

Surrendering *to Christ*

Gospel news for eternal salvation

Surrendering to Christ

Record of preaching in gospel hall

Acts 22: 6–9; Revelation 3: 19, 20

I thought of this occasion of Saul of Tarsus' conversion, thinking of what we read earlier as to the Lord falling on the earth in Gethsemane in Mark. Matthew, I think, says that He fell on His face. We thought of the pressure on Christ, the pressure that came on Jesus, we couldn't measure it. The distance that had come in through sin, distance that had come in through the fall, would be indicated, I think, as Christ fell, fell on the earth. Nothing in Jesus, nothing in Jesus, I mean, in any way in connection with the fall of man, except that He came in to the place of man. Think of God looking on to Jesus as Man, manhood in Christ, always ever, it's been said, in the mind of God. Very wonderful matter, beloved, that God should look ahead to provide for us.

But what Christ did was take on everything that had come in in the fall. Referred to, I think, in the reading as to the curse, how He bore it, the magnitude of it, the immensity of

it. The cries on the cross we touched on. The appeal to every one of our hearts would be to answer to them. That's the appeal in the glad tidings, is to answer, answer to the cries on the cross. Why, why stay away? Why stay aloof? Why stay at a distance? The Lord has gone through the distance, He has measured it, He has traversed it, He has removed it for ever before the eye of God. So there's a way in, a way in through mercy's door, the door of mercy is wide open. That's a wonderful matter, beloved. It's not shut, it's not shut for you, it's not shut tonight. The glad tidings is that the door is open. The appeal is to come, come through that door, find your way to that door.

I thought of Saul here, Paul, that he says, I fell to the ground. There's two things here, really three things, but there were two main matters here. There was the light, a light out of heaven. It says, suddenly shone out of heaven a great light round about me. Later on he says it's a light above the brightness of the sun, in his third account of his conversion. See, is it, is it deepening with you, beloved? It's a wonderful thing to look back, and to know when the light of Jesus shone into your

heart. In some sense it's a gradual matter, in some sense; in some sense it's a matter that commences and builds up and develops, and then finally there's total surrender. See, some of us would, no doubt, be able to speak of experiences like that, experiences starting early in our lives, and accumulating, finally it's a complete surrender, there's a complete surrender. The question in the glad tidings is how, how quickly can that come? How quickly can I arrive at a total surrender and never go back on it?

See, how quick it was with Paul. It was overdue, it was overdue for Saul of Tarsus. He had been kicking against the goads, he had been resisting what had been coming into his pathway to arrest him. And yet he had found it hard, he hadn't found it easy. It says, the way of a transgressor is hard. Saul of Tarsus' way would not have been easy, it would have been hard. God was making it hard.

We knew what that was too when we were—see, we knew what that was when we were young, when we were in our teen-ages. Thank God that He made it hard. It's the love of Christ, you know, that makes it hard, it's the personal love of Jesus that makes it hard,

makes it difficult for you not to give in. It's a wonderful matter, you know. Why, why keep sinning against love? Someone reminded me that if you go on sinning against the love of Jesus it's like betraying Him. It's what the Lord encountered, is the rejection of His love when He was here. That's what He proved, was the rejection; the rejection of His Person, rejection of His love, rejection of His word, rejection of His glory.

And Saul of Tarsus was on the wrong road. How many of us have been on the wrong road? Will you ever go back? Challenge yourself tonight, challenge yourself tonight here. You're in the place of favour. Are you going to ever go back again? Are you going to go back to your sins? Have you ever been set free, entirely free, completely free? That's complete surrender. That's what the Lord is interested in. See, have we, have we measured up to it? Have we understood?

We come to these meetings, and we think it's easy. You think it's easy? It's not easy, it's not easy. The Lord is knocking, standing at these times, and He has been knocking. How many times He has been knocking on the door of our hearts, and we've kept it shut,

kept it shut. Beautiful occasion of Saul's conversion was that he let it open, he opened it. And this light came in, wonderful light from heaven. He met a lover, he met a lover personally, Jesus came down. Couldn't have accomplished, been accomplished any other way, couldn't have been accomplished any other way except that Christ came personally down. He was such a difficult case, Saul of Tarsus. Really it's what's been said, he is the most lawless man, greatest hater of Christ, but he's turned around by the love of Jesus, by His grace that broke his will, smashed his will to pieces. What a victory in his case. Why not prove it in your own case? Why not prove it in your own case? Bring it down to your own history, why don't you analyse your own history up to this point? Why don't you analyse it, go over it carefully in the presence of the Lord, and find the grace that's come in to break your will, break it down, so that it can never be put back together again?

