

The Gospel for Today

New Evangelistic Sermons for a New Day

By

R. A. TORREY, D.D.

*Author of "How to Bring Men to Christ"
"Anecdotes and Illustrations" etc.*

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON

AND

EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1922, by FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue

Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.

London: 21 Paternoster Square

Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

GREAT THINGS AND HOW ANY ONE CAN GET THEM

“All things are yours.”—1 CORINTHIANS 3:21.

YOU will find my text in 1 Corinthians 3:21, “All things are yours.” That is a text that stirs the blood. I pity any man who is not stirred to the very depths of his being by an utterance of God like that, “ALL THINGS ARE YOURS.” There are many who think that only a few men can ever attain unto great things, that the great mass of men must rest content with small things, with things of little account. That is not so. The very greatest things, indeed everything that is of infinite and eternal value is open to all men. There is not a man or woman here tonight who cannot have great things, the very greatest things, those things which are of most priceless worth. Certainly, if any one will become a member of that class of people to whom God, in our text, makes the marvelous promise, “All things are yours,” he can have the very greatest things, those things which are of most priceless value.

I. GREAT JOY.

First of all, *Any one here can have GREAT JOY.*

When Christ was born at Bethlehem an angel came down from heaven and proclaimed, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10, 11). The birth of Jesus, the Christ of God, into this world brought great joy into the world: the reception of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord by the individual man or woman brings great joy into the heart of that man or woman. No matter who the man or woman may be who receives Jesus Christ, he will find joy, great joy “in Him.” The highest form of joy known to man is joy in the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus fills every heart into which He is admitted with boundless joy. One may be very gloomy and despondent by nature but if he really receives Jesus Christ he will find great joy.

I recall a man who I think was one of the gloomiest men I ever met. He had one of those despondent, despairing faces that make you shudder. I dreaded to have him approach me. The man had at one time been the inmate of an insane asylum where he was sent for melancholia, and he looked and acted as if he ought to be there still. It was my privilege to point that man to Jesus Christ. He did not accept Jesus Christ in a day. I dealt with him day after day for quite a while, and he seemed so deeply immersed in his gloom that the light could not penetrate his darkened heart. It seemed as if he never

would see the truth and accept the Lord Jesus. He was one of the most discouraging men with whom I have ever dealt. But he kept coming back to me, and at last, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the light broke in upon his darkened heart and he received Jesus Christ, and became at once one of the brightest, happiest men I ever knew, as well as one of the most faithful and effective Christian workers.

I met another man who had made a shipwreck of life. He belonged to a good family, he was a man of unusual ability and well educated; but he had gone wrong and had thrown away his life in sin. The night I first met him he was a wanderer on the face of the earth, hundreds of miles from home, money gone, friends gone, manhood gone, and seemingly everything worth while gone. He came to me at the close of a service I was conducting and asked me if I thought there was any hope for a man like him? I told him, "Yes," that I knew that there was, and pointed him to the Lord Jesus and he took Him that night and became a very happy man. That was years ago, but for many years, every now and then, I got a letter from him telling me of his great joy. He is happy indeed, today; for he is with Christ in the glory.

No one ever really took Jesus Christ, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, moral or vicious, honest or criminal, of any nation or character, who did not find great joy. God has provided great joy for every one in Jesus Christ. I know a man at the present time in San Quentin for murder, but in San Quentin where he has already been some years he was led to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. His letters, some of which his father lets me see, are among the most joyous letters, and the most full of Jesus Christ, of any letters I have even seen.

If any one has not great joy, it is wholly his own fault. No one can rob another of his joy if his joy is really in Jesus Christ. Men may rob you of your money, they may rob you of your good name, they may rob you of your friends, but they cannot rob you of your joy, if it really is in the Lord Jesus.

