

A vibrant garden scene with a stream in the background and a variety of flowers in the foreground. The foreground is dominated by a dense cluster of flowers, including many red and white striped flowers, yellow daisy-like flowers, and some white flowers. The background shows a stream flowing through a lush green area with trees and a grey signpost on the right.

# Daily Manna

## April

from  
Haus Barnabas  
in the Black Forest

# Explanation

These daily readings are intended to add a new dimension to the ministry of Haus Barnabas. Our aim is to make these notes available for all our guests to use personally as they may wish and also to use the Scripture readings for our communal prayer time after breakfast.

For many years we have used the Daily Light selection of Scriptures for our morning prayers in Haus Barnabas and the concept and format of the Daily Light, namely a range of short Scriptures based on a particular theme verse form the basis for our own new selection of Scripture readings. The Bible translation we have used is the New King James Version. We cannot emphasize too strongly that it should be these verses of Scripture itself which should be the kernel for our spiritual nourishment. The meditation that follows is but one line of thought from the theme verse and God might want to use the Scripture verses to say something quite different to you personally. Spend time with the Scripture verses. 'Chew' on them prayerfully during the day, in the same way as you will see Black Forest cows sitting chewing the cud!

We also expect the meditations to prove a blessing to many of you. We wouldn't dare to say this if we had written them ourselves! They all originate from C.H. Spurgeon's Morning and Evening devotions and we have taken the liberty of up-dating the language. Whilst we 'oldies' who already have a high regard for C.H.S probably don't find this necessary and perhaps question the audacity of attempting it, my prayer is that this slightly up-dated language will help to make these well loved, soul-nourishing devotional thoughts more acceptable to Christians of all denominations and age groups in this twenty-first century.

With a prayer that the Lord will use His Word to bless you in a wonderful way,

Len Holder.

1<sup>st</sup> April

## Scripture readings

### **Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth**

His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!

The desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early.

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. - I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. - Consider how I love Your precepts; revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness. - My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your word. - How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love.

**Song 1:2** - Song 5:16 - Isa 26:8-9 - Luke 15:20; Hos 14:4 - Ps 91:14; Ps 119:159;25;103 - Zeph 3:17

*Suggested additional reading: **Song of Solomon 1***

## Meditation

### ***Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.***

- *Song of Solomon 1:2*

As we begin a new month, let us seek the same desires after our Lord as we see here glowing in the heart of the spouse of Solomon's Song. See how she leaps at once to Him; there are no prefatory words; she does not even mention His name; she is in the heart of her

theme at once, for she speaks of Him who was the only Him in the world to her. How bold is her love!

It was with much condescension that Jesus permitted the weeping penitent to anoint His feet with spikenard. It was rich love which allowed the gentle Mary to sit at His feet and learn of Him, but here, love, strong, fervent love, aspires to higher demonstrations of regard, and closer signs of fellowship. Esther trembled in the presence of Ahasuerus, but the spouse in joyful liberty of perfect love knows no fear. If we have received the same free spirit, we also may ask the like. *“Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.”*

By kisses we can picture those various signs of affection by which the believer is made to enjoy the love of Jesus. The kiss of **reconciliation** which we enjoyed at our conversion. You surely remember how overwhelming it was; sweet as honey dropping from the comb. The kiss of **acceptance** is still warm on our brow, as we know the reassurance that He has accepted us, just as we are, through His rich grace. The kiss of daily **communion** with Him in our quiet time, is something that we long to have repeated day after day, till it is changed into the kiss of **reception**, which will remove the soul from earth, and the kiss of **consummation** which fills it with the joy of heaven.

We walk by faith but enjoy rest in sensations of His nearness. Faith is the road, but communion with Jesus is the well from which the pilgrim drinks. O “lover of our souls”, don't remove your presence from us; let the lips of Your blessing meet the lips of our asking; let the lips of Your fulness touch the lips of our need, and immediately we will find joy in the kiss of Your mouth.

## Prayer

*I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.  
I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty  
land. Ps 143:5-6*

## Scripture readings

### **He answered him not one word**

Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marvelled greatly.

And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction, and plan deception all the day long. But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; and I am like a mute who does not open his mouth. Thus I am like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth is no response. For in You, O LORD, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God.

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ... Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

**Matt 27:14** - Matt 27:11-14 - Mark 14:60-62 - Ps 38:12-15 - 1 Peter 2:21-23

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Peter 2*

## Meditation

***He answered him not one word*** - Matthew 27:14

Jesus had never been slow to speak when He was blessing and teaching His disciples and the crowds who followed Him but He wouldn't say a single word for Himself. "*No man ever spoke like this Man,*" (John 7:46) and no man was ever so silent as He.

Was this remarkable silence *an integral part of His perfect self-sacrifice*? Was He showing that He wouldn't say a single word to hinder or delay the act of slaughter that was coming? He had already dedicated His holy person as an offering for us, had He so entirely surrendered Himself that He wouldn't now interfere on His own behalf, even to the minutest degree, but be bound and slain an unstruggling, uncomplaining victim?

Was this silence also *an evidence of the defenselessness of sin*? Nothing can be said to water down the seriousness of sin or to excuse human guilt; and, therefore, He who bore its whole weight stood speechless before His judge.

Is not patient silence *the best reply to a taunting world*? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The blacksmith's anvil breaks numerous hammers by quietly bearing their blows. Didn't the silent Lamb of God furnish us here with *a grand example of wisdom*? Where every word was an occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to provide no additional fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will before very long overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and in fact finds silence to be its wisdom.

By His silence our Lord also provided *a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy*. A long defence of Himself would have been contrary to Isaiah's prediction. "*He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.*" (Isa 53:7). Through His peaceful and quiet demeanor He conclusively proved Himself to be the true Lamb of God. As such we salute Him this morning. Be with us, Lord Jesus, and in the silence of our heart, let us hear the voice of Your love.

## Prayer

*Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind. Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.* Ps 73:21;23;24

## Scripture readings

### **They took Jesus, and led him away**

God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked. - They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.

Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

**John 19:16** - Job 16:11; Matt 27:28-31 - Luke 23:26 - Lev 16:21-22 - Ps 103:12

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 53*

## Meditation

### ***They took Jesus, and led Him away*** - John 19:16

Jesus had been all night in agony, He had spent the early morning at the hall of Caiaphas, He had been rushed from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate. He would have had but little strength left, and yet neither refreshment nor rest were allowed Him . They were eager for His

blood, and therefore led Him out to die, loaded with the cross. O dolorous procession! Well might the “*daughters of Jerusalem*” weep. (Luke 23:28). My soul, do you weep too?

What can we learn here as we see our blessed Lord led forth? Can we not recognise the reality of that which had since the days of Moses been symbolised in the ritual of the *the scapegoat*? There the high-priest would bring out the scapegoat, put both of his hands upon its head and confess the sins of the people. In this way those sins were pictured as being removed from the people and laid upon the goat. The goat was then led away by a suitable man into the wilderness. It was carrying away the sins of the people, so that if they were looked for they couldn't be found. In the Gospels see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce Him guilty; God Himself imputes our sins to Him, “*the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all;*” (Isa 53:6); “*He made Him who know no sin to be made sin for us*” (2 Cor 5:21) and then as the substitute for our guilt, bearing our sin on His shoulders, represented by the cross; we see the great Scapegoat led away by the appointed officers of justice.

Beloved, can you feel assured that He carried *your* sin? As you look at the cross upon His shoulders, does it represent *your* sin? There is but one way by which you can be sure of this. Have you laid your hand upon His head, confessed your sin, and trusted in Him? This is what the high priest had to do for the people in the Old Testament. Today no one can do it for you, it must be a personal confession of sin and a personal trust in Christ. Then you can be assured that your sin lies no longer on your head; God has transferred it all by blessed imputation to Christ, and He bears it on His shoulder as a load far heavier than the wooden cross. Don't let the picture vanish till you can rejoice in your own deliverance and salvation and adore the loving Redeemer on whom your iniquities were laid.

