



Daily Manna  
August

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.

## Scripture readings

### **"Let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain"**

I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom - Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than heaven - what can you do? Deeper than Sheol - what can you know? - The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever.

Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. - I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. - More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. - All the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God. - Abraham in hope believed ... he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

**Ruth 2:2** - Eccl 1:13; Job 11:7-8; Deut 29:29 - Jer 15:16; Job 23:12; Ps 19:10-11 - Rom 10:8-9; 2 Cor 1:20; Rom 4:18;20-21

*Suggested additional reading: **Prov 2***

## Meditation

***"Let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain."*** - *Ruth 2:2*

Depressed and troubled Christian, come and glean today in the broad field of God's promises. There are an abundance of precious promises here, which exactly suit your needs. Take this one: *A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench.*

(Is 42:3). Is that suitable for you? A reed, helpless, insignificant, and weak, a bruised reed, out of which no music can come; weaker than weakness itself; do you feel to be like such a reed; a reed bruised by all that has happened to you. Yet, and here is the promise, He will not break you nor allow you to be broken, but on the contrary, will restore and strengthen you! Or, are you like a smoking flax? You feel totally unable to give out any light or warmth to give your Lord pleasure, but, nevertheless, in His grace He won't snuff you out but rather blow on you with the precious breath of His Holy Spirit till He has fanned you into a flame.

Then try gleaning from another ear? *"Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"*. (Matt 11:28). What kind and gentle words! Your heart is vulnerable, and the Master knows it, and therefore He speaks so gently to you. Won't you respond and obey Him, and come to Him even now?

Then take another ear of corn: *"Fear not, you worm Jacob, ... I will help you, says the Lord and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel"*. (Is 41:14). How can you fear with such a wonderful assurance as this?

You can gather ten thousand such golden ears as these! *"I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins."* (Is 44:22). Or this, *"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool"*. (Is 1:18) Or this, *"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' ... And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely"*. (Rev 22:17). Our Master's field is rich with grain. Search the Scriptures, see what treasure there is there. Don't be timid, believer. Don't hesitate, gather what you need. All God's promises in Christ are Yes and Amen (2 Cor 1:20). This means that when you come to Christ all God's promises to His children belong to you. Don't be afraid, only believe! Grasp these precious promises, thresh them out by meditation and feed on them with joy.

## Prayer

*How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Ps 119:103-104*

## Scripture readings

### **Who works all things according to the counsel of His will**

With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding. - My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. - Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counsellor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him?

Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; - I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, ... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honoured, and I have loved you; Everyone who is called by My name ... I have created for My glory.

**Eph 1:11.** Job 12:13. Isa 46:10 - Isa 40:13-14. - Acts 2:22-23 - John 10:17-18 - Eph 1:4-5 - Isa 43:1;4;7

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 43:1-13*

## Meditation

### ***Who works all things according to the counsel of His will.-***

*Ephesians 1:11*

Part of our faith in God's all embracing wisdom is our acceptance of a divine purpose and a detailed plan for His work of salvation.

What would *creation* be like without His design? Is it really possible that nature could have simply evolved. Is there a fish in the sea, or a bird in the air which was left to chance in its formation?

Although many think so, the eye of faith can trace the hand of a wise and loving God in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel. We marvel at the infinite wisdom displayed in the intricate design of every aspect of nature around us. And if God is present in creation, ruling over everything, why not in His work of *grace*? Is it likely that God would allow His new creation to be controlled by human free will with all its fickleness when divine counsel rules His old creation?

Look at *Providence*! The Scriptures tell us that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground outside of our Father's will. Even the hairs of our head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our suffering in scales, and the hills of our trials in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance. No; He knows the end from the beginning. He sees every stone in its appointed place. Not only the corner-stone which He has laid in His dear Son and His atoning death at Calvary, but He also sees each chosen, living stone in its ordained position. Each taken out of the quarry of the mass of humanity and polished by His grace; He sees the whole 'building' from corner to cornice, from base to roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He has in His mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in the place prepared for it, and how vast will the final edifice be. And He knows the exact time when the capstone will finally be laid with shoutings of "*Grace! Grace! to it.*" (Zech 4:7)

Finally it will be clearly seen and acknowledged with appreciation and wonder that in every chosen believer, loved from before the foundation of earth, Jehovah did exactly as He chose with His own, and that in every aspect of His work of grace He has accomplished His purpose, and glorified His own name.

## Prayer

*O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You are acquainted with all my ways. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. Ps 139:1-6*

## Scripture readings

### **The Lamb is its light.**

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. - Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. - The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory.

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; - And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one

When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. - For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light. - In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

**Rev 21:23** - Rev 21:23-24; Isa 24:23; Isa 60:19 - John 17:24;22 - 1 Cor 13:10; 12; Ps 36:9; Ps 16:11

*Suggested additional reading: **Revelation 1***

## Meditation

### ***The Lamb is its light*** - Revelation 21:23

Quietly contemplate the Lamb as the light of heaven. Light in Scripture is the emblem of **joy**. The joy of the saints in heaven is this: *Jesus* chose us, loved us, bought us, cleansed us, clothed us, kept us, glorified us: we are here entirely through the Lord Jesus. Each one of these thoughts will be to us like the luscious grapes of Eshcol.

Light is also the cause of **beauty**. Beauty and our vision of beauty is dependent on light. Without light no radiance flashes from

the sapphire, no peaceful ray proceeds from the pearl; and in a similar way all the beauty of the saints above comes from Jesus. As planets, they reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness; they live as beams proceeding from the central orb. If He were to withdraw, they must die; if His glory were veiled, their glory would expire.

Light is also the emblem of *knowledge*. In heaven our knowledge will be perfect, but the Lord Jesus Himself will be the fountain of it. Dark circumstances on earth, never understood before, will then be clearly seen, and all that puzzles us now will become plain to us in the light of the Lamb. What reason there will be to worship and glorify the God of love when we understand our earthly lives in His light!

Light also means *manifestation*. Light reveals. In this world it is not yet clear what we shall be. God's people are a hidden people, but when Christ receives His people into heaven, He will touch them with the wand of His own love, and change them into the image of His revealed glory. They were poor and wretched, but what a transformation! They were stained with sin, but one touch of His finger, and they will be as bright as the sun, and clear as crystal. Oh! what a manifestation! All this proceeds from the exalted Lamb. Whatever there may be of effulgent splendour, Jesus will be the centre and soul of it all. Oh! to be present and to see Him in His own light, the King of kings, and Lord of lords!

## Prayer

*O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honour and majesty, Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. ... O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. ...May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in His works. Ps 104:1-2;24;31*

## Scripture readings

### **The people who know their God shall be strong.**

Those who know Your name will put their trust in You. - The Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true.

This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. - It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. - The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. By my God I can leap over a wall. It is God who arms me with strength.

Abraham my friend: He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD

**Dan 11:32;** Ps 9:10; 1 John 5:20 – John 17:3; 2 Cor 4:6; Ps 18:28;29;32 - Isa 41:8; Rom 4:20-22 - Jer 9:24.

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Kings 17*

## Meditation

### ***The people that do know their God shall be strong***

*Daniel 11:32*

Every believer understands that to know God is the highest and best form of knowledge; and this spiritual knowledge is a source of strength to the Christian.

It strengthens his *faith*. Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as people who are enlightened and taught of the Lord.

They are said to “*have an unction from the Holy One,*” (1 John 2 20) which refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. His work is to teach them God's truth, which in turn increases and nourishes their faith.

Knowledge strengthens *love*, as well as faith. Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour. Or, to use another similitude, knowledge paints the portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love Him. We cannot love a Christ whom we do not know, at least, in some degree. If we know but little of the excellences of Jesus, what He has done for us, and what He is doing now, we cannot love Him much; but the more we know Him, the more we shall love Him.

Knowledge also strengthens *hope*. How can we hope for something we don't know exists? Hope may be likened to a telescope, but till we receive instruction, our ignorance blocks the lens and we can't see anything at all. Knowledge removes the blockage and then as we look through the bright optic glass we catch a glimpse of the the glory to come and anticipate it with joyous certainty.