I met a woman in Chicago many years ago. She was most wretched. She had had great misfortunes come into her life. She had been defrauded of her money. She had been robbed of her husband and his love. Her soul was bitter. She had a hard, sour face,—one of the hardest faces I ever saw. I spoke to her of Jesus Christ. She would not listen. She hated the one who had wronged her and longed to get even, and would not listen to the story of the love of God. She said God did not love her or He would never have permitted her to suffer what she had suffered. I met the same woman again in the Moody Church some years later. Again, I spoke to her of Jesus Christ and of God's love. This time she professed to be an infidel. I knew she was lying to me and told her so, and recalled her story as she had told it to me several years before. She supposed that I had forgotten her and so had ventured on this new story that she was an infidel. But she was still hard and bitter. A year or

two later I met her again. Again I spoke to her of Jesus Christ, and this time she broke down and accepted Him. Immediately her life was changed. Instead of bitterness, she found great joy at once. I met her again some time later. She had been very sick but was still rejoicing in Jesus Christ and longing to tell others of this wonderful Saviour and the joy He brings into the heart of those who accept Him.

I was once sitting in my office in Minneapolis and a woman with a very hard face came in. She approached my desk and said, "Do you send missionaries to talk with people who are dying?" "Yes," I replied. "Well, there is a woman dying at my house" (and she gave me the street and number). "I wish you would send a missionary around to talk to her." I judged from the woman's appearance the kind of place it must be and the kind of woman it must be who was dying. In a little while two women missionaries came in. I said to them, "There is a woman dying around at such and such a street and number. Will you go around and talk with her? I think it is a wicked place and that the woman has lived a life of sin."

The two missionaries went aside and prayed and then went around to this house. It was as I had suspected,—a den of infamy, and the dying woman was a woman who had made the worst shipwreck of life that a woman can make. They told the dying woman of Jesus Christ and His death for her upon the Cross of Calvary, and how He had made full atonement for all her sins. And then she received Jesus Christ and great joy at once came into the heart which sin had so darkened. When the missionaries came back I asked them, "Did she accept Jesus Christ?" "Yes," they said, "but that is not all, Mr. Torrey, though she was dying of an incurable disease that no physician could heal, we were led to kneel down and pray that God would not only save her soul but would also heal her body. God heard our prayer and she is healed." The woman was beyond any human physician's skill, but these missionaries had been given faith to pray for her recovery from an incurable and loathsome disease. God had heard their prayer. She got up from that bed, a saved, happy, and well woman. Years afterward, when I had moved to Chicago, one of these two missionaries came to Chicago to study at the Moody Institute, and this woman heard that she was coming and came to her and told her to bring me a message of her joy in the Lord.

Oh, there is great joy for everybody, if they will only seek it in God's way. Any one can have it. If you wish it, come to me at the close of this service and I will tell you just what to do to get it.

We are told in Acts 8:8, that when Samaria received the truth regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, "there was great joy in that city." If any one will receive the truth regarding Jesus Christ and receive Jesus Christ Himself into his heart, there will be "great joy in "that heart.

II. GREAT PEACE.

But there is another great thing any one here can have. *You can have GREAT PEACE.* Peace and joy are closely related but they are not the same thing by any means. But they are to be obtained in much the same way. If we accept Jesus Christ, and trust in Him, and obey His Word, we shall have great peace as well as great joy. Paul says in Philippians 4:6, 7, “In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*” And the experience of thousands and tens of thousands of people proves this promise that God made through Paul, to be absolutely true.

Think of that! “THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.” Is not that a “great peace”? It is infinite peace, “the peace of God” i.e., not only the peace which God gives, but the deep, infinite peace that there is in the heart of God Himself. And it is for any one of you here who wishes it. Your heart may be tempest tossed tonight. Your heart may be a raging sea of doubts, and fears, and anxieties, and unsatisfied desires and passions. But there is peace for you, “great peace,” “perfect peace,” “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

I wonder if there was ever a more tempestuous soul than that of Saul of Tarsus? He breathed an atmosphere of storm, and passion, and hatred. He “breathed out (or, to translate more exactly, “breathed in”) threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). But that stormy soul found such peace in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus Christ bestows upon all those who receive Him, that even in jail at Philippi, at midnight, when his back was torn and bleeding from the stripes he had just received, we find him singing praises to God (Acts 16:23-25). And, later, in prison at Rome, awaiting sentence of death, no ruffle of anxiety or fear disturbs the deep calm of his soul. It was at that time he uttered such words as these, “Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice.” And a little further on he writes the words I just quoted, “In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” And a little further on he says again, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.” And two verses still further on he says, “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.” Yes, every one can have great peace, abiding peace, abounding peace, never failing peace, “THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.” Jesus said the night before His crucifixion, in His farewell words to His disciples and to all who should become disciples in after years, “Peace I leave with you; MY PEACE I give unto you:

not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful” (John 14:27).