So that he fell to the ground, and he heard the voice. So there was the light, and then there was the voice; that's a very wonderful matter, that means his heart was open. He didn't just hear the sounds. The others knew

that the light—these others that were with him, they beheld the light, and they heard the voice, but they couldn't distinguish the words. Paul distinguished the words of Jesus. Jesus was speaking to him. In his last account he says He spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue. You wonder why he reserves that to the last account, the Lord taking up, it's been said, the language of love. And he heard the actual words that Christ was speaking to him. And they were compressed, they were few. He says, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And then he says, Who art Thou, Lord? And He says, *I am Jesus the Nazaræan, whom thou persecutest; very wonderful.*

It could be the position for us tonight, you know, just to isolate ourselves in that sense, just to withdraw ourselves, you might say, take ourselves into the presence of God, get into the presence of Jesus, find His interest in us, find that His love is towards us, His grace is towards us, and that it's a difficult, we've been, it's been a difficult matter to break us down, it's been a difficult matter for the Lord to accomplish His ends with us. How He loves us. How much He has to do in us, but how much He would do through

us, how He could use us. Greatest vessel that was ever secured here, human vessel ever secured, was Saul of Tarsus. And he's brought down, he falls to the ground; think of it, very wonderful. And then he rose up, led by the hand, he couldn't see.

Just to get some appeal, appeal in Laodicea. What's been said is the same light was there as Philadelphia, they had the same light, but they weren't answering to it, there was indifference. See, that's what will keep the word out. What we ought to do is examine our own hearts, you know, are we indifferent? Have we been indifferent? I go back, some of us, you know, years, how far can we go back? Fifty years, forty-five years, others can go back much longer. Have we been indifferent to the appeal? Have we been indifferent to the counsel? Had that word about counsel, counsel in Psalm 32, I will counsel thee with Mine eye upon thee. Think of the favour of it, getting counsel from Jesus. Think of the Lord's grace and love, that He would counsel even indifferent persons, persons who were indifferent to His love. And He says, I am standing at the door and knocking. It's the position He has taken

up tonight in the glad tidings. May we, may we answer to it, may we find that we get to a complete surrender.

Love to appeal to younger persons, you know, you don't have to wait as long as some of us waited, you don't have to wait that long. See, some of you young fellows that are past twenty, it's long, it's getting late in the day. You say, I'm only young. Yes, but you haven't got much time on your side left. You say, I've got plenty of time. No, you haven't, no, you haven't. We referred to that accident in South Australia the other day, this morning, and, see, that comes, can come across persons very, very quickly. You don't know, you don't know what time you've got. My appeal to you, my advice, my counsel, is to submit to Christ tonight. Don't, don't take a chance, don't chance it. Take it, take the gospel as serious, treat it as of the absolute greatest importance that you let Christ into your life. Look to Him for direction, look to Him for everything.

He says, I will come in. I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear My voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with Me. Think of

the Lord saying, be zealous therefore and repent. It's a gift of God, repentance is a gift of God; that means it's sovereign, repentance is sovereign. Very critical matter to understand that. It's offered, it's commanded in the glad tidings, but it's a gift of God. You've got to come to Christ to get it, you've got to come and get it. You won't just get it automatically, you won't get repentance automatically, repentance is a very deep matter.

It says, be zealous, be zealous therefore and repent. It means you've got to follow after it, you've got to be urgent to get it. And then what will happen then is that there'll be a whole change of outlook in your life, whole change of direction, you'll be thinking of Christ every day, you'll be thinking of Him every moment, you won't be wanting to shut Him out of your life for an instant. May we, may we get a touch tonight, may the Lord in His grace lift us up and show us the depths of what's needed for us to make a complete break, a complete total surrender. For His name's sake.

B.D. Hales

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