Knowledge gives us reasons for *patience*. How shall we have patience unless we know something of the love and sympathy of Christ, and understand the good which is promised to come out of the times of testing and correction which our heavenly Father sends us?

Nor is there one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy knowledge. How important it is then to grow not only in grace, but also in the “knowledge” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## Prayer

*Make me understand the way of Your precepts; so shall I meditate on Your wonderful works. My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word. Psalm 119:27-28*

## Scripture readings

**We know that all things work together for good to those who love God,**

And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart. - I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined ... They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, "This is My people"; and each one will say, "The LORD is my God." - We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth. - Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

**Rom 8:28** - Deut 8:1-3; Zech 13:9- Ps 46:1-2 - Ps 25:12-13; 2 Cor 4:16-17

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 25*

## Meditation

***We know that all things work together for good to them that love God*** - Romans 8:28

There are many mysteries in the Word of God but there are some things about which a believer is absolutely certain. He knows, for instance, that God is sitting in the stern of the boat when it rocks most. He believes that an invisible hand is always on the world's

tiller, and that whenever circumstances may seem to be drifting out of control, Jehovah is in fact steering them. That re-assuring knowledge prepares him for everything. He looks over the raging waters and sees the spirit of Jesus treading the waves, and he hears a voice saying, "It is I, be not afraid." He knows too that God is always wise, and, knowing this, he is confident that there can be no accidents, no mistakes; that nothing can happen that didn't ought to happen. He can say, "If I should lose everything I have, if God so wills it, it is better that I should lose it than have it. The apparent worst calamity is in fact the wisest and the kindest thing that could happen to me if God ordains it."

*"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."* The Christian does not merely hold this as a theory, but he *"knows"* it as a matter of fact. His God-given faith provides him with the evidence of its truth. (*Heb 11:1*). Also through the eyes of his faith his experiences substantiate it. Everything has worked for good til now; the poisonous drugs have been mixed in fit proportions and have worked the cure; the sharp cuts of the lancet have cleansed out the proud flesh and facilitated the healing. Every event up to now has produced the most divinely blessed results. And so, believing that God rules all, that He governs wisely, that He brings good out of evil, the believer's heart is assured, and he is enabled calmly to meet each trial as it comes. The believer can pray in the spirit of true resignation, "Send me what You will, my God. I will be content so long as it comes from You. You feed us from Your table, O Lord, and never has a poisonous dish ever been served to any of Your children."

*"Say not my soul, 'From whence can God relieve my care?  
Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere.  
His method is sublime, His heart profoundly kind,  
God never is before His time, and never is behind.'"*

## Prayer

*Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! but let those who love Him be like the sun when it comes out in full strength."*

*Judg 5:31*

## Scripture readings

### **Watchman, what of the night?**

This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. - Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

To you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. - Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming.

The prophetic word confirmed. ... a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout. ... And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

**Isa 21:11**; Acts 1:11; Rom 13:11-12 - Mal 4:2; - Mark 13:35 - 2 Peter 1:19 1 Thess 4:16-17 - Rev 22:20

*Suggested additional reading: **Matthew 25:1-13***

## Meditation

***Watchman, what of the night?*** - *Isaiah 21:11*

***What sort of enemies are out there?*** Doctrinal errors are many, and new ones seem to appear every day. Against what heresy should I be on my guard?

Sins creep out from their hiding places when darkness comes. I must climb the watch-tower myself and watch with prayer. Our

heavenly Protector foresees all the attacks which are about to be made upon us, even when as yet the evil planned is still but a wish in Satan's mind. He prays for us that our faith won't fail as He knows that we are to be sifted as wheat. Continue to warn us of our enemies O gracious Watchman, and don't let us sleep in complacency.

“Watchman, what of the night?” *What weather is coming* for the Church? Are the clouds lowering, or is it all clear and fair overhead? We must care for the Church of God with anxious love. Dangers are never far away. Warn us of them O Watchman; ritualism, materialism complacency with worldliness. Teach us to observe the signs of the times, to pray and prepare for conflict.

“Watchman, what of the night?” *What stars are visible?* What precious promises suit our present needs? You sound the alarm, give us the comfort too. Christ, the polestar, is always fixed in His place, and all the stars are secure in the right hand of their Lord.

But watchman, *when is the morning coming?* The Bridegroom delays His coming. Are there no signs of His return as the Sun of Righteousness? Has the morning star risen yet to give the promise of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away?

O Jesus, if You don't come in person to Your waiting Church today please come in your Spirit to my eager heart, and make it sing for joy.

## Prayer

*I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. ... For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Ps 16:7;10-11*

## Scripture readings

### **The upright love you**

Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! - When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. - I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.

Love rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. - We love Him because He first loved us.

Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

**Song of Solomon 1:4;** Ps 31:23; John 21:15 - Ps 116:1-2 - John 14:23; Prov 8:17 - 1 Cor 13:6-7; Rom 5:5; 1 John 4:19 - Eph 6:23-24

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Cor 13*

## Meditation

### ***The upright love You - Song 1:4***

Believers love Jesus with a deeper affection than they dare to give to any other being. They would sooner lose father and mother than part with Christ. They hold all earthly comforts with a loose hand, but they carry Him fast, embraced in their hearts. They voluntarily deny themselves for His sake, but they can not be driven

to *deny* Him. If in a moment of weakness some form of denial passes their lips, it is their greatest sorrow and like Peter they repent with bitter tears.

It is scant love which the fire of persecution can dry up; the true believer's love is a deeper stream than this. Men have laboured to divide the faithful from their Master, but their attempts have been fruitless in every age. Neither crowns of honour, nor frowns of anger, have untied this more than Gordian knot. This is no every-day attachment which the world's power may eventually dissolve. Neither man nor devil have found a key which opens this lock. Never has the craftiness of Satan shown itself so weak as when he has used it in trying to break apart this union of two divinely welded hearts.

It is written, and nothing can blot out the sentence, "*The upright love You.*" The intensity of the love of the upright, however, is not so much to be judged by how it appears, as by how the upright long for it to be. It is our daily sorrow that we don't love Him enough. Would that our hearts were capable of holding more, and reaching deeper. Like Samuel Rutherford, we sigh and cry, "*Oh, for as much love as would go round about the earth, and over heaven — yea, the heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds — that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ.*"

Alas! the longest reach of our love is hardly longer than our arms and our affection is but as a drop of a bucket compared with what He deserves. Measure our love to our Lord by our intentions however and we are immediately in another scale. Our trust is that our Lord will understand our weaknesses and take notice of the cry of our heart to love Him more. Oh, that we could give all the love in all hearts in one great mass, a bringing together of all loves to Him who is altogether lovely!

## 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

### **They weave the spider's web**

No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web.

*Isaiah 59:4-5*

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

**Isa 59:5;** Isa 59:4-5 - Matt 7:21 - Matt 15:8-9 - James 1:22,26 - 1 Cor 13:1,2

*Suggested additional reading: Acts 13:4-12*

## Meditation

### ***They weave the spider's web.***- Isaiah 59:5

Look at a spider's web, and see in it a most suggestive picture of the religion of a hypocrite.

The spider's web is ***a trap to catch prey***. The spider fattens itself on flies, and the Pharisee has his reward. The foolish and naive are easily enticed and entrapped by the loud claims of false religion and even the more careful don't always manage to escape. Philip baptized

Simon Magus, whose declaration of faith was so soon exposed as being unspiritual and it met the stern rebuke of Peter. Reputation, praise, advancement, are some of the flies which hypocrites catch in their nets.

A spider's web is *a marvel of skill*. Look at it and admire the cunning hunter's strategy. Aren't the religious claims of a deceiver similarly wonderful? How does he make so barefaced a lie appear to be a truth? How can he make his glittering tinsel appear as pure gold?

A spider's web *comes all from the creature's own bowels*. The bee by contrast gathers her wax from flowers. The spider sucks no flowers, and yet she can produce and spin out her material to whatever length she chooses. Even so hypocrites find their trust and hope within themselves; their anchor has been forged on their own anvil, and their cable twisted by their own hands. They lay their own foundation and hew out the stone for their own house, disdaining to be debtors to the sovereign grace of God.