III. A GREAT POSITION.

There is another great thing any one can have and that is, A GREAT POSITION. We have a way of thinking that the great positions are only for a very select few. That is a great mistake. The greatest and grandest and most glorious of all positions is for any one who will have it. Very few can ever be President of the United States. Very few can become United States Senators or members of Congress. Very, very few can ever become kings or emperors. But there is a position far higher than that of congressman or senator, or President of the United States, or king or emperor, that is open to any one of us. Turn to John 1:12 and you will find out just what that position is. This is what it says, “As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become CHILDREN OF GOD, even to them that believe on his name.” To be a “child of God” is surely to occupy a higher position than to be an earthly president, prince, king or emperor. What is any earthly monarch to the King of kings and the Lord of lords? The greatest and most potent monarch of this earth looks like a gnat when compared with the Infinite, Eternal God, Who created all things seen and unseen. The greatest earthly throne is but a toadstool compared with the throne of God. And the position of becoming God’s child and God’s heir is open to any one who desires it in his heart.

One day it was my fortune to run by accident upon a real, live king. I was not looking for him, and he certainly was not looking for me. I was coming down the hall of the University at Leipzig all alone, and I saw a man coming up the stairway all alone. I instantly recognized him as the King of Saxony. Of course, I uncovered and bowed as we passed one another, and he bowed back with a smile, very courteously and very pleasantly. And I had met a king—and he had met—what had he met? He had met a free American citizen, but he had met something more than that, he had met a child of God, and to be a child of God is to hold a far higher position than to be a king. And this position is open to any one who wishes to fill it, “AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.” Think of it! ANY MAN OR WOMAN CAN BECOME A CHILD OF GOD. Yes, any one.

But some of you will decline that great honour. Why? Because you had rather have some disgusting sin or some contemptible sin than to become a child of God. Or you would rather have the silly satisfaction of calling yourself a sceptic and therefore fancying yourself very brainy and an independent thinker, than to become a child of God. Or you are not willing to endure the world’s sneers, and you would rather have this fool world’s praise, than to

be even a child of God. Oh, for what paltry baubles we trade this great honour of becoming children of God! What pitiable fools we are. I did it for years myself. I thank our wondrous God that He had mercy upon me and patience with me, and at last brought me to my senses.

IV. A GREAT HOPE.

There is another great thing that any one can have and that is, A GREAT HOPE. Paul describes this great hope. He says in Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised." What a hope that is, "HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE"! The world has nothing to match against that. The very best the world can give cannot last more than eighty, ninety or a hundred years at the longest. We say this world has been good to Rockefeller, it has given him several hundred millions or it may be a billion. But for how long? For but a very little while. The poorest living newsboy on the streets of this city will be richer than Rockefeller in this world's wealth in a very few years. This world's hopes are poor things, for upon them all is written, "For a few days only."

One day, quite a while ago, the newspapers contained glowing accounts of the magnificent gifts of gold and precious stones presented to two young people who were to be married, the man the son of one of America's richest millionaires, and the woman, the daughter of another multi-millionaire. But in a very few years they will leave all these costly gifts, all these diamonds and pearls and all this gold. But the one who will believe on Jesus Christ gets a hope that is indeed great,—eternal life; life, Divine in its quality, endless in its duration, the very life of God Himself. Years roll on, the life eternal still lasts. Centuries fly by, the life eternal still lasts. Ages and ages sweep on in endless procession but the life eternal is just beginning. Ah! Eternal Life! that is something worth while. To me there is a growing charm in these words, "Eternal Life." In former years I did not think much of them. The present life seemed fair and long and very alluring. But of late years as I have seen one thing after another end, as I have seen vast fortunes crumble, and one great man after another pass into oblivion and some one else come on and take his place, as I have seen not only vast fortunes but mighty kings and even vast empires collapse and vanish, as I have seen the stamp of transitoriness and decay upon everything earthly, I have felt an ever increasing pity for the poor fools who live for the present fleeting world, and an increasing joy in these great words, "eternal life."

"In hope of eternal life," that is indeed a hope worth having. And any one here can have it. The poorest can have it just as well as the richest. The weakest can have it just as well as the strongest. The sinfullest can have it just as well as the holiest. The great, the glorious hope of life eternal is open to all.