## Prayer

*Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You.* Ex 15:6-7

4<sup>th</sup> April

## Scripture readings

**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. - For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, ... He condemned sin in the flesh. - For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You are complete in Him, ... In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands ... buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him. ... And you, ... He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us. ... He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

**2 Cor 5:21** - Gal 3:13; Rom 8:3; 1 Peter 3:18 - 1 John 1:8-9 - Col 2:10-14 - 1 John 2:1-2

*Suggested additional reading: Col 3:1-17*

## Meditation

***For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. - 2 Cor 5:21***

Depressed Christian! why are you sad? Are you mourning over the failures and corruptions of your own heart? Look to your perfect

Lord, and remember, you are complete in Him. In God's sight You are as perfect as if you had never sinned; no, you are even better than that, the Lord our Righteousness has dressed you in a suit of his own divine clothes so that you now have more than just human righteousness, you have the righteousness of God.

You, who are mourning about inherited sin and lustful perversions you still find sweeping over you, remember, none of your sins can condemn you. You have learned to hate these sins; but you need to learn too that the sins which you have committed, whether in thought or deed are no longer yours, they have been laid upon Christ's head. Your standing as a Christian is not in yourself, it is in Christ's righteousness. Your acceptance by your holy heavenly Father is not in yourself but in your Lord. You are as much accepted of God to-day, with all your sinfulness, as you will be when you stand before His throne, free from all corruption.

I beseech you, get hold of this most precious thought, your perfection is in Christ! You are "*complete in Him*".(Col 2:10). Clothed in your Saviour's best suit, without "*spot or wrinkle*" (Eph 5:27), you are as holy as He the Holy one. "*Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*" (Rom 8:34)

Christian, let your heart rejoice, for you are "*accepted in the beloved*" (Eph 1:6); what have you to fear? You have every reason for knowing peace in your heart and to display a confident, contented exterior to the world. Live near to your Master. Live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when your time has come, you will rise up where your Jesus sits, and reign at His right hand; and all this because the divine Lord, who knew no sin, was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

## Prayer

*For You are my lamp, O LORD; The LORD shall enlighten my darkness. ... You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness has made me great. You enlarged my path under me; So my feet did not slip. 2. Sam 22:29;36-37*

5<sup>th</sup> April

## Scripture readings

### **On him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus**

They compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." - "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." - "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour." - Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind. - If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

You became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit. - When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

**Luke 23:26** - Mark 15:21 - Luke 9:23; Luke 14:27; Heb 13:13 - John 12:26 - 1 Peter 4:1; Rom 8:17 - 1 Thess 1:6; Acts 11:23 - 2 Cor 4:17

*Suggested additional reading: Mark 10:17-31*

## Meditation

***On Him they laid the cross, that He might bear it after Jesus.*** - Luke 23:26

We see in Simon's carrying the cross a picture of the privilege of the Church throughout all generations; she is the cross-bearer after

Jesus. Mark then, Christian, Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may be able to endure it. Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow. Remember that, and expect to suffer. But let us find comfort in this thought, that in our case, as in Simon's, it is not our cross that we carry but Christ's. When you are laughed at for your Christian lifestyle; when following Jesus brings opposition and persecution, then remember it is not *your* cross, it is Christ's cross; and what a privilege it is to carry the cross of our Lord Jesus!

Remember too that ***you are carrying the cross after Him***. You have blessed company; the path before you is marked with your Lord's footprints. The mark of His blood-red shoulder is on that heavy burden. It's *His* cross, and He goes before you as a shepherd goes before his sheep. Take up your cross daily, and follow Him. Don't forget either, that ***you are bearing this cross in partnership with Him***. It's the opinion of some that Simon only carried one end of the cross, and not the whole of it. That's very possible. Christ may have carried the heavier part, against the transverse beam, and Simon may have borne only the lighter end. In anycase this is certainly so with you. You are only called to carry the light end of the cross. Christ bore the heavier end.

And remember, although Simon only had to bear the cross for a very brief while, it gave him lasting honour. In this same way the cross we carry is only for a little while at most, and then we shall receive the crown, the glory. Surely we should love the cross, and, instead of shrinking from it, count it very dear, because it "*is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" (Cor 4:17)

## Prayer

*Remove from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept Your testimonies. Princes also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on Your statutes.* Ps 119:22-23

## Scripture readings

### **Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp.**

And when they had mocked Him, they ... led Him away to be crucified. ... And those who passed by blasphemed Him. ... Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" - "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven." - If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

**Heb 13:13** - Matt 27:31;39;41-42;44 - Matt 16:24-26; Matt 5:11-12; 1 Peter 4:14 - Heb 12:3

*Suggested additional reading: Acts 14:1-22*

## Meditation

### ***Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp.*** Heb 13:13

Jesus, carrying His cross, was led forth to suffer outside the gate. The Christian's reason for leaving the camp of the world's sin and religion is not because he loves to be different, but because *Jesus did so*; and the disciple must follow his Master. Christ was "*not of this world*" (John 8:23) His life and His testimony were a constant protest against conformity with this world. There has never been such

obvious affection for men and women as we see in Him; but at the same time He was *“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”* (Heb 7:26). In the same manner Christ’s people must *“go forth to Him.”* They must take their position *“outside the camp,”* as witness-bearers for the truth. They must be prepared to walk the straight and narrow path. They must have bold, unflinching, lion-like hearts, loving Christ first, and His truth next, and Christ and His truth above all the world.

Jesus would have His people *“go forth outside the camp” for their own sanctification.* You cannot grow in grace to any high degree while you are conformed to this world. The life of separation may be a path of sorrow, but it is the highway of safety; and though the separated life may be painful, and make every day a battle, yet it is overall a happy life. No joy can excel that which the soldier of Christ experiences: Jesus reveals Himself so graciously, and gives such delightful refreshment, that the warrior feels more calm and peace in the struggles of his daily life than others find even in their hours of rest. The highway of holiness is the highway of fellowship and communion with Christ.

It is in this way we shall *win the crown* if we are enabled by divine grace to faithfully follow Christ *“without the camp.”* The crown of glory will follow the cross of separation. A short period of shame will be well recompensed by eternal honour; a little while of witness-bearing will seem nothing when we are forever with the Lord.

## Prayer

*Princes also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on Your statutes. Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors. Ps 119:23-24*

## Scripture readings

### **How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame?**

Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. - He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

All the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." - I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon!"

When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.

**Ps 4:2** - Mark 12:6-8; John 1:10-11 - Matt 12:23-24; John 8:50-52 - Matt 27:29-30

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 4:16-30***

## Meditation

### ***How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame?*** — Psalm 4:2

An instructive writer has made a sad list of the “honours” which the blinded people of Israel awarded to their long-expected King.

They gave Him *a procession of “honour”*, in which Roman legionaries, Jewish priests and ordinary men and women took a part, He Himself bearing His cross. This is the triumph which the world awarded to Him who came to overthrow man’s worst enemy.

Sarcastic and mocking shouts were His only acclamations, and cruel taunts His only paeans of praise.

They presented Him with *the wine of "honour"*. Instead of a golden cup of generous wine they offered Him the criminal's stupefying death-draught. He refused it because He wanted to retain a clear mind as He bore our sin. Afterwards when He cried, "I thirst," they gave Him vinegar mixed with gall, thrust to His mouth upon a sponge. Oh! wretched, detestable inhospitality to the King's Son.

He was provided with *a guard of "honour"*, who showed their esteem of Him by gambling over His garments, which they had seized as their booty. Such was the body-guard of the adored of heaven; a quaternion of brutal gamblers.

*A throne of "honour"* was found for Him upon the bloody tree; no easier place of rest would rebel men yield to their liege Lord. The cross was, in fact, the full expression of the world's feeling towards Him. "There," they seemed to say, "You Son of God, this is the manner in which God Himself should be treated, could we reach Him."

*The title of "honour"* was nominally "King of the Jews," but the blinded nation distinctly repudiated this and in reality called Him "King of thieves," preferring Barabbas and setting Jesus in the place of highest shame between two thieves.

In these ways His glory was turned into shame by the sons of men, but never fear, one day He will in His full glory gladden the eyes of saints and angels, world without end.