But a spider's web is *very frail*. It is curiously but not enduringly manufactured. It is no match for the house wife's broom, or the traveller's walking stick. The hypocrite needs no battery of guns to blow his hope to pieces, a mere puff of wind will do it. Hypocritical cobwebs will soon come down when the broom of destruction begins its purifying work. Which reminds us of one more thought, namely, that such cobwebs *will not remain forever in the Lord's house*. Our Master will ensure that the webs and those who spin them will soon be destroyed for ever.

## Prayer

*Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against You. But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.*

*Ps 5:10-11*

## Scripture readings

### The love of the LORD

In Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, ... nor the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way they should go. ... Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing. - Is Ephraim My dear son? ... For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD. - Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. - And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

**Hos 3:1** - Neh 9:19;21; Jer 31:20 - Mic 7:18 - 1 John 4:9-10; 1 John 4:16 - Rom 8:35-37

*Suggested additional reading: Nehemiah 9:5-31*

## Meditation

### *The love of the Lord - Hosea 3:1*

Believer, **look back** through all your experience, and think of the way that the Lord your God has led you up to now through the 'wilderness' of your life, how He has fed and clothed you every day, how He has put up with your bad behaviour, all your murmurings,

and all your longings after the 'flesh-pots of Egypt'. Think how He has opened the rock to give you water and fed you with manna that came down from heaven. Think of how His grace has been sufficient in strengthening and helping you in all your troubles, how through His atoning death He has forgiven all your sins, how His rod and His staff have comforted you.

And when you have looked back on the love of the Lord, then let your faith survey His love *in the future*, for remember that Christ's covenant and blood provide far more blessing than you have yet experienced. He who has loved you and pardoned you, will never cease to love and pardon. He is the Alpha, and He will be the Omega too: He is the first, and He will be the last. Therefore, remember that when you pass through the valley of the shadow of death, you won't need to fear any evil, for He will be with you. When you stand in the cold floods of Jordan, you won't need to be frighten for death can't separate you from His love; and when you come into the mysteries of eternity you won't need to tremble, "*For I am persuaded, that neither death; nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Rom 8 38-39).

Now, soul, doesn't this refresh your love? Doesn't this make you love Jesus? Doesn't such a flight, in thought, through illimitable plains of the ether of love inflame your heart and compel you to delight yourself in the Lord your God? Surely as we meditate on "*the love of the Lord,*" our hearts burn within us, and we long to love Him more.

## Prayer

*I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Ps 23:4-6*

## Scripture readings

### **Christ, who is our life**

The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. - You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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.

I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings ... that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

**Col 3:4;** 1 Cor 15:45; John 5:25-26 - Eph 2:1; Rom 8:2 - Gal 2:20 - Col 3:2-4 - Phil 3:8,9,10,12

*Suggested additional reading: Phil 3*

## Meditation

### ***Christ, who is our life.*** - Colossians 3:4

There is much to think about in this marvellously rich expression - .“*Christ, who is our life.*”

Christ is the **source** of our life. “*You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*”(Eph 2:1) The same voice which brought Lazarus out of the tomb raises us to newness of life

He is now the **substance** of our spiritual life. It is by His life that we live; He is in us, the hope of glory, the spring of all our actions,

the central thought which motivates every other thought.

Christ is the *sustenance* of our life. On what can the Christian feed but on Christ his Saviour? *“I am the bread of Life, He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”* (John 6:35). O weary traveller through the desert of this sinful earth, you will never get a crumb to satisfy the hunger of your soul, except ye find it in Him!

Christ is the *comfort* of our life. All our true joys come from Him and in times of trouble it is only His presence that can give us peace of mind and that quiet assurance that all is well. There is nothing worth living for but Him and His lovingkindness is better than life!

Christ is the *object* of our life. As the ship speeds towards the port, so the believer moves expectantly towards the haven of his Saviour’s presence. As the arrow flies to its goal, so the Christian flies towards the perfecting of his fellowship with Christ Jesus. As the soldier fights for his captain, and is crowned because of his captain’s victory, so the believer stands up for Christ, and gets his triumph through of the triumphs of his Master. For him *“to live is Christ.”* (Phil 1:21)

Christ is the *example* of our life. The nature of the life within will influence and control the development without; and if we live in close fellowship with our Lord Jesus we will grow like Him.

Setting Him before us as our Divine pattern; aiming day by day to follow Him closely, treading carefully in the footprints He has left for us, He will become the *crown* of our life in glory

Oh! how safe, how honoured, how happy we should feel as Christians with Christ as our life!

## Prayer

*Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually. Ps 119:116-117*

## Scripture readings

### **Oh, that I were as in months past**

As in the days when God watched over me; when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise.

Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, LORD, and grant us Your salvation. - Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works. - If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. - As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

**Job 29:2-6**; Ps 42:4 - Ps 51:12; Ps 85:6-7 - Rev 2:4-5; John 7:37; Rev 3:19-20

*Suggested additional reading: Rev 2:1-7*

## Meditation

### ***Oh that I were as in months past.*** - Job 29:2

Many Christians can view the past with pleasure, but now regard the present with dissatisfaction. They look back on past days and remember their fellowship with the Lord as something wonderful and real. Bible reading and prayer were a delight and the church services made Sunday the best day of the week. Now their Christianity has become dreary and somehow they don't feel to fit either into Christian circles or into the company of their former worldly friends. The reason: once they lived near to Jesus, but now

they know they have wandered from Him. Deep in their heart they cry with Job, “*O that I were as in months past!*” Is it like this with you?

There are a number of possible reasons for this sad condition.

It may arise because of a comparative *neglect of prayer*. To neglect a daily quiet time with the Lord is a sure cause for spiritual decline.

Or it may be the result of *idolatry*. Your heart has been occupied with something else more than with God and you are loving the things of earth more than the things of heaven. A jealous God will never be content with a divided heart. He must be loved first and best. He will withdraw the sunshine of His presence from a cold, wandering heart.

Or the cause may be found in *self-confidence* and *self-righteousness*. Pride has been busy in your heart, and instead of lying low at the foot of the cross you are thinking of yourself as someone God should be proud to have on His side.

Christian, if you are not now as you “*were in months past,*” do not stay with just a wish to experience again your earlier happiness. Go at once and seek out your Master and tell Him how you feel. Ask Him for His grace to help you to walk closer to Him. Humble yourself before Him, and before long He will lift you up and give you once again the enjoyment of the sense of His presence. Don't just sit down and sigh and moan about the situation. Because our beloved Physician lives there is hope, no there is more, there is the certainty of recovery for the worst possible cases.

## Prayer

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Ps 51:10-12*

## Scripture readings

### **The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice**

Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns"; For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth. - And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all.

Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure.

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.

**Ps 97:1** - Ps 96:10;13 - Rev 19:6 - 1 Chron 29:11 - Ps 2:1-5 - Phil 2:10-11

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 97*

## Meditation

### ***The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice*** - Psalm 97:1

There can be no basis for worry and fear as long as this wonderful statement is true!

***On earth*** the Lord's power as easily controls the rage of the wicked as the rage of the sea; His love as easily refreshes the poor with mercy as it refreshes the earth with showers. The majestic

power which gleams in flashes of fire amidst the horror of the tempest is also seen in the fall of empires, the demise of governments and the crash of thrones. In all our conflicts and tribulations, we may behold the hand of the divine King.

*“God is God; He sees and hears  
All our troubles, all our tears.  
Soul, forget not, ‘mid thy pains,  
God o’er all for ever reigns.”*

**In hell**, evil spirits acknowledge, with misery, His undoubted supremacy. When permitted to roam abroad, it is with a chain at their heel. The bit is in the mouth of behemoth and the hook in the jaws of leviathan. Death’s darts are under the Lord’s lock and key, and the grave’s prisons have divine power as their warden. The terrible vengeance of the Judge of all the earth makes fiends cower down and tremble, even as dogs in the kennel fear the hunter’s whip.

