

course He might have pleaded various answers to this. He might have defended His grace to sinners, on the ground of the necessity of the case, or on the ground of God's glory. But in this chapter, from beginning to end, in each of the lovely parables, He vindicates it, simply on the ground of the joy that He, and the Father, and all heaven itself, were finding in it. Only think of that, beloved. If the Lord God be asked a reason for His ways of salvation with you and me. He says that *He* takes delight in them—they make Him and His glorious habitation to rejoice.

What assurance, what consolation spring from that. Would his neighbours, think you, murmur at the shepherd's joy over his lost sheep now found by him, or the woman's friends grudge her pleasure, as she swept her piece of money into her lap? And so it is with God. It is *His own joy* in the salvation of sinners, that Jesus proposes as His warrant or vindication.

Let us cherish the thought deeply in our souls—the Gospel of our peace is the spring of joy to Him, who planned and accomplished it; that our God has done nothing less than this, *laid the scene of His own happiness in our salvation*, as these parables testify to us.

Jesus had travelled, as we have seen, through Pharisees, guests, host, and crowds of attendants; and was now sitting with sinners who knew their need of Him and came to get what they wanted. Heaven, in one sense, is but this spot stretched out—the habitation of saved sinners and of a rejoicing Saviour.