## Prayer

*The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my Saviour, You save me from violence. 2 Sam 22:2-3*

## Scripture readings

### **If they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?**

But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'

What will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" - When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; ... The court was seated, and the books were opened.

**Luke 23:31** – Luke 23:28-31 – 1 Peter 4: 17-18; 2 Thess 1:7-9 – Heb 10:26-30 – Dan 7:9-10

*Suggested additional reading: **Heb 10:19-31***

## Meditation

### ***If they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?*** - Luke 23:31

Among other interpretations of this suggestive question, the following is full of teaching: If our Saviour, the innocent substitute

for sinners, suffered like this, what will be done when the sinner himself, *“the dry wood”*, shall fall into the hands of an angry God?”

When God saw Jesus in the sinner’s place, He did not spare Him; and correspondingly when He finds the unregenerate without Christ, He won’t spare them either. O sinner, Jesus was led away by His enemies and you will be dragged away by fiends to the place appointed for them and you. Jesus was deserted of God; and if He, who was only a sinner by imputation of guilt was deserted, how much more do you think you will sense that desertion? *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* what an awful cry this was that our Saviour gave and when you cry the same, *“O God! O God! why have You forsaken me?”* the answer of “Wisdom” will come back to torture you for all eternity, *“Because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes.”* (Prov 1:25-26). God didn’t spare His own Son, how much less will He spare you!

What whips of burning wire will be yours when your conscience smites you with all its terrors. You richest, most self-satisfied and self-righteous sinners, who would willingly stand in your place when God shall say, *“Awake, O sword, against the man that rejected Me; smite him, and he must feel the smart for ever”*? Jesus was spat upon: sinner, what shame will be yours! We cannot sum up in one word all the mass of sorrows which came together on the head of Jesus who died for us, therefore it is impossible for us to tell you what streams, what oceans of grief, must roll over your spirit if you die as you are now. You may die so, you may die now. By the agonies of Christ, by His wounds and by His blood, do not bring on yourselves the wrath to come! Trust in the Son of God, and you shall never die.

## Prayer

*And now, Lord, what do I wait for? my hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions. Ps 39:7-8*

## Scripture readings

**And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.**

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha - And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. - Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree - Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him.

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Luke 23:27** - John 19:15-17; Matt 27:55-56 - Heb 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24; Isa 53:4-5 - Heb 12:1-2

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 21*

## Meditation

***And a great multitude of people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.*** - Luke 23:27

Amongst the jeering crowd who followed the Redeemer to His doom, there were some gracious souls whose bitter sorrow expressed itself in the loud wailing which even today characterises eastern funeral processions. Such was certainly fitting music to accompany this tragic and sorrowful procession.

When my soul sees in her imagination, my Saviour bearing His cross to Calvary, she joins those godly women and weeps with them. For there is most certainly true cause for grief as we watch this procession. A cause that lies far deeper than those mourning women realised. They bewailed innocence maltreated, goodness persecuted, love bleeding, meekness about to die; but my heart has a deeper and more bitter reason to mourn. My sins were the scourges which lacerated those blessed shoulders, and crowned with thorn those bleeding brows: my sins cried “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” and laid the cross upon His gracious shoulders. The holy Son of God being led forth to die is sorrow enough for all eternity: but the fact that I was His murderer, is cause for more, infinitely more grief, than my tears can ever express. Why those women loved and wept is not hard to guess: but they could not have had greater reasons for love and grief than my heart has. Nain’s widow saw her son restored (*Luke 7:11-15*) - but He has raised me, myself, to newness of life. Peter’s wife’s mother was cured of the fever (*Matt 8:14-15*) - but I of the greater plague of sin. Out of Magdalene seven devils were cast (*Mark 16:9*) - but a whole legion out of me. Mary and Martha were favoured with His visits as a guest (*Luke 10:38*) - but He has made His home with me. His mother bare His body - but He is formed anew in me, the hope of glory. (*Gal 4:19; Col 1:27*). My debt to Him is far greater than that of those blessed women, so don't let me show less gratitude or sorrow than they.

*Love and grief my heart dividing,  
With my tears His feet I'll lave —  
Constant still in heart abiding,  
Weep for Him who died to save.*

## Prayer

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. These, O God, You will not despise. Ps 51:15-17*

10<sup>th</sup> April

## Scripture readings

### **The place called Calvary.**

He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the centre. - He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. - Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

**Luke 23:33** - John 19:17-19; Isa 53:12 - Heb 13:12; Heb 2:14-15 - Gal 3:13-14 - John 15:13-14

*Suggested additional reading: 1 John 3: 1-16*

## Meditation

### ***The place called Calvary - Luke 23:33***

(The Greek word here is *kranion*, which means a "skull" and is used by the Gospel writers in their Greek text by way of an interpretation of the Hebrew name "Golgotha" – place of a skull. The English translation "Calvary" comes directly from the Latin *calvaria* also meaning a skull. ed.).

God's ways are full of apparent contradictions. For the Christian, the hill of Calvary with all its horror and suffering is a hill of comfort, and when his soul is seeking a home where it can feel complete freedom and rest, this refuge would need to be built of the wood of the cross on which Jesus died. And where is the place of greatest blessing if it's not the spot where the soldier's spear pierced our Saviour's side and produced that rich fountain of eternal blessing?

No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like Calvary's tragedy. Light springs from the midday-midnight of Golgotha, and every flower of the field blooms sweetly under the shadow of that once accursed tree. In that place where our Saviour thirsted the God of love has dug a fountain from which water as pure as crystal constantly gushes forth, each drop capable of alleviating the woes of mankind. You who have had your times of trouble and conflict will happily confess that it was not at Olivet that you ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on mount Tabor; but its Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha which have been the places of greatest comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitternesses of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha has often scourged away your cares, (*John 19:13*), and the groans of Calvary yields us comfort rare and rich.

We would never have known Christ's love in all its heights and depths if He had not died; nor could we have guessed the Father's deep affection if He had not given His Son for us. Although the everyday blessings we receive from our heavenly Father all sing of love, just as the sea-shell, when we put it to our ears, whispers of the deep sea from where it came, if we would hear the ocean itself we need to look beyond these tangible mercies to the transactions of the crucifixion. He who would know love must retreat to Calvary and watch the Man of sorrows die.

## Prayer

*Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live. Ps 119:76-77*

## Scripture readings

### **I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint.**

"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." - "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death." - The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.

Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, yes, my soul and my body! - My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word.

He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. - So His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.

He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

**Ps 22:14** - John 12:27-28; Matt 26:38; Ps 22:16-17 - Ps 31:9; Ps 119:28 - Isa 53:12; Isa 52:14 - Phil 2:8-10

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 22*

## Meditation

***I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint. -***

*Psalm 22:14*

Did earth or heaven ever witness a sadder scene than this; the eternal Son of God, in human form, dying and in soul and body feeling as weak as water poured out on to the ground!

As the Roman soldiers roughly placed the cross in its socket it shook Him with great violence. It strained all His ligaments, pained every nerve, and more or less dislocated all His bones. Burdened with His own weight, the dignified sufferer felt the strain increasing

every moment of those six long hours. His sense of faintness and general weakness were overpowering; while to His own consciousness He became nothing but a mass of misery and swooning sickness. When Daniel saw the great vision, he described his sensations in these words: *"No strength remained in me; for my vigour was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength."* (Dan 10:8). How much greater must have been the physical reaction of our greater Prophet when He saw the dreadful vision of the wrath of God, and felt it in His own soul! To the average human being sensations such as our Lord endured would have been too much for their bodies to bear and unconsciousness would have come kindly to their rescue; but in His case, He was wounded, and *felt* the sword; He drained the cup and *tasted* everydrop.