*“Fear not death, nor Satan’s thrusts,  
God defends who in Him trusts;  
Soul, remember, in thy pains,  
God o’er all for ever reigns.”*

**In heaven** none doubt the sovereignty of the King Eternal and all fall on their faces in worship. Angels are His courtiers, the redeemed His favourites, and all delight to serve Him day and night. May we soon reach the city of the great King!

*“For this life’s long night of sadness  
He will give us peace and gladness.  
Soul, remember, in thy pains,  
God o’er all for ever reigns.”*

## Prayer

*O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs ... shine forth! Rise up, O Judge of the earth ... LORD, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph? They utter speech, and speak insolent things; all the workers of iniquity boast in themselves. They break in pieces Your people, O LORD, and afflict Your heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, "The LORD does not see, nor does the God of Jacob understand."*

Ps 94:1-7

## Scripture readings

### **The cedars of Lebanon which He planted**

On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. ... I, the LORD, have spoken and have done it.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing. - He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Praise the Lord ... mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars.

**Ps 104:16** - Ezek 17:23-24 - Ps 92:12-14; Ps 1:3 - John 15:16 - Psalm 148:7;9

*Suggested additional reading: Jeremiah 17:5-13*

## Meditation

***The cedars of Lebanon which He has planted.*** - Ps 104:16

Lebanon's cedars are a picture of the Christian, in that ***they owe their planting entirely to the Lord.*** This is true of every child of God. He is not man-planted, nor self-planted, but God-planted. The mysterious hand of the divine Spirit dropped the living seed into the heart which He had Himself prepared in readiness. Every true heir of heaven is like a cedar planted by the great Husbandman.

Moreover, the cedars of Lebanon ***are not dependent upon man for their watering;*** they stand on the high rocks, unmoistened by human irrigation but nourished by our heavenly Father. It is also exactly so for the Christian who has learned to live by faith. He is

independent of man, even in temporal things; he looks to the Lord his God and Him alone for his continued maintenance. The dew of heaven is his portion, and the God of heaven is his fountain.

Again, the cedars of Lebanon ***are not protected by any mortal power***. They owe nothing to man for their preservation from stormy wind and tempest. They are God's trees, kept and preserved by Him, and by Him alone. It is precisely the same with the Christian. He is not a hot-house plant, sheltered from temptation; he stands in the most exposed position. He has no shelter, no protection, except this, that the broad wings of the eternal God always cover the cedars which He Himself has planted.

Like cedars, believers are ***full of sap*** having vitality enough to be ever green, even amid winter's snows.

Lastly, the flourishing and majestic cedar stands as a witness of God's care and ***exists to praise only God***. The Lord, and He alone has planted and nourished the cedars of Lebanon, and David exhorts them specifically, together with all creation to come and worship: "*Praise the Lord ... mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars.*" (Ps 148:7;9) As believers, let us learn from this for ourselves. Although thankful to all those God uses to bless us there is no reason to magnify man. We have been planted, nourished, and protected by the Lord's own hand, and all the glory belongs to Him.

## Prayer

*You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore.*

*Ps 86:10-12*

## Scripture readings

**For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work;**

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your judgments.

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly - the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. - "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ... has begotten us again to a living hope ... to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials ... yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. - Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you.

**Ps 92:4** - Zeph 3:14-15 - John 10:10; 1 John 1:7; Mark 2:5 - 1 Pet 1:3;4;6;8;9; 1 Pet 4:13 - Mark 5:19

*Suggested additional reading: **Exodus 15:1-21***

## Meditation

***For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work -***  
*Psalm 92:4*

Do you believe that your sins are forgiven, and that Christ has made a full atonement for them? Then what a happy Christian ***you ought to be!*** Your happiness should be unaffected by the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, can it matter what happens to you now? You probably won't want to pray as

Luther is reputed to: *“Hit me Lord, hit me, for my sin is forgiven; if You have but forgiven me, hit me as hard as You like”* but we should be able to understand the sentiment!

Christian, if Christ has saved you don't just be glad, ***be grateful and loving***. Cling to that cross which took your sin away and serve Him who served You. *“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.”* (Rom 12:1)

Don't just let your zeal evaporate in a joyful chorus or two. Show your love in expressive ways. Love the brothers and sisters of the Christ who so loves you. If there is a Mephibosheth anywhere who is lame or incapacitated, help him for Jonathan's sake. (2 Sam:9). If there is a suffering believer, weep with him, and help him bear his cross for the sake of Him who wept for you and carried your sins. Since you have been freely forgiven for Christ's sake, go and tell others the joyful news of the Gospel of God's mercy. Don't be content just to enjoy this unspeakable blessing for yourself but publish abroad the story of the cross. Holy gladness and holy boldness will make you a good preacher, and all the world will be a pulpit for you to preach in. Cheerful holiness is the most persuasive of sermons, but the Lord must give this to you. Ask Him for it this morning before you go into the world. When we are rejoicing in what the Lord has done we won't need to be afraid of being too happy!

## Prayer

*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.*    Rev. 4:11

*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!*    Ps 103:1

## Scripture readings

### **Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening;**

From the rising of the sun to its going down the LORD's name is to be praised. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.

And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. - 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.

Whatever things are true, ... noble, ... just, ... pure, ... lovely, .... of good report, meditate on these things.

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.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

**Gen 24:63** - Ps 113:3; Ps 19:1-2 - Matt 14:23; Ps 143:5-6 - Phil 4:8-9 - Isa 40:31 - Ps 19:14

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 104*

## Meditation

***Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening.*** - *Genesis 24:63*

***An occupation to be recommended.*** Isaac's example teaches us wisdom. Instead of spending all our leisure hours in non-Christian company, light reading and time consuming television programmes, to spend more time alone with God would benefit us all. Meditation chews the cud and extracts the real nutriment from our daily experiences of God and the circumstances He brings into our lives.

As we meditate on our Saviour and all we know about Him in the Scriptures this will particularly feed our souls. Isaac found Rebecca while engaged in his private meditations (*Gen 24:63*) and many have found and learnt to love the Lord Jesus through the same means.

***A choice of place to be recommended.*** In the field we have an open-air study surrounded by texts for thought. From the trees to the flowers, from the soaring eagle down to the chirping grasshopper, from the blue expanse of heaven to a drop of dew, all these things are full of teaching. And when God opens our eyes these various subjects before us can stir our imagination far more vividly than printed text in a book. Our little rooms are neither so healthy, so suggestive, so agreeable, or so inspiring as the fields. When we see nothing as common or unclean, but feel that all created things point to their Maker, the hills, fields and rivers will at once be holy places.

***A time of day to be recommended.*** Sunset as it draws a curtain over the day, is a wonderfully suitable time for our souls to relax. Take every opportunity to allow the responsibilities of everyday life to give way to the joys of heavenly communion. The glory of the setting sun excites our wonder, and the solemnity of approaching night awakens our awe. If the business of the day will allow it, it would do us all good to spare an hour in the evenings to walk in the fields. If not, the Lord is of course also there in the city and will meet us where ever we are, in the crowded streets, in the bus or train or in our homes. Let your heart go out to meet Him.

## Prayer

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.*

*Psalm 19:14*

## Scripture readings

### **Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name**

Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. - "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." - For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" - And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. - Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth.

**Ps 29:2** - 1 Chron 16:29-30; Rev 4:11; Rom 11:36 - Isa 6:3; Luke 2:13-14 - 2 Thess 2:13; Ps 115:1

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Chron 16:7-36*

## Meditation

### ***Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name. - Psalm 29:2***

God's glory is seen in who He is and what He does. He is glorious in His character, for there is such a store of everything that is holy, and good, and lovely in God, that He must be glorious. The actions which flow from His character are also glorious; but while He intends that they should show His goodness, and mercy, and justice to those He has created, He is equally concerned that the glory associated with them should be given only to Himself. There is in reality no reason for us to boast and glory in ourselves. All that we are and have comes from God. Who has made us different from

anyone else? And what do we have that we did not receive from the God of all grace? Then how we need to be so careful to walk humbly before the Lord!

