

Foreword to Spurgeon's 'Christ's Glorious Achievements'

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, a cataract bursting upon the world. As a man, he fizzed with life and good cheer; as a pastor, he was so fruitful he seems fictitious. Streams of living water flowed from within him. So what was the reservoir that fed him? Whence such verve and bounty?

The answer, without a doubt, is Jesus Christ. Christ was his treasure, his life, the organising centre of his thought and ministry. He had the highest view of Scripture, but he was not first and foremost a man of the Bible: his view of it and his use of it were steered by the fact that it is the word of *Christ*. He loved the Puritans, but he was not primarily a Puritan out of time: he went to them as heralds of *Christ*. He was an avowed Calvinist, but not for the sake of a system in itself: he embraced what theology he saw most glorifying *Christ*. In his first sermon in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, on March 25, 1861, he said:

I would propose that the subject of the ministry of this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshippers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ. (Sermons, 7.169)

And he did not stray from that in the thirty years he pastored there. These are his last ever words from the pulpit, dated June 7, 1891:

It is heaven to serve Jesus. I am a recruiting sergeant, and I would fain find a few recruits at this moment. Every man must serve somebody: we have no choice as to that fact. Those who have no master are slaves to themselves. Depend upon it, you will either serve Satan or Christ, either self or the Saviour. You will find sin, self, Satan, and the world to be hard masters; but if you wear the livery of Christ, you will find him so meek and lowly of heart that you will find rest unto your souls. He is the most magnanimous of captains. There never was his like among the choicest of princes. He is always to be found in the thickest part of the battle. When the wind blows cold he always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies ever on his shoulders. If he bids us carry a burden, he carries it also. If there is anything that is gracious, generous, kind, and tender, yea lavish and superabundant in love, you always find it in him. These forty years and more have I served him, blessed be his name! and I have had nothing but love from him. I would be glad to continue yet another forty years in the same dear service here below if so it pleased him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter on it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day! Amen. (Sermons, 37.323-24)

In those words you see it: he preached *Christ*. Not some abstract gospel with an abstract reward of 'grace' or 'heaven'. He preached *Christ*. And, you can see, he *preached* Christ. Those are not

the words of a lecturer, merely filling minds with information; those are the words of a herald issuing a summons.

This little collection of sermons is a lovely slice of Spurgeon, with all those layers. First, he brings you to marvel at Christ. This is precisely what will bring about the deepest change in a human heart, Spurgeon knew, for it is when I want Christ that I want his character and his ways, and when I want to walk away from sin. Second, he shows you the need to proclaim Jesus, and the power of the message of Christ. Looking at how Jesus brought no news other than himself, he notes:

If even such a divine Barnabas, such a first-born Son of consolation as the Lord Himself must point to what He Himself has done, for only so can He make His followers to be of good cheer, then how wise it must be in ministers to preach much of Jesus'. (*This is from the first paragraph of 'Christ, The Overcomer of the World'*)

May this book bring you to see more in Christ, and to greater joy in him. And may it instill something of that Christ-centred spirit of Spurgeon into you, that we might see such cataracts again in our day.

This is the foreword to the Banner of Truth title, *Christ's Glorious Achievements*.



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C. H. Spurgeon, *Preaching*