*Man of sorrows, what a name,  
for the Son of God who came.  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!*

As we kneel before the throne of our now ascended Saviour, let us remember with great thankfulness how He has made it a *"throne of grace"* to which we have freedom of access. (*Heb 4:14-16*). Let us in spirit drink of the benefits and blessings of His cup, that we may be strengthened for our hour of heaviness whenever it may come. Every member and cell of His physical body suffered at Calvary and as it was in His natural body it seems that every member of His spiritual body must also expect some degree of suffering, for *"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."* (*Acts 14:22*). But as His physical body was raised uninjured to glory and power out of all His griefs and woes, even so shall we His mystical body come through the furnace with not so much as the smell of fire upon us.

## Prayer

*But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* Ps 22:9-11

12<sup>th</sup> April

## Scripture readings

### **My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me.**

Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. - By sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. - A broken spirit dries the bones.

I will say to God my Rock, "Why have You forgotten me? ... My enemies reproach me, while they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" Why are you cast down, O my soul? and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? - At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. - We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Ps 22:14** - Ps 32:4; Prov 15:13; Prov 17:22 - Ps 42:9-11 - Ps 42:1-2; Mark 15:34 - Heb 2:18; Heb 4:15-16

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 145***

## Meditation

***My heart is like wax; it has melted within me.*** - *Psalm 22:14*

Our blessed Lord experienced a terrible sinking and melting of soul. "*The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?*" (Prov 18:14). Deep depression of spirit is the worst of all trials; other sufferings are as nothing compared with this. Well might the suffering Saviour cry to His God, "*Be not far from*

me," (Ps 22:11), for more than at all other times a man needs his God when his heart is melting within him through heaviness and he feels in utter despair.

Believer, come near to the cross this morning, and humbly adore the King of glory who was once brought far lower in mental distress and inward anguish than you, or anyone else, ever were. Mark how this has prepared Him for His gracious office as a faithful High Priest, able to sympathise with all our weaknesses. (*Heb 4:15*). Most appropriately He can through this suffering sympathise with those of us whose sadness springs directly from a sense of distance from our Father's love. You long to know closer and more intimate communion with Jesus. Your soul is thirsting and fainting to experience the nearness of your Lord; to feel in a tangible way the reality of the promises and clear statements of Scripture that you accept and believe in your mind. Don't give way to despair for your Master has passed through this dark room before you and to a far greater degree. When we can grasp hold of the fact that our great High Priest understands and sympathises with us and that our drops of sorrow are as nothing compared with the ocean of His grief then this will surely create in us a degree of love to Him that we have never known before.

Come in, O strong, deep love of Jesus, like the sea at high tide in the spring time, cover all my struggles, drown all my sins, wash out all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float it right up to my Lord's feet. There let me lie, a poor broken shell, washed up by His love, having no worth or value in myself but daring to whisper to my Jesus that if He will put His ear to me, He will hear within my heart faint echoes of the vast waves of His own love. The love that has lifted me to where it is my delight to lie, at His feet, for ever.

## Prayer

*Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!" But I am poor and needy; Yet the LORD thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God. Ps 40:16-17*

## Scripture readings

### **A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me**

Also take for yourself quality spices — five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, ... cinnamon ... sweet-smelling cane ... cassia, ... and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil. ... And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests. - God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

They saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it. And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them.

In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him. - And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. .... And who is sufficient for these things?

**Song 1:13** - Ex 30:23-25;30; Ps 45:7-8 - Matt 2:11 - Mark 15:23-24 - Col 2:9-10; John 1:16 – 2 Cor 2:14-16

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 45*

## Meditation

***A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved to me.*** - Song 1:13

Myrrh may well be chosen as a type and picture of Jesus on account of its ***preciousness***, its ***perfume***, its ***pleasantness***, its ***healing, preserving, disinfecting qualities***, and its ***connection with sacrifice***. But why is He compared to “*a bundle of myrrh*”? Firstly,

for quantity. He is not a drop of it, He is a casket full. He is not a sprig or flower of it, but a whole bundle. There is enough in Christ to meet all my needs! Don't let me be slow in turning to Him and availing myself of all that He offers me!

Our well-beloved is also compared to a “bundle” in regard to variety, for in Him *“dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”* (Col 2:9). Everything needful is in Him. Think of Jesus in His different characters, and you will see a marvellous variety: Prophet, Priest, King, Husband, Friend, Shepherd ; consider Him in His life, death, resurrection, ascension, second advent; view Him in His virtue, gentleness, courage, self-denial, love, faithfulness, truth, righteousness, everywhere you look He is a bundle of preciousness.

He is a *“bundle of myrrh”* for preservation. Loose myrrh would soon be lost but in a bundle, perhaps as a scent bag, it is held together. Similarly we must value Him as our best treasure; we must prize His words and His ordinances; and we must keep our thoughts of Him and knowledge of Him as under lock and key, lest the devil should steal anything from us.

Moreover, Jesus seen as a *“bundle of myrrh”* suggests possession. As with flowers, single flowers could be there for everyone to pick but a bunch indicates someone has taken possession of them and they belong to someone in particular. From before the foundation of the world, Jesus was set apart for His people; and He gives forth His perfume only to those who understand how to enter into communion with Him and have close contact with Him. Oh! blessed people whom the Lord has allowed to enter into an understanding of His secrets, and for whom He has set Himself apart. How choice and happy are those who can say, *“A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved to me.”*

## Prayer

*You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness. Ps 45:2-4*

## Scripture readings

### **All those who see Me ridicule Me.**

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying: "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.

Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. - Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." - And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

**Ps 22:7** - Ps 22:7-8 - Luke 16:14 - Luke 22:47-48 - Matt 27:28-30; Luke 23:11 - Matt 27:39-40; Luke 23:35-37

*Suggested additional reading: Matt 26 57-68*

## Meditation

***All they that see me ridicule Me: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.*** - *Psalm 22:7*

All that our Lord suffered was in love for us and as we contemplate the cost of our redemption let's not overlook the pain

that ridicule must have caused Him. Judas mocked Him in the garden with that deceitful kiss; the chief priests and scribes laughed Him to scorn; Herod treated Him with contempt; the servants and the soldiers jeered at Him, and brutally insulted Him; Pilate and his guards ridiculed His royalty; and as He hung on the cross all sorts of horrid jests and taunts were hurled at Him.

Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain it is particularly heartless and cruel. Imagine the Saviour crucified, racked with inner anguish far beyond everything that we mortals can ever guess at, and then picture that motley crowd, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip in bitterest contempt at this poor suffering victim! Surely there must have been more behind this mockery than meets the eye? Why would such a great and mingled crowd have unanimously so dishonoured Him with such contempt? Was it perhaps evil confessing, at the very moment of its greatest apparent triumph, that in fact it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness which was then reigning on the cross?

O Jesus, “despised and rejected of men,” how could You die for men who treated You so? Herein is love amazing, love divine, yes, love beyond measure. We, too, have despised You! Not only before our conversion but even since our new birth we have often had more respect for the world than for You. Forgive us Lord. You bled to heal our wounds, and died to give us life, O that we could lift You up high on a glorious throne for all men to worship You! We would ring out Your praises over land and sea till all would as universally adore You as once they rejected You.

*Your creatures wrong You, O sovereign Good!  
You are not loved, because not understood:  
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile  
Ungrateful men, regardless of Your smile.*

## Prayer

*Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us! For we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorn of those who are at ease, with the contempt of the proud.*

*Ps 123:3-4*

15<sup>th</sup> April

## Scripture readings

### **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**

Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide in times of trouble? - How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? - O LORD, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? even cry out to You, "Violence!" and You will not save.

Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you. - Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? ... You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. - My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. - Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. ... For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

**Ps 22:1** - Ps 10:1; Ps 13:1; Hab 1:2 - Isa 59:2, Hab 1:12-13 - Gal 3:13-14; Isa 53:11; 1 Peter 2:24

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 31***

## Meditation

***My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? - Psalm 22:1***

Here we are beholding the Saviour in the very depth of His sorrows. No other place shows the griefs of Christ so much as at

Calvary, and no other moment at Calvary is so full of agony as that in which His cry rends the air — *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* which is translated *“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”* (Mark 15 34). At this moment physical weakness was united with acute mental torture from all the shame and ignominy through which He had had to pass; and to crown His grief He was now suffering spiritual agony surpassing all expression, as He sensed God’s presence departing from Him. This was the black midnight of His horror. Then it was that He descended the abyss of suffering. No man can enter into the full meaning of these words.