There is only room for one glory in the universe so the moment we glorify ourselves, we are setting ourselves up as rivals to the Most High. Shall the insect which lives just for a few hours glorify itself against the sun which warmed it into life? Shall the piece of pottery exalt itself above the man who fashioned it on the wheel? Shall the dust of the desert fight against the whirlwind? Or the drops of the ocean struggle with the tempest? *“Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due to His name.”* (Ps 29:1-2) Yet it is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence - *“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be glory.”* (Ps 115:1) It's a lesson which God is always needing to teach us, and to teach us sometimes by most painful discipline.

Let a Christian begin to boast, *“I can do all things,”* without adding *“through Christ who strengthens me,”* and before long he will have to groan, *“I can do nothing”* and hide himself in shame. When we do anything for the Lord, and He is pleased to accept and use our service let us lay our crown at His feet, and exclaim, *“Not I, but the grace of God which was with me!”* (1 Cor 15:10).

## Prayer

*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.*  
Rev. 4:11

*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!* Ps 103:1

## Scripture readings

### **The mercy of God**

The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression. - Give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy endures forever.

"With everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. - I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me. - Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

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.

**Ps 52 8** - Num 14:18; 1 Chron 16:41 - Isa 54:8; Ps 13:5-6;- Ps 23:6 - Luke 4:18-19 - Eph 2:4-6

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 1:7-79***

## Meditation

### ***The mercy of God.*** - Psalm 52:8

Let's meditate a little on God's mercy.

It is **tender mercy**. With sensitive, loving touch He heals the brokenhearted and revives their wounded spirits and the way He applies His mercy is as gracious as the heart of love which lies behind it.

It is **great mercy**. There is nothing little in God; His mercy is like Himself; it is infinite. You cannot measure it. His mercy is so great that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God.

It is **undeserved mercy**, as all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only another name for justice. The sinner has no right to the kindness of the Most High. We are all rebels before a holy God and deserve to be condemned. It is the sovereign love of a merciful God alone which delivers us from this judgement and there are no personal grounds on which to plea for mercy.

It is **rich mercy**. Some things appear great, but provide but little benefit. In contrast mercy is like a cordial to revive drooping spirits; a healing ointment for bleeding wounds; a heavenly plaster cast for broken bones; a royal carriage for weary feet and a loving, understanding friend for fearful hearts.

It is **manifold mercy**. As John Bunyan once said, “All the flowers in God’s garden are double.” There is no single mercy. As you rejoice in the mercy you have received you will find that it contains a whole cluster of blessings.

It is **abounding mercy**. Millions have received it, yet far from being exhausted its source is as fresh, as full, and as free as ever.

It is **unfailing mercy**. It will never leave you. As you trust in a merciful God, He will never fail you. There will be mercy in temptation to keep you from yielding; mercy in trouble to prevent from despair; mercy each day to revive your spirit and mercy in dying to give joy to your soul.

## Prayer

*Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me; Lord, be my helper! You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever. Ps 30:10-12*

## Scripture readings

### **Strangers have come into the sanctuaries of the LORD's house**

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, ... many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, .... ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. - I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

**Jer 51:51** - 2 Peter 2:1-3 - Jude 3-4 – 2 Cor 11:3 - John 14:6; John 10:9-10

*Suggested additional reading: Rev 11:1-19*

## Meditation

### ***Strangers have come into the sanctuaries of the LORD's house.*** - Jeremiah 51:51

In this account in Jeremiah the faces of the Lord's people were covered with shame, for it was a terrible thing that men should intrude into the Holy Place reserved for the priests alone. Everywhere about us we see the same cause for sorrow. How many men and women who show no sign of spiritual new birth are officiating in the professing Churches of Christ! How many

unconverted are being assured that they need no salvation being already members of Christ's body simply because they have been baptised?

Instead of being faced with the spiritual challenge of their sinfulness and the need to seek salvation in Jesus Christ, many see themselves born into Christianity by natural birth and the will of their parents or grandparents and clear statement of John 1:12-13 is turned on its head! The ordinances of the church are pressed upon them and often the challenge of their conscience is whether they can remain a member of a church, which in reality means nothing to them, rather than an awareness of the fact that they are outside of the family of God until they repent and embrace Jesus Christ and His demands on their live in personal faith.

To adulterate the Church is to pollute a well, to pour water upon fire, to sow a fertile field with stones. May we all have grace to maintain in our own proper way the purity of the Church, as being an assembly of believers, and not a nation, or an unsaved community of unconverted men.

Our zeal must, however, begin at home. Let us examine *ourselves* as to our right to eat at the Lord's table. Let us see to it that we have on our wedding garment, lest we ourselves be intruders in the Lord's sanctuaries.

Jesus told us that "*many are called, but few are chosen.*" (Matt 22:14) and that "*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*" (Matt 7:14). We need grace to come to Jesus aright, with the faith of God's elect. He who smote Uzzah for touching the ark (2 Sam 6:6-7) is very jealous of His two ordinances. As a true believer I may approach them freely, as an alien I must not touch them lest I die. Heart searching is the duty of all who are baptized or come to the Lord's table.

## Prayer

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.. Ps 139:23-24*

## Scripture readings

### **He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the LORD.**

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel. - Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, ... He will feed His flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.

I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. - The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

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. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.

**Micah 5:4** - Matt 2:6; Isa 40:10-11 - Ezek 34:14; Ps 23:1-2 - John 10:27-30

*Suggested additional reading: Ezekiel 34:11-31*

## Meditation

### ***He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the LORD***

- Micah 5:4

Christ reigns in His Church as a **Shepherd-King**. He has supremacy, but it is the superiority of a wise and tender shepherd over his dependant and loving flock; He commands and receives obedience, but it is the willing obedience of well-cared-for sheep, who know their beloved Shepherd's voice and follow Him with joy. He rules by the force of love and the energy of goodness.

His reign is *practical*. It is said, “He shall *stand and feed*.” The great Head of the Church is actively engaged in providing for His people. He does not sit down upon the throne in empty state, or hold a sceptre without wielding it in government. No, He stands and feeds. The expression “feed,” in the original means; to shepherd, that is to do everything expected of a shepherd: to guide, to watch, to preserve, to restore, to tend, as well as to feed.

His reign is *continual in duration*. It is said, “He shall stand and *feed*”; **not** He shall feed now and then, and then leave His sheep to fend for themselves; **not**, He shall one day grant a revival, and then next day leave His Church to starve and die. His eyes never sleep, and His hands never rest; His heart never stops beating in love, and His shoulders are never tired of carrying His people’s burdens.

His reign is powerful and effective. “*He shall feed in the strength of Jehovah.*” Wherever Christ is, there is God; and whatever Christ does there is the Most High in action. It is a happy thought that as our Shepherd stands and represents our interests in the courts of heaven, He is Himself very God of very God, to whom every knee shall bow. What a joy is ours to belong to such a Shepherd. As the Son of Man He understand us and communes with us and as the Son of God He protects us. Let us worship and bow down before Him as the people of His pasture.

## Prayer

*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth! ... Stir up Your strength, and come and save us! Restore us, O God; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved! Ps 80:1-3*

## Scripture readings

### **David the son of Jesse; the sweet psalmist of Israel**

The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart. - He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.

O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness ...Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ...Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds him with His hand.

I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken. The LORD knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever.

**2 Sam 23:1** - 1 Sam 13:14; Ps 78:70-71 - Ps 139:1-2; Ps 16:1-2; Ps 51:1,7,10 -Ps 37:23-24 - Ps 37:25;18

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 34*

## Meditation

### *The sweet psalmist of Israel - 2 Samuel 23:1*

Of all the saints whose lives are recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures, David's experiences are one of the most interesting and instructive. In his history we meet with a range of trials and temptations unparelled in the lives other Old Testament saints all of which suggest David as a type and picture of our Lord himself.

David knew the trials of all ranks and conditions of men. Kings have their particular troubles and David wore a crown: the peasant has his cares, and David handled a shepherd's crook: the outcast has many hardships, and David lived in the caves of Engedi: the army captain has his difficulties, and David found the sons of Zeruiah too hard for him.

