

were four lepers at the gate; poor outcasts; men who might not mix with others; the most weak and helpless in all the place; by them it pleased the Lord to deliver.

God often delivers thus; choosing "the weak things of the world to confound 'he things which are mighty,'" and showing that He can "save by many or by few." Thus he humbles pride, making it plain that deliverance is of Him, and not of man. And thus He encourages His servants to hope and trust. For, though no likely means of deliverance appear, yet He can deliver by the most unlikely. Let them but seek Him and trust Him, He will be at no loss for instruments to do His will.

2. The argument of the lepers teaches us another lesson. They sat at the entering of the gate, and talked together. Perhaps, in Eastern fashion, they had sat there long in gloomy silence. But at last they roused themselves and one another. "Why sit we here until we die." Yet if they went into the city, nothing but death awaited them there. What should they do then? There was but one thing to do: they would give themselves up to the Syrians. If they killed them, they would but die; and die they must, whether they stayed where they were, or went into the city. But perhaps they would save them alive. It was their only chance. They would bestir themselves. They would not sit still and die. They would flee to the Syrians.

Sinners, also, if they sit still and do nothing, must die. And if they think to flee to any source but one, they must die too. There is but one Refuge—Christ. Perhaps they have looked on God as their enemy; for they have indeed made themselves his enemies by wicked works: perhaps they have never had any feeling towards Him but fear. But they need not fear, He is gracious and merciful, ready to forgive, both able and willing to save. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. All who come to God by Him will be received. It is sometimes hard for a poor simple creature to believe this. He has so long neglected God and sinned against Him, that a full and free forgiveness for Christ's sake is almost more than he dares to hope for. Yet, if he can raise his thoughts no higher, let him at least flee to Jesus with the leper's feeling: if I stay as I am, I die; if I flee elsewhere, I die; if I flee to Him, I can but perish, but it may be that He will have mercy and save me.

3. The lepers acted on their resolution. They rose up in the twilight to flee to the Syrians' camp. But when they got to the uttermost part, the beginning of it, what did they find? To their surprise, instead of a great host, they found not a man. The camp was there, but the men were gone. The horses they found tied up as usual, and the asses; the tents were standing; but, instead of the din of a camp, no voice of man did they hear. They went from tent to tent; there was no one to hinder them; they ate and drank as much as they pleased, these famished wretches; they found treasure—silver and gold and raiment—they took possession of it, carried it off and hid it, and then went back and carried off more from another tent, and hid that too. All they found was theirs. There was no one to say them nay. No more want, misery, poverty. Their plan had succeeded beyond their utmost hopes. They had fled

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