Some of us think at times that we could cry, *“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”* There are seasons when the brightness of our Father’s smile is eclipsed by clouds and darkness; but let’s remember that God never really forsakes us. In our case it is only an apparent forsaking but for Christ it was a real forsaking. We grieve at a little withdrawal of our Father’s love; but who can calculate the depth of Christ’s agony when His God turned His face from Him? In our case our cry is often caused by our unbelief, but in His case it was the utterance of a dreadful fact, for God had really turned away from Him for a season. O you poor, distressed soul, who once lived in the sunshine of God’s face, but are now in darkness, remember that He has not really forsaken you. God shrouded in the clouds is as much our God as when He shines in all the brightness of His grace. But if even the *thought* that He has forsaken us gives us agony, what must have been the woe of the Saviour when He exclaimed, *“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”*

## Prayer

*Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man! For You are the God of my strength; why do You cast me off? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* *Ps 43:1-2*

16<sup>th</sup> April

## Scripture readings

### **The precious blood of Christ**

When I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. - Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. - "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. - The church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. - You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**1 Peter 1:19** - Ex 12:13; 1 Cor 5:7; John 1:29 - Matt 26:28; Acts 20:28 - Eph 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19 - Rev 1:5-6

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 22:14-22***

## Meditation

### ***The precious blood of Christ.*** - — 1 Peter 1:19

As in faith we stand at the foot of Christ's cross we see crimson streams of precious blood distilling from His hands, feet and side. It is "*precious*" because of its ***redeeming and atoning efficacy***. By it our sins are atoned for. Together with all who receive Him, believing in His Name, we are redeemed from under the law; reconciled to God and made one with Him.

Christ's blood is also "*precious*" in its **cleansing power**. It "*cleanses us from all sin.*" (1 John 1:7) "*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*" (Isaiah 1:18). Through Jesus' blood there is not a spot left upon any believer, "*no wrinkle nor any such thing*" (Eph 5:27) remains. O precious blood, which makes us clean, removing the stains of iniquity, great iniquity, and allowing us to stand "*accepted in the Beloved*", (Eph 1:6) notwithstanding the many ways in which we have rebelled against our God.

The blood of Christ is likewise "*precious*" in its **preserving power**. We are safe from the destroying angel under the sprinkled blood. (*Ex 12:13*). Remember it is the fact that God Himself sees the blood which is the true reason for our being spared. Here is comfort for us when our eye of faith is dim, for God's eye is still the same.

The blood of Christ is "*precious*" also in its **sanctifying influence**. The same blood which justifies by taking away sin, in its after-action quickens the new nature and leads it onward to subdue sin and to follow out the commands of God. There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus.

And "precious," unspeakably precious, is this blood, because it has an **overcoming power**. It is written, "*They overcame by the blood of the Lamb.*" (Rev 12:11). How could they do otherwise? He who fights with the precious blood of Jesus, fights with a weapon which cannot know defeat. The blood of Jesus! sin dies at its presence; death ceases to be death; heaven's gates are opened. The blood of Jesus! we shall march on, conquering and to conquer; there can be no defeat all the time we are trusting in its power!

## Prayer

*Lord, ... You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6:68-69*

## Scripture readings

**You have come to ... to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.**

Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you". - By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. - Brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. - If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**Heb 12:22-24** - Ex 24:8; Heb 11:28 - 1 Peter 1:2; Heb 10:19-22 - Matt 11:28; 1 John 1:7

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 85*

## Meditation

***You have come to ... the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel. - Hebrews 12:24***

Reader, have *you* come to the blood of sprinkling? The question is not whether you have come to a knowledge of doctrine, or an observance of ceremonies, or to a certain form of experience, but *have you come to the blood of Jesus?*

The blood of Jesus is the life of all vital godliness. If you have truly come to Jesus, we know how you came - the Holy Spirit graciously brought you there. You came to the blood of sprinkling with no merits of your own. Guilty, lost, and helpless, you came to take that blood, and that blood alone, as your everlasting hope. You came to the cross of Christ, with perhaps a trembling and an aching heart; but what a precious sound it was to you when you heard the voice of the blood of Jesus! The dropping of His blood is as the music of heaven to the penitent sons of earth. We are full of sin, but the Saviour invites us to lift our eyes to Him, and as we look at His bleeding wounds, each drop of blood, as it falls, cries, "It is finished; I have made an end of sin; I have brought in everlasting righteousness." Oh! what precious language the blood of Jesus is speaking to us!

If you have come to that blood once, you will come to it constantly. The theme and pattern of your life will be "*Looking unto Jesus.*" (Heb 12:2) and "*coming to Him.*" (1 Peter 2:4). Your whole conduct will be epitomized in this. Not so much having once looked and once come but rather always looking and always coming. If you have ever come to the blood of sprinkling, you will feel your need of coming to it every day. He who doesn't want to wash in it every day, is indicating that he has never washed in it at all. The believer feels it to be his constant joy and privilege that there is still a fountain opened. Past experiences are doubtful food for Christians; coming to Christ in the present can alone give us joy and comfort. This morning let us sprinkle our door-post fresh with blood, and then feast upon the Lamb, assured that the destroying angel must pass us by.

## Prayer

*Lord, You have been favorable to Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin. Ps 85:1-2*

## Scripture readings

### **She bound the scarlet cord in the window.**

Bind this line of scarlet cord in the window ... bring ... all your father's household to your own home. ... Whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. - By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. - His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." - Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

**Josh 2:21** - Josh 2:18-19; Heb 11:31 - Matt 7:24-25; John 2:5 - John 14:21 - Heb 9:19-20; Ex 12:13

*Suggested additional reading: Joshua 2*

## Meditation

### ***She bound the scarlet cord in the window.* - Joshua 2:21**

Rahab considered the spies as representatives of the God of Israel and accepted their promise as the basis of her preservation. Her faith was simple and firm, and she was very obedient to it. To tie the

scarlet line in the window was a very trivial act in itself, but she dared not run the risk of neglecting it. Come, my soul, isn't there a lesson here for you? Have you been attentive to all your Lord's will, even though some of His commands may seem non-essential? Have you observed in his own way the two ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper? To neglect these indicate an unloving disobedience in your heart. Aim to be blameless in all things. Walk faithfully in the light that you have, even to the tying of a thread in your window if this was commanded, and seek daily for more light to understand and know better the will of your Lord.

But this act of Rahab sets forth an even more solemn lesson. Have I implicitly trusted in the precious blood of Jesus for my salvation? Have I tied the scarlet cord, as with a Gordian knot in my window, in such a way that my trust in Christ is always before my eyes and can never be removed? Or can I look out towards the Dead Sea of my sins, or the Jerusalem of my hopes, without seeing the blood. This scarlet cord and its accompanying power should affect my outlook on everything.

Those passing by outside the wall would have seen the cord with its so conspicuous a colour, and it will be well for me if my life makes the efficacy of the atonement conspicuous to all onlookers. What is there to be ashamed of? Let men or devils gaze if they will, the blood of my Saviour is my boast and my song.

Then think my soul, there is Someone who will see that scarlet line, even when from weakness of faith you can't see it yourself. Jehovah, the Avenger, will see it and will in mercy pass over you. Jericho's walls fell flat: Rahab's house was on the wall, and yet it stood unmoved; my nature is built into the wall of humanity, and yet when destruction smites the human race, I shall be secure.

My soul, tie the scarlet cord in your window afresh, and relax in peace.

## Prayer

*Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness. Ps 143:10*

## Scripture readings

### **Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**

You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. ... you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.

The LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die" - "He shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, ... So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins."

The veil is taken away in Christ. - Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation. - Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, ... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

**Matt 27:51** - Ex 26:31;33; Lev 16:2; 15-16 - 2 Cor 3:14; Eph 2:13-14; Heb 10:19-22

*Suggested additional reading: **Heb 10:1-23***

## Meditation

### ***Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*** — *Matthew 27:51*

It took no small miracle to tear this strong, thick veil into two, but its intention was never merely to give a display of power. In this act of mighty God on the occasion of Christ's death we have a number of significant object lessons.