Our psalmist also experienced troubles through his friends and family. His friend and counsellor Ahithophel deserted him, "*My own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*" (Ps 41:9). His worst enemies were those of his own family, his children were one of his greatest afflictions.

The temptations of poverty and wealth, of honour and reproach, of health and weakness, all tested their power on him. He had temptations from outside to disturb his peace, and from inside to mar his joy. David had no sooner escaped from one trial when he fell into another; had no sooner emerged from one period of depression and fear when once again he was brought into the lowest depths and exclaimed, "*All Your waves and billows have gone over me.*" (Ps 42:7).

No doubt it is this range of experiences and sufferings which have made David's psalms so universally the delight of experienced Christians. Whatever our frame of mind, whether ecstasy or depression, David has exactly described our emotions. He was an able master of the human heart, because he had been tutored in the best of all schools, the school of heart-felt, personal experience. As we are instructed in the same school and as we mature in grace and in years we increasingly appreciate David's psalms and find them to be "green pastures." My soul, let David's experience cheer and instruct you today.

## Prayer

*Lord, You are my Shepherd. Lead me in green pastures and besides still waters and daily restore my soul for your names sake.*

*Psalm 23*

## Scripture readings

### **He who waters will also be watered himself.**

A generous man devises generous things. - share your bread with the hungry, ... bring to your house the poor who are cast out; and do not hide yourself from your own flesh. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am'. - Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.

Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, .... 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.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

**Prov 11:25** - Isa 32:8 - Isa 58:7,9 - Matt 25:40 - 1 Tim 6:18-19 - Phil 2:5,8-10 - Matt 5:7

*Suggested additional reading: **James 5:1-12***

## Meditation

***He who waters will also be watered himself.*** - *Proverbs 11:25:*

We are here taught the great lesson, that to get, we must give; that to accumulate, we must scatter; that to make ourselves happy, we must make others happy; and that in order to become spiritually vigorous, we must seek the spiritual good of others. In watering others, we are ourselves watered.

How? Our efforts to be useful, ***bring out our powers for usefulness.*** We have latent talents and dormant faculties, which are brought to light by exercise. Our strength for work is hidden even

from ourselves until we go out to fight the Lord's battles, or to climb the mountains of difficulty. We do not know what tender sympathies we possess until we try to dry the widow's tears, and soothe the orphan's grief.

We often find in attempting to teach others, that we *gain instruction for ourselves*. Oh, what lessons some of us have learned at the bedside of those we have visited! We went to teach the Scriptures, we came away blushing that we knew so little of them. In our conversation with God's suffering children we have ourselves been taught the way of God more perfectly and have received a deeper insight into divine truth.

So watering others *makes us humble*. We discover how much unexpected grace God has poured out on His children in times of need and how much these suffering Christians outstrip us in spiritual knowledge.

Our own *comfort is also increased* by working for others. We try to cheer them, and the consolation gladdens our own heart. Like the two men in the snow; one rubbed the other's limbs to keep him from dying, and in so doing kept his own blood in circulation, and saved his own life. The poor widow of Sarepta gave to the prophet Elijah in time of drought from the last that remained in her food cupboard and from that day on there was always enough for her needs.

Give then, "*and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over*". (Luke 6:38)

## Prayer

*Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?*

(And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.') *Matt 25:37-40*

## Scripture readings

**I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!**

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. My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, "Where is your God?" - O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. - My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying, "When will You comfort me?" For I have become like a wineskin in smoke,

With my soul I have desired You in the night. Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early. - Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes it is a tree of life.

To love Him with all the heart ... is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. - The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. - We love Him because He first loved us.

**Song of Solomon 5:8** - Ps 42:1-3; Ps 63:1; Ps 119:82-83; - Isa 26:9; Prov 13:12 - Mark 12:33; Rom 5:5; 1 John 4:19

*Suggested additional reading: Song of Solomon 5*

## Meditation

***I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him, I am lovesick.*** - *Song of Solomon 5:8*

Such is the language of the believer who is panting, as a deer for water, (*Ps 42:1*), after fellowship with Jesus; *he is lovesick for his Lord*. Spiritual Christians are never completely at ease except they are living near to Christ; for away from Him they lose their peace. The nearer to Him, the nearer to the perfect calm of heaven. The nearer to Him, the fuller the heart is, not only of peace, but of life,

and vigour, and joy, for these all depend on constant communion with Jesus. As the sun is to the day, as the moon is to the night and as the dew is to the flower so is Jesus Christ to us. What bread is to the hungry, clothing to the naked, the shadow of a great rock to the traveller in a hot, weary land, such is Jesus Christ to us. So, when we are not consciously in touch with Him little wonder if our spirit cries in the words of the Song, *“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that you tell Him I am lovesick.”*

There is blessing for those who so long after Jesus. Since, *“blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness”* (Matt 5:6); therefore supremely blessed must be those who thirst after the Righteous One Himself. Blessed is that hunger and thirst, for it comes from God. Before I attain to the full blessedness of actually being filled, in the awareness of my emptiness and in the eagerness of my soul to be filled with Christ I am already blessed. If I must wait to actually feed on Jesus, it is next door to heaven to hunger and thirst after Him. There is a sacredness about that hunger, since it sparkles as a jewel among the beatitudes of our Lord.

But central in the blessing is the clear and certain promise that such hungry ones *“shall be filled”*; filled with that which they desire. If Christ has caused us to so long after Him, He will certainly satisfy those longings; and when He does come to us, as come He will, oh, how blessed it will be!

## Prayer

*I remember the days of old; 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*

*Answer me speedily, O LORD; my spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit.*

*Ps 143:5-7*

## Scripture readings

### **The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard**

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. - The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.

Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the LORD.

Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. - So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

**Isa 65:19** - Rev 21:4; Rev 7:17 – Jer 31:13-14 - Isa 60:20; Isa 51:11 - John 16:22

*Suggested additional reading: **Revelation 7:9-17***

## Meditation

***The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard.*** - Isaiah 65:19

Once we get to glory there will be no more tears. ***All outward causes of sorrow will be gone.*** There are no broken friendships, no frustrated hopes in heaven. Poverty, hunger, danger, persecution, and slander are all unknown there. No pain distresses, no thought of death or bereavement saddens.

There will be no more weeping, for those there *have been made perfectly holy*. No “*evil heart of unbelief*” prompts them to lose faith in the living God; they are without fault before His throne, and are fully conformed to His image. Once free from sin there will be no further cause for sadness.

They weep no more, because *all fear of change is past*. All there are eternally secure. Sin is shut out, and we will be shut in. We will live in a city which shall never be stormed; we will bask in a sun which shall never set; we shall drink from a river which shall never run dry; we shall pick fruit from a tree which will never wither. Years without number may go by but eternity will never be exhausted, and while eternity endures immortality and blessedness will co-exist with it. We will be forever with the Lord.

There will be no more weeping, because there in the glory *every desire will be fulfilled*. We will have everything we need and more. Eye and ear, heart and hand, judgment, imagination, hope, desire, will, and all our faculties will be completely satisfied. However imperfect our present ideas may be of the things which God has prepared for those who love him, yet we know enough by the revelation of the Spirit, to be sure that the saints above are supremely blessed. They are filled with the joy of Christ, which is an infinite fulness of delight. They bathe themselves in the bottomless, shoreless sea of infinite blessedness. This is the joyful “*rest which remains for the people of God*” (Hebrew 4:9) It may not be so far away as you think! Before long the weeping willow will be exchanged for the palm-branch of victory, and sorrow’s dewdrops will be transformed into the pearls of everlasting bliss. “*Therefore comfort one another with these words.*” (1 Thess. 4:18)

## Prayer

*You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.*

*Rev. 5:9-10*

## Scripture readings

### **The one who breaks open will come up before them;**

The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; ... He shall prevail against His enemies. A light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison.

I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. - Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children.

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. - I will ransom them from the power of the grave; O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!