V. A GREAT INHERITANCE.

Then there is another great thing that is open to all and that is, A GREAT INHERITANCE. Peter describes this inheritance in this way, “An inheritance *in incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*” (1 Pet. 1:4). Now that cannot be said about any earthly inheritance. What earthly inheritance is incorruptible? The hand of decay is upon every earthly inheritance. What earthly inheritance is undefiled? My! how dirty most great earthly inheritances are! What earthly inheritance fadeth not away? They are fading, every last one. The fool son or grandson of the shrewdest millionaire is likely to wind up in jail, and the inheritance disappears entirely in every case as soon as the owner of it dies.

Paul describes this great inheritance that any one of us can get in a still more remarkable way in Romans 8:16, 17, “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*” Think of that a moment please. “HEIRS OF GOD!” Heirs of all God’s infinite wealth, joy, and glory, and “JOINT HEIRS (FELLOW-HEIRS, CO-HEIRS) WITH CHRIST,” heirs in the way in which Jesus Christ is heir and to the extent to which Jesus Christ is an heir. Co-heirs with Him in whom dwelt “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”; and who was, therefore, the “heir of all things.” In that same way the one who receives Jesus Christ becomes an heir of God. Look out upon the whole earth with all its wealth and say, “this all belongs to God, and I am His child and His heir, and therefore I am heir of all this.” Look up at the stars, those great immeasurable, incomprehensible, overwhelmingly stupendous worlds of light and splendour and bewildering magnitude and majesty, and say, “I am an heir of all these.” Think of the infinite wisdom, infinite joy, and infinite glory of the Deity, and say, “I am His child. Therefore all this is my inheritance. There is absolutely no limit to what is open to me.” Millionaire? that is nothing. Billionaire? that is still nothing. I am an heir of God, a co-heir with Jesus Christ! It fairly makes one’s head swim just to think of it. This inheritance is open to any one. Take, for example, some washer-woman. This inheritance is open to her. Or some labouring man. This inheritance is open to him. Or an ex-convict. This inheritance is open to him. Or men and women who have squandered their lives. This inheritance is open to them.

One night in Birmingham, England, upon going on to the platform in Bingley Hall I received a note from a young woman. She asked me to pray for her brother who she said had squandered two fortunes and had just returned from India where he had squandered a third. I read the note from the platform and the audience joined me in prayer for this man. Though we did not know it, miles away in Worcester, while we prayed, that man was seated

by a table with a loaded revolver upon it preparatory to taking his own life. But God heard our prayer, and he was converted and saved as he sat by that table, just within a few minutes of hell. He had thrown away three inheritances, but he received that night an inheritance to which all three together were as nothing.

There are poor men, there are rich men. There are good men, there are bad men. But this inheritance is open to one and all without distinction. Listen to the way Peter puts it, “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven *for you*.” For whom? Listen. “*For you who are kept by the power of God through faith* unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Do you take in the force of these words? This inheritance is for any one who believes on Jesus Christ and who, therefore, is kept, not by his own power, but “by the power of God,” unto that complete salvation of spirit, soul, and body, that is to be made manifest in the last time. That, then, is all one has to do to get this great inheritance, just place faith in Jesus Christ and be “kept by the power of God through faith unto (that glorious, infinite) salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Any one can do that, and therefore any one can get this inheritance.

We see, then, that there is for us all, for any one who will have them, a great joy, a great peace, a great position, a great hope, and a great inheritance. Do you want these five great things? I put the question to each one of you. Do you want these five great things? You can have them. Take Jesus Christ as your Saviour and surrender to Him as your Lord, and confess Him as such before the world, and these five great things become yours. Do that and you will get them all. Oh, how can any one of you refuse to do it? How can you hesitate to do it? If I should take a bushel basket full of large diamonds of the finest water and make it known that any one who wished could have one, would you hesitate? There might be some friend near you, to laugh at you, but you would come just the same. Well, I am setting out something infinitely better than a basket full of fine diamonds. I set forth a great peace, I set forth here a great joy, I set forth a great position, I set forth a great honour, I set forth here a great hope, I set forth here a great inheritance, and I say on the authority of God, Who cannot lie, “Come up and help yourself.” How many of you will?