Firstly, *the old law of ordinances was put away*. Like an old worn-out garment it was torn and laid aside. When Jesus died, the sacrifices were all finished. He had fulfilled them all and therefore the temple where they took place was marked with this sign of the end of its usefulness.

Then that rent also *revealed and made public all the hidden things of the old dispensation*. The mercy-seat could now be seen, and the glory of God gleamed forth above it, indicating that in the death of our Lord Jesus we have a clear, abiding revelation of God, “*unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.*” (2 Cor 3:13). Life and immortality are now brought to light, and things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world are made manifest in Him.

*The annual ceremony of atonement was thus abolished*. The atoning blood which was once every year sprinkled within the veil, had now been offered once for all time by the great High Priest, and therefore the place of the symbolical rite was broken up. No blood of bullocks or of lambs is needed now, for Jesus has entered within the veil with his own blood. From now on *access to God is permitted*, and is the privilege of every believer in Christ Jesus. It was not just a small tear giving merely a small hole through which we might peer at the mercy-seat, but the rent reaches from the top to the bottom. We may come with boldness to the throne of heavenly grace.

Do we err if we say that the opening of the Holy of Holies in this marvellous manner, through our Lord’s expiring cry, was a type of the opening of the gates of paradise to all believers? Our bleeding, dying Lord has gained the key of heaven for us; He opens and no man shuts; let us enter with Him into the heavenly places, and sit with Him there till our common enemies shall be made His footstool.

## Prayer

*The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted. Ps 18:46*

## Scripture readings

### **That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death**

He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!"

When this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ... "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. - I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

**Heb 2:14** - Isa 25:7-8 - Hos 13:14 - 1 Cor 15:54-57 - Col 2:15; Rev 1:18

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Cor 5:1-8*

## Meditation

### ***That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death.* - Hebrews 2:14**

O child of God, death has lost its sting! The devil's power over death is destroyed and you can put away any fear of dying. If you have anxious thoughts about that moment when vital parts of your

body will cease to function pray specifically about it. Ask for grace from God the Holy Ghost to give you a clearer understanding and faith in your Redeemer's death, and this will strengthen you for that solemn hour. Living near the cross of Calvary you will begin to think of death with pleasure, and will welcome it when it comes with intense delight.

It's sweet to die in the Lord: it's a covenant-blessing to sleep in Jesus. Death is no longer banishment, it is a return from exile; a going home to the many mansions where the loved ones already live. The distance between glorified spirits in heaven and militant saints on earth seems great; but it's not really so. We aren't far from home; a moment will bring us there. The sail is spread; the soul is launched upon the deep. How long will the journey take? How many wearying winds must beat upon the sail before it can be reefed in the port of peace? How long will that soul be tossed upon the waves before it comes to that sea which knows no storm? Listen to the answer, "*Absent from the body ... present with the Lord.*" (2 Cor 5:8). Yon ship has just departed, but it's already at its haven. It did but spread its sail and it was there. Like that ship of old, on the Lake of Galilee, a storm had tossed it, but Jesus said, "Peace, be still," and *immediately* it came to land. Don't imagine that a long period divides the moment of death from the eternity of glory. When the eyes close on earth they open in heaven. The horses of fire aren't on the road for an instant.

Then, O child of God, what is there for you to fear in death, seeing that through the death of your Lord its curse and sting are destroyed? It's now like a Jacob's ladder whose foot is in the dark grave, but its top reaches to glory everlasting

## Prayer

*I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

*Ps 73:23-24*

## Scripture readings

### **I know that my Redeemer lives,**

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!"

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they ... came to the tomb, ... but they found the stone rolled away. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And ... behold, two men stood by them in shining garments ... then as they were afraid ... these said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!"

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. - This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.

**Job 19:25** - Hos 13:14 - Luke 24:1-6 - John 11:25; Eph 1:7 - Rev 1:18 - 2 Tim 1:12; Heb 6:19

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 24***

## Meditation

### ***I know that my Redeemer lives.*** - Job 19:25

The marrow of Job's comfort lies in that little word "**my**"; "my Redeemer," and in the fact that *his* Redeemer lives. Oh! to grasp hold of a living Christ in a personal way. We must know Him as ours before we can enjoy Him. What is gold to me all the time it is still in the mine? There are men begging for bread around gold mines and

oil mines as in every city of the world. It is only when I have gold in my purse that I can buy the bread I need. So a Redeemer who doesn't redeem *me*, a Saviour who has no interest in helping *me*, is irrelevant for my life. Christ calls all hungry, thirsty and weary sinful men and women to Him and offers His salvation to all who will have it, so don't rest content until by faith you can say "Yes, I have cast myself on the mercy of the risen Lord; He has received me and now I know He is mine." Maybe you sense that your trust in Him is still very weak and you hardly dare say, "He lives as *my* Redeemer;" but remember if you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard seed, that little faith entitles you to say it.

But there is also another word here, which expresses Job's strong confidence, "*I know.*" To say, "I hope so, I trust so" is comfortable; and there are thousands in the fold of Jesus who never seem to get further than this. But to reach true and lasting comfort you must be able to say, "I know." Ifs, buts, and maybes, are murderers of peace and comfort. Doubts are dreadful things in times of sorrow. Like wasps they sting the soul! If I have any suspicion that I don't really belong to Christ then this is like vinegar mixed with the gall of death. But if "*I know.*" that Jesus has defeated the power of sin and death and has risen again for **me**, then darkness is not dark and even the night is light about me.

Surely if Job, many centuries before the birth of Christ, could say, "*I know,*" *we* shouldn't need to speak with any less certainty. Make sure that you are building your confidence on the right foundation, namely fully on Jesus Himself and on the basis of a personal trust-relationship with Him. This faith in Him will involve trusting the Gospel promises He has given us. Immerse yourself in these and God has promised us the witness of His Spirit with our spirit that we are His children. A living Redeemer, truly mine, is joy unspeakable.

## Prayer

*I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.* Ps 9:1-2

## Scripture readings

### **Him God has exalted to His right hand**

The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." - And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.

God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

**Acts 5:31** - Ps 110:1; Matt 28:18-19 - Phil 2:9-11 - Eph 2:4-6 - Col 3:1-4

*Suggested additional reading: Col 2:11 – 3:11*

## Meditation

### ***Him God has exalted to His right hand.*** - Acts 5:31

Jesus, our Lord, once cruelly crucified to death, wrapped lovingly by His friends in linen grave clothes and buried in a Jewish sepulchre, now sits on the highest throne of glory. The most honourable seat in heaven is His by undisputed right! But a most wonderful thought for our meditation today is that the exaltation of Christ by His Father to this throne in heaven is a **representative**

**exaltation.** Although as Jehovah He has eminent glories which we as finite creatures can never share, yet as our Mediator the honours which Jesus wears in heaven are the heritage of all the saints.

It is delightful to reflect how close the union is between Christ and His believing people. We are actually one with Him; we are members of His body; and His exaltation is our exaltation. He will grant us to sit with Him on His throne, even as He overcame, and is sat down with His Father on His throne. (*Rev 3:21*) He has a crown, and He gives us crowns too; (*2 Tim 4: 8*). He has a throne, but He is not content with having a throne to Himself, on His right hand there must be His queen, arrayed in “gold of Ophir.” (*Ps 45:9*). He cannot be glorified without His bride.

Look up to Jesus now, believer; let your eye of faith imagine Him on His throne in the glory crowned with many crowns; and remember that one day you will be like Him: “*We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*” (*1 John 3:2*); not so great as He is, you won't be so divine, but still you will, in a measure, share the same honours, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which He possesses. Be content to live unknown for a little while, and to walk your weary way through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction; for soon you shall reign with Christ. He has “*made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign on the earth.*” (*Rev 5: 10*)

Oh! wonderful thought for the children of God! We have Christ for our glorious representative in the courts of heaven now, and soon He will come and receive us to Himself to be with Him there, to behold His glory, and to share His joy.