So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Mic 2:13** - Isa 42:13; Isa 42:6-7 - Isa 45:2; Isa 49:25 - 1 Cor 15:21-23 - Hos 13:14 - Isa 51:11

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 91*

## Meditation

### ***The one who breaks open will come up before them.***

- *Micah 2:13*

Great changes have taken place because Jesus has gone before us. He calls us to simply follow in His footsteps and this means we need have no fear of the unknown.

He has *conquered every enemy* who threatens to obstruct our way. Take courage all faint-hearted Christians! Christ has not only travelled the road He has already killed all your enemies. Do you

dread sin? He has nailed it to His cross. Do you fear death? Like David and Goliath He has cut off its head. Are you afraid of hell? He has locked its gate to prevent any of His children straying into it. None who trust themselves to Him will ever see this gulf of despair and perdition.

Whatever foes may be before the Christian, they are all overcome. There are lions, but their teeth are broken; there are serpents, but their fangs are extracted; there are rivers, but they are bridged or made fordable; there are flames, but we wear protective clothing. All weapons of war that the enemy has prepared to use against us have been rendered worthless. In the person of Christ God has taken away all the power that anyone could use to harm us. So Christian you may march on safely and go happily on your life's journey for all your enemies are already conquered. What else is there to do but to march on and 'take the prey'? The enemies are beaten, they are vanquished; it is our privilege to divide the spoil. You will, it is true, often find yourselves in spiritual warfare but your fight is actually with a defeated enemy. His head is broken; he may try to injure you but his strength is insufficient to achieve his aims. Your victory is certain and the treasure to be gained is far more than can be valued.

*“Proclaim aloud the Saviour’s fame,  
Who bears the Breaker’s wond’rous name;  
Sweet name; and it becomes him well,  
Who breaks down earth, sin, death, and hell.”*

## Prayer

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. 1 Chron 29:11*

## Scripture readings

### **His fruit was sweet to my taste.**

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! - With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces; a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow; of well-refined wines on the lees.

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. - Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! My son, eat honey because it is good, and the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste; So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul; if you have found it, there is a prospect, and your hope will not be cut off.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

**Song 2.3** - Ps 34:8 - Isa 25:6 - Isa 26:8-9; Ps 37:4 - Ps 119:103; Prov 24:13-14 - Ps 63:5

*Suggested additional reading: **Song of Solomon 2***

## Meditation

### ***His fruit was sweet to my taste.*** - Song 2:3

In the Scriptures we find that each of our physical senses are used figuratively to help us understand spiritual faith. **Faith is sight:** “*Look unto me and be saved.*” (Is 45 22). **Faith is hearing:** “*Hear, and your soul shall live.*” (Isa 55.3). **Faith is smelling:** “*All Your*

*garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia*"; (Ps 45:9). "Your name is as ointment poured forth." (Song 1:3). **Faith is spiritual touch.** By this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christ's garment, (*Matthew 9:20*) and by this we handle the things of the good word of life. (*1 John 1:1*). **Faith is equally the spirit's taste.** "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps 119:103). "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." (John 6:53). This "taste" is faith in one of its highest operations.

One of the first acts of faith is *hearing*. We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear; we hear it as God's Word, and we believe it to be so; that is the **hearing of faith**. Then our mind *looks* on the truth as it is presented to us; that is to say, we understand it, we perceive its meaning; that is the **seeing of faith**.

Next we discover its preciousness; we begin to admire it, and find how fragrant it is; that is **faith in its smell**. Then we accept the mercies which are prepared for us in Christ; that is **faith in its touch**. From this follow the enjoyments, peace, delight, communion; which are **faith in its taste**.

Any one of these acts of faith brings salvation. To hear Christ's voice and to respond to it in faith as the sure voice of God in the soul will save us; but what gives us true enjoyment is consciously receiving Christ into us and this is the tasting aspect of faith. Such inward and spiritual appreciation of His sweetness and preciousness as a Saviour is the food of our souls. It is then that we sit "*under His shadow with great delight,*" and find His fruit sweet to our taste. (Song 2:3)

## Prayer

*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.* Ps 63:5-6

## Scripture readings

### **He has commanded His covenant forever**

Blessed ... with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, chosen ... in Him before the foundation of the world, ... predestined to adoption by Jesus Christ to Himself, ... to the praise of the glory of His grace.

An everlasting covenant ... the sure mercies of David. - ordered in all things and secure.

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. .... they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Ps 111:9** - Eph 1:3-6 - Isa 55:3; 2 Sam 23:5 - Jer 31:33-34 - Heb 13:20-21

*Suggested additional reading: Galatians 3:13-29*

## Meditation

***He has commanded His covenant for ever.*** - Psalms 111:9

The Lord's people can delight in God's everlasting covenant; His contract, signed and settled, that He has given us in His word. As the Holy Spirit leads us into an understanding of its terms it becomes a never ending source of encouragement to us.

We delight to contemplate *the antiquity* of this covenant, remembering that before our earth hung in space the interests of the saints were made secure in Christ Jesus.

Seeing this covenant described as “*the sure mercies of David.*” (Is 55:3) we rest secure in its **certainty**. We celebrate it as signed, and sealed, and ratified, “*ordered in all things and secure.*” (2 Sam 23:5)

It makes our hearts palpate with joy to think of its **immutability**; a covenant which neither time nor eternity, life nor death, shall ever be able to violate; a covenant as old as eternity and as everlasting as the Rock of ages.

We rejoice to feast on **the fulness** of this covenant as we see that it provides for everything that we can possibly need. God is our portion, Christ our saviour, friend and companion, the Spirit our Comforter, earth our temporary dwelling and heaven our home. We see that it provides an inheritance reserved and entailed to every soul possessing an interest in its ancient and eternal deed of gift.

Our eyes sparkled when we first recognised it as **a treasure-trove** in our Bible; but what joy it gave us deep in our souls when we saw that it was the last will and testament of our divine kinsman, who had bequeathed everything to us!

We thrill at the **graciousness** of this covenant. The law of the Old Testament was made void and worthless because it was a covenant of works and depended upon human merit. But this must endure because grace is the basis, grace the condition, grace the strain, grace the bulwark, grace the foundation, grace the topstone. The covenant is a treasury of wealth, a granary of food, a fountain of life, a store-house of salvation, a charter of peace, and a haven of joy.

## Prayer

*O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep. - 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, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance.*

*Ps 92:5; Ps 106:4-5*

## Scripture readings

### How long will they not believe Me

The LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place. Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God. - "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?"

Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" - Without faith it is impossible to please Him. - Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. - If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead. - By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

**Num 14:11** - Deut 1:31-32; Mark 9:19 - Matt 14:31; Heb 11:6; Rom 11:20 - John 20:29 - Rom 10:17; Luke 16:31; Eph 2:8

*Suggested additional reading: Numbers 14:1-38*

## Meditation

### ***How long will they not believe Me?*** - Numbers 14:11

Fight against unbelief with repentance and prayer. Unbelief so dishonours Christ, that to the extent that we allow it to creep in He will withdraw Himself from us so that we no longer sense His nearness. Although unbelief is a weed, whose seeds will never entirely be extinguished from the soil, we must aim to destroy its root with zeal and perseverance. Amongst all hateful things it's the most

horrible. Its venom harms both parties, the doubter and the doubted. In your case Christian believer it is most wicked, for the Lord's faithfulness and mercy to you in the past increase your guilt in doubting Him now. When you distrust the Lord Jesus He may well cry out, "*Behold, I am weighed down by you, as a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.*" (Amos 2:13). This is crowning His head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct has been consistently affectionate and true.

Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unlimited wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and to distrust All-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills are more than enough for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust His fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from Him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of His resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for its main purpose is to harm and eventually break our communion with our dear Lord and to bring misery into our lives.

Bunyan tells us that unbelief has as many lives as a cat. If so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Away with you, you traitor, my heart abhors you.

