is salvation in Christ Jesus, I must either believe Him at once or call Him a liar.

He died for men, not as believers, but as sinners.

If you believe that Christ died for the ungodly, your faith will save you, and you may go in peace. If you will trust your soul to Jesus, who died for the ungodly, even though you cannot believe all things or move mountains or do any other wonderful works, yet you will be saved. It is not great faith but true faith that saves. Salvation lies not in the faith but in the Christ in whom faith trusts.

Surely a man can believe what he knows to be true; and as you know Jesus to be true, you can believe in Him.

“Alas!” cries another, “my trouble is that I cannot quit my sinning. I know that I cannot go to heaven and carry my sin with me.” I am glad that you know that, for it is quite true. You must be divorced from your sin, or you cannot be married to Christ.

“Wilt thou have thy sins and go to hell, or wilt thou quit thy sins and go to heaven?”

How can I live in sin when He as died to save me from it?

Get this thought, “Christ died for me,” worked into your soul, and you will soon be ready to die for Him. Believe that He suffered in your stead and offered for you a full, true, and satisfactory atonement.

You have either to believe in Jesus or die. There is no hope for you but in Him.

However, you are commanded to believe upon the authority of God Himself. He bids you to believe in Jesus Christ, and you must not refuse to obey your Maker.

Why crucify Him again by unbelief? Is this not crowning Him with thorns again and spitting on Him again? What! Is He not to be trusted? What worse insult did the soldiers pour on Him than this? They made Him a martyr, but you make Him a liar, which is far worse. Do not ask, “How can I believe?” Rather, answer another question: “How can I disbelieve?”

It is because you still quarrel with God and resolve to have your own will and your own way that you cannot believe.

Proud self creates unbelief. Submit. Yield to your God, and then you will sweetly believe in your Savior.

So it is in grace. We repent and believe, though we could do neither if the Lord did not enable us.

No man would refuse to enter a life boat because he did not know the specific gravity of bodies. Neither would a starving man decline to eat until he understood the whole process of nutrition. If you will not believe until you can understand all mysteries, you will never be saved at all. If you allow self-invented difficulties to keep you from accepting pardon through your Lord and Savior, you will perish in a condemnation that will be richly deserved.

You are not asked to trust in a dead Jesus but in One who, though He died for our sins, has risen again "*for our justification*".

He is not a mere memory but a continually existent Person who will hear your prayers and answer them.

It is clear from the text that repentance is linked with the forgiveness of sins.

Repentance and forgiveness are riveted together by the eternal purpose of God.

Repentance must go with the remission of sins.

Repentance is the inseparable companion of faith.

Do not expect to be able to repent until you are able to see the grace of our Lord Jesus and His readiness to blot out your sin.

The Spirit of God enlightens us to see what sin is and thus makes it loathsome in our eyes.

The Spirit of God works in us to will and to do according to God's good pleasure.

The Holy Spirit creates repentance in us by supernaturally renewing our nature and taking the heart of stone out of our flesh.

Repentance does not come from an unwilling nature but from free and sovereign grace.

Jesus uses the whole range of our experience to wean us from earth and woo us to heaven.

He who is gone into His glory, raised into all the splendor and majesty of God, has abundant ways of working repentance in those to whom He grants forgiveness. Even now, He is waiting to give repentance to you. Ask Him for it at once.

If you have been brought up in the brightest of Christian light and yet have rejected it, there is still hope. If you have sinned against conscience and against the Holy Spirit and against the love of Jesus, there is still room for repentance. Though you may be as hard as unbelieving Israel of old, softening may yet come to you, since Jesus is exalted and clothed with boundless power.

You are probably a Gentile, but yet you may have a very stubborn heart that has stood against the Lord Jesus for many years. Even so, our Lord can work repentance in you.

Assuredly, the contemplation of the death of Christ is one of the surest and speediest methods of gaining repentance.

Take your heart in prayer to Him who understands it and say, "Lord, cleanse it. Lord, renew it. Lord, work repentance in it."

However, if you believingly think of Jesus dying for you, repentance will burst forth.

Meditate on the Lord's shedding His heart's blood out of love for you.

He who died for you can, by His gracious Spirit, make you die to sin. He who has gone into glory on your behalf can draw your soul after Him, away from evil and toward holiness.

Look to the Living One for life. Look to Jesus for all you need between the gate of hell and the gate of heaven. Never seek elsewhere for any part of what Jesus loves to bestow, but remember that Christ is all.

A dark fear haunts the minds of many who are coming to Christ. They are afraid that they will not persevere to the end.

I believe that this fear is often the father of the fact, and that some who have been afraid to trust Christ for all time and eternity have failed because they had a temporary faith that never went far enough to save them. They set out trusting Jesus in a measure, yet looking to themselves for continuance and perseverance in the heavenward way.

If we trust in ourselves for our holding on, we will not hold on.

If you look to Christ for your beginning, beware of looking to yourself for your ending.

If you begin in the Spirit, you must not hope to be made perfect by the flesh. Begin as you intend to go on, and go on as you began. Let the Lord be all in all to you.

Wherever the Lord makes a provision, we are quite sure that there is a need for it.

What God has provided, we will surely need.

The salvation that is received by faith is not a thing of months and years, for our Lord Jesus has "*obtained eternal redemption for us*". What is eternal cannot come to an end.

The Lord is able to not only save us from hell, but also to keep us from falling.

If you are just beginning in the divine life, the Lord can give you an irreproachable character. Even though, in your past life, you may have gone far into sin, the Lord can altogether deliver you from the power of former habits and make you an example of virtue. Not only can He make you moral, but He can also make you abhor every false way and follow after all that is saintly. Do not doubt it. The chief of sinners need not be a step behind the purest of the saints. Believe this, and according to your faith it will be unto you.

If we are found faithful, it will be because God is faithful. The whole burden of our salvation must rest on the faithfulness of our covenant God.

He is faithful in His love. He is faithful to His purpose; He does not begin a work and then leave it undone. He is faithful to His relationships. As a Father He will not renounce His children; as a Friend He will not deny His people; as a Creator He will not forsake the work of His own hands. He is faithful to His promises and will never allow one of them to fail for a single believer. He is faithful to His covenant, which He has made with us in Christ Jesus and ratified with the blood of His sacrifice. He is faithful to His Son and will not allow His precious blood to be spilled in vain. He is faithful to His people, to whom He has promised eternal life and from whom He will not turn away.

This faithfulness of God is the foundation and cornerstone of our hope of final perseverance. The saints will persevere in holiness because God perseveres in grace. He perseveres to bless, and therefore believers persevere in being blessed. He continues to keep His people, and therefore they continue to keep His commandments.

Believers are members of the body of Christ, and so they are one with Him by a loving, living, lasting union.

Because we are one with Jesus, we are made partakers of His nature and are endowed with His immortal life. Our destiny is linked with that of our Lord, and until He can be destroyed, it is not possible that we would perish.

Deeply contemplate this partnership with the Son of God unto which you have been called, for all your hope lies there.