## Prayer

*Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the LORD's name is to be praised. The LORD is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, who dwells on high, Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? Ps 113:2-6*

## Scripture readings

**Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. - And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. - For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Saviour, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

**Romans 8 37** - 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 12:9-10 - 1 John 4:4; 1 John 5:4-5 - Josh 1:5-6 - Jude 24-25

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Sam 17:40-51*

## Meditation

***Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*** - *Romans 8:37*

We go to Christ for forgiveness, and then too often look to the law for the strength to fight our sins. Paul rebukes us with the words he wrote to the Church in Galatia: "*O foolish Galatians! who has*

*bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth? ... This only I want to learn from you, Did you received the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?"* (Gal 3:1-3).

Take your “*besetting sins*” to Christ’s cross, for it is only there that our old nature can be put to death, for “*our old man is crucified with Him*”. (Rom 6:6). The only weapon with which to fight sin is the spear which pierced the side of Jesus. To give an illustration; you want to overcome an angry temper, how do you go about it? It is quite likely that you have never tried the right way. Go to Jesus with it. How did I get salvation? I came to Jesus just as I was, and I trusted Him to save me. I must kill my angry temper in the same way? It is the only way in which I can ever kill it. I must go to the cross with it, and say to Jesus, “Lord, I trust You to deliver me from this.” That is the only way to give it a death-blow. Are you covetous? Do you feel the world entangling you? You may struggle against this evil so long as you please, but if it's your besetting sin, you will never be delivered from it in any other way than by the blood of Jesus. Take it to Christ. Tell Him, “Lord, I have trusted You, and Your name is Jesus, for You save Your people from their sins; Lord, this is one of my sins; save me from it!”

Good resolutions and the confessional are nothing without Christ as a means of mortification. Your prayers, and your repentances, and your tears, the whole of them put together, are worth nothing without Him. “None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good;” or helpless saints either! You must be conquerors through Him who has loved you, if you are to be conquerors at all. Our laurels must grow among His olives in Gethsemane

## Prayer

*I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust. Ps 18:1-2*

## Scripture readings

### **And because of all this, we make a sure covenant.**

God is the LORD, and He has given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You. - Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. - That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring; They will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses. One will say, 'I am the LORD's'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; another will write with his hand, 'The LORD's,' and name himself by the name of Israel.

O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD now in the presence of all His people.

**Neh 9:38** - Ps 118:27-29; Heb 13:15 - Rom 12:1; Phil 2:15 - Isa 44:3-5 - Ps 116:16-18

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 116*

## Meditation

***And because of all this we make a sure covenant*** - Neh 9:38

There are various experiences in our lives which should prompt us to renew our personal covenant with God. This would bring blessing to us and glory to God. For instance after ***recovery from serious illness*** it would be appropriate to dedicate the renewed health

and strength God has given us to His service. After any *deliverance from trouble*, when we again find joy in our life let's revisit the foot of the cross, and renew our consecration. And then again, and perhaps especially, after any *sin which has grieved the Holy Spirit* or brought dishonour upon the cause of God; let us look to that blood which can make us whiter than snow and again offer ourselves unto the Lord.

But we shouldn't only let our troubles be reasons for confirming our dedication to God, but *times of prosperity* should also prompt the same. Whenever we have experiences which deserve to be called "*crowning mercies*" then, surely, if He has crowned us, we ought also to be ready to crown our God. Let's bring out afresh all the jewels of the fruit of His Spirit which He has so graciously planted in our hearts, and allow our God to sit on the throne of our love, as our King of kings and Lord of lords.

If we could only learn to profit spiritually through times of prosperity, we wouldn't need so much adversity. If we could gain from God's kiss all the good it should provoke in us, perhaps we wouldn't have to suffer so much under His rod. Have we recently received some blessing we little expected? Has the Lord placed our feet in a large room? Can we sing of mercies multiplied? Then this is the day to put our hand upon the horns of the altar, and say, "Bind me here, my God; bind me here with cords, even for ever."

As often as we need God to fulfill His promises to us, let us bring to Him our renewed prayer so that our vows and promises to Him may not be dishonoured. And finally as often as we meditate on Christ's sufferings and death and remember Him in fellowship with his people around His table let us use these times as a another wonderful reason to renew our own personal "*sure covenant*" to be His and His alone.

## Prayer

*I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation. Ps 118:21*

## Scripture readings

### **Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.**

Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people also, and your father's house; so the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him. - You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse.

Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. - My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

**Song 2:10** - Ps 45:10-11; Song 4:7-8 - 2 Cor 6:17-18 - Rev 22:17; John 10:27-28 - Col 3:1-4

*Suggested additional reading: **John 17:6-26***

## Meditation

***Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.*** — Song 2:10

Listen! I can hear the voice of my Beloved? He's speaking to *me*! The Spring sunshine is delighting the land and He can't bear for me to be spiritually asleep while nature all around me is waking up from her winter's rest. He calls me to "*rise up,*" and it's true, I've been too

long engrossed in the activities of this world. He is risen, I am risen in Him, why then should I “*cling to the dust*”? (Ps 119:25). From lower loves, desires, pursuits, and aspirations, I need to rise towards Him.

He is calling me with the amazing title “*my love*,” and says I'm His “*fair one*”; what more persuasion do I need! If He is honouring me in this way and really thinks me attractive, how can I stay in the “*tents of Kedar*” (Psalm 120:5) and find my companions among the sons of men? He's inviting me to “*come away!*” and wants to take me further and further from everything selfish, grovelling, worldly and sinful; yes too from the outwardly religious world which doesn't really know Him; religion that has no sympathy with the mystery of the higher life.

There's nothing harsh about this loving call, “*come away*” and what is there down here to hold me in this wilderness of vanity and sin? O my Lord, I would love to come away with You, but I fear I'm somehow so entangled in the thorns here, that I can't escape as I would love to. If it were really possible, I'd have neither eyes, nor ears, nor heart for sin. You are calling me to Yourself with these wonderful words, “*come away*,” and what a melodious sound that is! To come to You would be to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labour, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes. But Lord, how can a stone rise, how can a lump of clay come away from the horrible pit? O raise me, draw me. Your grace can do it. Send me Your Holy Spirit; stir up the sacred flames of love in my heart, and I will begin and keep on rising until I leave life and time behind me, and really and truly “*come away*”.

## Prayer

*Draw me away! We will run after you. ... We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine.*

*Song 1:4*

## Scripture readings

### **Do this in remembrance of Me**

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

He has made His wonderful works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. - Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early.

And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place." - Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

**1 Cor 11:24** - Luke 22:19-20 - Ps 111:4; Isa 26:8-9 - Ex 13:2; Ps 103:2-4 - Matt 26:41

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 22:7-22***

## Meditation

***This do in remembrance of Me.*** - 1 Corinthians 11:24

Does this mean that Christians can forget Christ! There would be no need for this loving exhortation if there were no fear that our memories might prove treacherous. Nor is this idea just a suggestion,

it has sadly too often proved to be the case. It's not just a possibility, but a lamentable fact.

It would seem incredible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb, rescued from their sins and loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should forget their Saviour! But unlikely as this appears, in practise none of us can deny that it happens. Forget Him who never forgot us! Forget Him who allowed His blood to pour forth for our sins! Forget Him who loved us even to death! Can it be possible? Yes, it is not only possible, but our conscience will tell us we are all guilty of it. We are prepared to allow Him, the Saviour who loves us so much, to be like an occasional visitor to our thoughts when He should be Lord and Master there.

It is the incessant turmoil of the world, the constant attraction of earthly things which takes away the soul from Christ. While our memories will preserve poisonous weeds, they quickly allow the rose of Sharon to wither.

In the communion service we have our Lord's antidote for our forgetfulness; "*This do in remembrance of Me.*" Through the bread and wine our thoughts are vividly brought back to His body broken and His blood shed for us and as we eat and drink we express in a tangible way the faith which unites us to Him. Let us take every opportunity to obey His command and so to bind a heavenly forget-me-not around our hearts for Jesus our beloved Saviour. Whatever else we let slip from our memories, let's hold fast to Him.