## Prayer

*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!*

*Mark 9:24*

## Scripture readings

### **Oil for the light.**

And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. - I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up. - He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. - The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

*Ex 25:6 - Ex 27:20 - Matt 5:16; Matt 25:3-5 - John 1:17; Acts 20:32; John 15:5-6; Gal 5:22-23 - 2 Cor 13:14.*

*Suggested additional reading: **Revelation 3:14-22***

## Meditation

### ***Oil for the light.*** - *Exodus 25:6*

My soul, be aware of how much you need this oil, for your lamp won't burn for long without it. If the flame burns out your wick will smoke and cause offence and be sure it will burn out once all the oil is gone. You don't have a source of oil springing up naturally within you so you need know where to buy it. Take heed from the disastrous experience of 'the foolish virgins'. (Matt 25: 8).

Even the consecrated lamps of the tabernacle could not give light without oil. Although they were sheltered in the holy place secure from outside winds; they needed to be trimmed and fed, and your need is just as great. Under the best possible circumstances you're not able to give light for another hour unless you are fed with fresh oil of grace.

It was not every type of oil that can be used in the Lord's service; petroleum from the earth's oil wells is of no use neither is fish oil nor that extracted from nuts. Only one type of oil will do and that's the best olive oil. Neither pretended grace from natural goodness, not fancied grace from the hands of priests not imaginary grace from outward ceremonies will serve the true saint of God. He knows that the Lord would not be pleased with such oil. He goes to the olive-press of Gethsemane, and draws his supplies from Him who was crushed there! The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from all contamination and only a light fed from this oil can be clear and bright. Our churches are the Saviour's golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light

Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge and love are the beams which shine out from the sacred light, but we can't produce such light unless in private we personally draw on this precious oil of Christ's grace though the medium of the Holy Spirit.

## Prayer

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.*

*Psalm 51:10-13*

## Scripture readings

### **The hope which is laid up for you in heaven**

Christ in you, the hope of glory. - If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. - "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." - When He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

A living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. - Rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. - For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

**Col 1:5** - Col 1:27; 1 Cor 15:19; John 17:24; 1 John 3:2 - 1 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Peter 1:13 - Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17 - 1 John 3:3

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:8*

## Meditation

### ***The hope which is laid up for you in heaven.* - Colossians 1:5**

Our hope in Christ for the future provides the secure underlying support for all our happiness and joy in this earthly life. The more we think of heaven the more our hearts will find contentment with whatever God's providence brings to us in this present age. All that we can desire as born-again believers is promised there. Here we often feel to be at the end of our strength, worn out physically, mentally and emotionally but yonder is the land of *rest*. There the sweat of labour will be no more and tiredness will be for ever

banished. To those who are weary and spent, the word “rest” is truly a heavenly word. Here we are always in the field of battle, so tempted within and often so molested by enemy forces without that we have little or no peace in mind and spirit. In heaven we shall enjoy the *victory* our Saviour has won for us. The banner will be waved aloft in triumph, the sword sheathed and we shall hear our Captain say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Perhaps we have suffering bereavement after bereavement, but we are going to the land of the *immortal* where graves are unknown. Here sin is a constant grief to us, but there we shall be perfectly *holy*, for there shall by no means enter into that kingdom anything which defiles. There are no poisonous weeds in the furrows of celestial fields. Oh! is it not a joy that you are not to be banished from paradise for ever, that you are not to dwell eternally in this wilderness, but shall soon inherit Canaan?

But let it never be said of us, that we are dreaming about the *future* and forgetting the *present*. Let the future so influence and sanctify the present that we may use our lives to the full. Through the Spirit of God the hope of heaven is the most potent force for the promotion of a virtuous, productive life; it is a fountain of joyful activity; it is the corner stone of cheerful holiness. The man who has this hope in him goes about his work with vigour, for the joy of the Lord is his strength. He fights against temptation with willing conviction, for the hope of the next world repels the fiery darts of the adversary. He can labour without present reward, for all he seeks is the 'Well done' of his Master in the world to come.

## Prayer

*You are worthy ... for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. Rev 5:9-10*

## Scripture readings

### **Wait on the Lord;**

Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!

For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him. Though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction ... your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.

It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. The vision is yet for an appointed time; ... though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

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.

**Ps 27:14** - Ps 25:4-5; Ps 27 14 - Isaiah 30:18; 20-21 - Lam 3:26; Hab 2:3 - Isaiah 40:31

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 27***

## Meditation

### ***Wait on the Lord.*** - Psalm 27:14

It may seem an easy thing to wait, but this is one of the disciplines that a Christian soldier needs many years to learn. Marching and quick-marching are much easier to God's warriors than standing still. There are often hours of perplexity when however willing we are and although we earnestly want to serve the Lord there are obstacles and hindrances which create real uncertainty as to how it is possible to go forward at all. What shall we do? Should we doubt His calling? retreat in cowardice? get absorbed in side issues or rush forward in presumption? No! simply wait!

***Wait however in prayer.*** Call upon God, and spread the situation before Him; tell Him your difficulty, and plead His promise of guidance. In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is honouring to God to be as humble as a child, and to ***wait with simplicity of soul*** upon the Lord. We can be certain that He is leading and teaching us when we become aware of our own ignorance and helplessness but nevertheless long to be serving and to be guided by His will.

But ***wait in faith.*** Express your unwavering confidence in Him. Unfaithful, untrusting waiting is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if He keep you waiting even till midnight, yet He will come at the right time *“The vision is yet for an appointed time; ... wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”* (Hab. 2:3)

***Wait in quiet patience,*** not rebelling because you are under the affliction, but blessing your God for it. Never murmur against circumstances over which you have no control. They are but 'secondary causes' in the hand of your Master. Never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it is, and put it everything, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hand of your covenant God, saying, “Now, Lord, not my will, but Yours be done. I don't know what to do; I am at my wits end, but I will wait until You will make a way through the sea, or drive back my enemies. I will wait, even if You keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon You alone, O God, and my spirit waits for You in the full conviction that You will yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower.”

## Prayer

*Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. Ps 25:20-21*

## Scripture readings

### On My arm they will trust

Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people,

"Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults. For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; But My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation."

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. .... "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.

**Isa 51:5** - Song 8:5; Prov 3:5 - Deut 33:27; Ps 77:14-15 - Isa 51:7-8 - Jer 17:5,7

*Suggested additional reading: **Jeremiah 17:5-14***

## Meditation

### ***"On my arm will they trust"** - Isaiah 51:5*

During times of severe trial, the Christian has nothing left on earth to trust in and is therefore forced to cast himself on his God alone. When his boat is sinking in the storm and no human deliverance can help, he must simply and entirely trust himself to the providence and care of God.

Happy storm that wrecks a man on such a rock as this! O blessed hurricane that drives the soul to God and God alone! Sometimes because of a crowd of well-meaning friends surrounding us with

their advice we never manage to get to God Himself. But when a man is so poor, so friendless, so helpless that he has nowhere else to turn, he flies into his Father's arms, and is blessedly and lovingly held there! When he is burdened with troubles so pressing and so personal that he cannot tell anyone about them but his God, he can be thankful for this difficult time; for he will learn more of his Lord than than at any other time.

Oh, tempest-tossed believer, it is a happy trouble that drives you to your Father! Now that you have only your God to trust to, see that you put your full confidence in Him. Don't dishonour your Lord and Master by unworthy doubts and fears; but be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Show the world that your God is worth ten thousand worlds to you. Show rich men how rich you are in your poverty when the Lord God is your helper. Show the strong man how strong you are in your weakness when underneath you are the everlasting arms.

Now is the time for feats of faith and valiant exploits. Be strong and very courageous and the Lord your God shall certainly, as surely as He built the heavens and the earth, glorify Himself in your weakness, and magnify his strength in the midst of your distress. The grandeur of the arch of heaven would be spoiled if the sky were supported by a single visible pillar, and your faith would lose its glory if it rested on anything discernible by the carnal eye. May the Holy Spirit enable you to simply rest in Jesus and enjoy his promised peace.

## Prayer

*The king shall have joy in Your strength, O Lord; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! You have given him his heart's desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips. For You meet him with the blessings of goodness; he asked life from You, and You gave it to him length of days forever and ever.*

*Psalm 21:1-4*

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