## Prayer

*We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, in the midst of Your temple. According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*

*Ps 48:9-10*

## Scripture readings

### God, our own God

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. - This is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death.

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. - The LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. - I trust in You, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in Your hand.

Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

**Ps 67:6** - Jer 31:33; Ps 48:14 - Jer 31:3; Ps 84:11-12 - Ps 73:25-26; Ps 31:14-15-  
Ps 67:5-7

*Suggested additional reading: Genesis 15*

## Meditation

### **God, our own God.** - *Psalm 67:6*

It is strange how little use we make of the spiritual blessings which God gives us, but it is stranger still how little we make use of God Himself. Although He is "*our own God,*" we apply ourselves but little to Him, and ask but little of Him. How seldom do we seek His counsel and how often do we simply go about our business without waiting on Him for guidance! In our troubles more often

than not we struggle on in our own weakness, weighed down by our problems, instead of responding to the Psalmist exhortation: “*Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you*” (Ps 55:22). The reason for our hesitancy must lie in ourselves and not in our God. In simple words His gracious invitation, which His word expresses in so many different ways, runs like this: “I am yours, soul, come and make use of me as you will; you may freely come to my store, and the oftener you come the more welcome you are.”

It's our own fault if we don't avail ourselves of God's riches. We have a rich, wise and all powerful friend who has given us this open invitation, it must surely be nothing but our own pride which keeps us back from depending upon Him daily in all the practical ways we need. Never keep quiet about your needs when you talk to Him; never fear or faint when your God is there to help you; go to His treasury, it's there for you, tell Him your situation and trust His wisdom to give you out of His riches what He considers best for you. Learn the divine skill of making God Himself and His will the highest aim of your life. He can supply you with everything and anything, but what is better still He can be to you instead of everything.

I would urge you, then, to make use of your God. Make use of Him in prayer. Go to Him often, because He is **your** God. O, why fail to use so great a privilege? Fly to Him, tell Him all your needs. Use Him constantly by faith every day. If some dark circumstance is darkening your life, use your God as a “*sun*,” if some strong enemy is attacking you, find in Jehovah a “*shield*,” for He has promised to be a sun and shield to His people. (Ps 84 11). If you have lost your way in the maze of life, use Him as a “*guide*,” for He will direct you. Whatever you are, and wherever you are, remember God is just what you want, and just where you want, and that He can do all you want.

## Prayer

*Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You." Ps 16:1-2*

## Scripture readings

### **Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.**

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

"For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you". - "My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed", says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken ... establish it forever and do as You have said. So let Your name be magnified forever.

Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in Your word. I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

**Ps 119:49** - Isa 40:28-41 - Isa 54:7; Isa 54:10 - 2 Sam 7:25-26 - Ps 119:74-76 - Luke 21:33

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 55*

## Meditation

### ***Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope. — Psalm 119:49***

Whatever your present need may be, you will find a promise in the Bible which just suits it. Are you feeling faint and tired because

your way is rough and you are weary? Here is the promise: “*He gives power to the faint.*” (Is 40 29). When you read such a promise, take it back to the great Promiser, and ask Him to fulfil His own word.

Are you seeking after Christ, and thirsting for closer communion with Him? This promise shines like a star before you: “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.*” (Matt 5:6). Take that promise to the throne continually; don't plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this: “Lord, You have said it, do as You have said.”

Are you distressed because of sin, and burdened with the guilt from things in your past? Listen to these words: “*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake and I will not remember your sins.*” (Is 43 25). You have no merit of your own to plead as a reason why He should pardon you, but you have this promise, so plead this, His written commitment, and He will do it.

Are you afraid lest you won't be able to hold on to the end, lest, after having thought yourself a child of God, you should prove a castaway? If that is your fear, take this word of grace to the throne and plead it: “*The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed.*” (Is 54:10)

If you have lost the precious sense of the Saviour's presence, and are seeking Him with a sad heart, remember the promises: “*Return to Me, and I will return to you*” (Mal 3:7); and “*For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you.*” (Is 54:7). Let your faith feed on God's own word, and whatever your needs or fears, take them to the Bank of Faith with your Father's note of promise and say: “*Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.*”

## Prayer

*Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations.*

*Ps 119:89-90*

## Scripture readings

### **You are my hope in the day of doom.**

If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it? - O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

His wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. - But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. - The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.

My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. - I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

**Jer 17:17** - Amos 3:6; Hab 3:2 - Job 2:9-10 - Ps 77:2-3; Ps 59:16 - Ps 62:5-6; Rom 8:18

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 46*

## Meditation

***You are my hope in the day of doom*** — Jeremiah 17:17

The path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and storm. True, the Scriptures tell us

that “*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;*” (Prov 3:17) and it is a great truth, that our faith in Christ gives us happiness below as well as bliss above; but experience teaches us that if the “*path of the just is like the shining sun that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day,*” (Prov 4:18): yet sometimes that light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer’s sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light.

There are many who have rejoiced in God's presence for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the earlier stages of their Christian life; they have walked along the “*green pastures*” by the side of the “*still waters*”, but suddenly they find the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the Land of Goshen they have to tread the sandy desert; in the place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they are tempted to say, “Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen.” Oh! you don't need to think like that, you who are walking in darkness. The best of God’s saints must drink the wormwood; the dearest of His children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; there are times when every believer will want to hang his harp on the willows (*Ps 137:1-2*).

Perhaps the Lord planned a smooth and unclouded path for you at first because you were weak and timid. He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must experience the riper and rougher path of God’s full-grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten branches of self-dependence, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope.

## Prayer

*And now, Lord, what do I wait for? my hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions. Ps 39:7-8*

## Scripture readings

### All the children of Israel complained

You complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. ... For the LORD will rise up ... that He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His unusual act. Now therefore, do not be mockers, lest your bonds be made strong.

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes. I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

**Num 14:2** - Deut 1:27 - Isa 28:17;21-22 - Heb 12:9-11 - Ps 119:71;75

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 106*

## Meditation

***And all the children of Israel complained.*** - Numbers 14:2

There are complainers among Christians now, just as there were in the camp of Israel of old. There are those who expect only sunshine and fair weather and cry out against any difficult and testing circumstances that our Father in His wisdom may use to discipline us. "Why is this happening to me?" they cry, "What have I done to deserve this sort of treatment?"

Although some may complain louder than others I suspect there are times when we all have such questions in our hearts so let's try

and look at these complaints realistically. What grounds do we have to murmur against the circumstances our heavenly Father allows into our lives? Can He treat us more harshly than we deserve? Consider what rebels we once were and yet He has loved us and forgiven us! Surely, if in His wisdom He now sees fit to put us through a training programme to refine and improve our characters we shouldn't complain, we should rather praise and thank Him. After all if this were punishment it would need to be far worse!

There is corruption and badness in all of us and it is our Father's concern to bring this to the surface so that it can be dealt with. Our murmuring and complaining is evidence of the selfishness and impatience which He is aiming to remove. Have you any idea how much dross is mingled with the gold in your character? The fire needs to be really hot if it is to purge it away. Although God already sees us as His holy children, covered in the righteousness and perfection of Christ, He is working to bring us to conform to the image of His Son and these difficulties in your life are part of this sanctification programme. Pray for a submissive spirit. The bitterness, rebellion, jealousy which are coming to the surface need to be acknowledged and repented of. They've been lying there hidden, covered with the spiritual vernier that you have been trying so hard to cultivate. Now like pus in a wound they are coming out! Talk realistically to God about them. Look to Christ. Did He react in this way to suffering in His life? Seek a greater measure of His Spirit.

But overall remember that your heavenly Father "*does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.*" (Lam 3:33). All His corrections are sent in love, to purify you, and to draw you nearer to Him. Thank Him for what He's doing and co-operate with Him so that this cleansing process can quickly have beneficial results in your life for His glory and your blessing.

## Prayer

*Remember me, O LORD, with the favour You have toward Your people. Oh, visit me with Your salvation, that I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones. Ps 106:4-5*



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