



Daily Manna

March

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

**Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out.**

Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits. - Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. The mandrakes give off a fragrance, and at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. ... By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit." - The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. ... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment ... being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

**Song 4:16** - Song 4:16; Song 7:12-13 - John 15:5;8; Gal 5:22-23;25 - Phil 1:9;11 - Rom 5:3-5

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 13:6-9***

## Meditation

***Awake, O north wind; and come, O south! blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. - Song of Solomon 4:16***

Anything is better than the dead calm of indifference. If, like the apostle Paul, our overwhelming concern is to know Jesus better and grow like Him, our souls may wisely desire the north wind of trouble if God would but sanctify this to us, to nurture and draw out the precious perfume of His character in us. As long as it can't be said,

*“The Lord was not in the wind,”* (1 Kings 19:11), we won't shrink from the most wintry blast that ever blew upon the garden of our souls and the plants of His grace in our lives. Don't we see the spouse here in this verse humbly submitting herself to the reproofs of her Beloved; entreating Him only to show His grace and love to her in some form, and making no stipulation as to the way in which it should come? Hadn't she, like ourselves, become so utterly weary of deadness and complacency that she longed for any visit from Him that would stir up the feelings of her soul and brace her for action?

But as well as the north wind she desires too the warm south wind of comfort; the smiles of divine love and the joy of the Redeemer's presence. Thankfully these are also highly effective in arousing our sluggish life. She desires either one or the other, or both; so that she may but be able to delight her Beloved with the spices of her garden. She couldn't bear to think of herself as being unprofitable and unfruitful. This should be our concern too, and more particularly when we realise that our Lord finds joy in witnessing the effects of His grace in our poor, weak spiritual lives. That it gives Him such pleasure is difficult to grasp, but accepting it, are we prepared to welcome trials and testing times and even martyrdom if these things glorify Him in revealing the fruit of His Spirit shining out of our characters?

Unexercised spiritual graces are like perfumes asleep and dormant in the flower bud. We must trust the wisdom of the great Husbandman to use any means that He might choose to enliven these graces. “Let the winds blow, O Lord, as You see fit, let the combination of affliction and comfort draw out the precious scent of faith, love, patience, hope, peace, joy, and all the other flowers of the garden.” When this prayer is answered the result won't only bring glory to our Beloved, but also draw us closer to Him and provide inexplicable inner joy and blessing.

## Prayer

*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. Ps 63:*

## Scripture readings

### **The genuineness of your faith**

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to rich fulfillment.

Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing..

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

1 Peter 1:7 - 1 Peter 1:6-7 - Ps 66:10-12 - James 1:3-4 - Rev 2:10

*Suggested additional reading: **Romans 4:13-5:5***

## Meditation

### ***The genuineness of your faith.*** - 1 Peter 1:7

Faith untried may be true faith, but it is sure to be little faith and is likely to remain dwarfish so long as it is without trials. Faith never prospers so well as when all things are against her! Tempests are her trainers, and lightnings are her illuminators. When the sea is calm, spread the sails as much as you can but the ship makes little or no progress. But let the winds howl and the waves rise, then although the vessel may rock, and her deck be awash and her mast creak under

the pressure of a full and swelling sail, it is then that she really begins to sail and to show what's she was made for.

No flowers are so beautifully blue as those which grow at the foot of the frozen glacier; no stars gleam so brightly as those which glisten in the polar sky; no water tastes so sweet as that which springs up amidst the desert sand; and no faith is so precious as that which lives and triumphs in adversity.

Tried faith brings experience. You wouldn't have believed your own weakness had you not been compelled to pass through that raging river which swept your feet away from your comfort zone and frustrated all your hope and plans. You wouldn't have known God's strength had you not experienced Him supporting and carrying you through those water-floods. Faith increases in solidity, assurance, and intensity, the more it is exercised with tribulation. Faith is precious, and its trial is precious too.

Don't let this however discourage those who are young in faith. You will have trials enough without looking for them. God knows what is best for us and He has already planned the ups and downs of our lives and will measure them out to us in due course. In the mean time if you can't yet claim the result of long experience, thank God for what grace you have. Praise Him for that degree of holy trust that you have already acquired and ensure that you walk by its rule and apply it practically day be day. You will yet have more and more of the blessing of God until your faith will remove mountains and conquer impossibilities.

## Prayer

*I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight. Ps 119:75-77*

## Scripture readings

### **I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.**

The LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. - They are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace.

We all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 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). - The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because 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.

I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. 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.'

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

**Isa 48:10** - Deut 4:20; 1 Kings 8:51 - Eph 2:3-5; Luke 4:18 - Zech 13:9 - Isa 41:10

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Peter 1*

## Meditation

### ***I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction*** - Isaiah 48:10

Comfort yourself, tried believer, with this thought: God says, “*I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.*” Doesn't the word come like a soft shower, assuaging the fury of the flame? Yes, isn't it like an asbestos armour, against which the heat has no power? Let affliction come – God has chosen me. Poverty, you may stride in at my door, but God is in the house already, and He has chosen me.

Sickness, you may intrude, but I have medicine ready - God has chosen me. Whatever befalls me in this vale of tears, I know that He has **“chosen”** me.

But if, believer, you require still greater comfort, remember that you have the Son of Man with you in the furnace. In your lonely bedroom, someone is sitting by your side whom you haven't seen, but whom you love; and often even when you don't realise it, He is smoothing your pillow and easing your discomfort. You are in poverty; but that simple home has become a palace where the Lord of life and glory is a frequent visitor. He loves to come into unexpected places to visit His people. Your friend is always by your side. You can't see Him, but you can sometimes sense the pressure of His hands. Don't you hear His voice? Even in the valley of the shadow of death He says, *“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God.”* (Isa 41:10). Remember that noble speech of Caesar: “Fear not, you are carrying Caesar and all his fortune.” Fear not, Christian; Jesus is with you. In all your fiery trials, His presence is both your comfort and safety. He will never leave one whom He has chosen for His own. *“Fear not, for I am with you,”* is His sure word of promise to His chosen ones in the *“furnace of affliction.”* Won't you then take firm hold of Christ and say - *“Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead, I'll follow where He goes.”*

(Although many Bibles today translation this verse as *“I have tried you”* we don't need to hesitate to accept and find blessing from Spurgeon's exposition. According to Gesenius the Hebrew word has the meaning of:(i) to try or test, (ii) to choose or select (*Gen 13:11; Ex 17:9; Josh 24:15; Job 9:14; 15:5; 29:25*) or (iii) to delight in (*Gen 6:2; Isa 1:29*). The Vulgate and Septuagint translate it here as *“I have chosen you”* and in the vast majority of its other occurrences in OT it clearly has the meaning of to choose. (ed))

## Prayer

*You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. Ex 33:12-13*

## Scripture readings

### **As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord**

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." - He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name,

"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." - "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."

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. - 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.

Col 2:6 - John 6:51; John 1:11-12 - Rev 3:20-21; John 14:23 - John 3:16; Gal 2:20

*Suggested additional reading: Romans 10:1-13*

## Meditation

***As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord.*** - Colossians 2:6

The life of faith is represented as *receiving*. Receiving is ***an act which implies the very opposite of gaining something by our own efforts***. It is simply the acceptance of a gift. As the earth drinks in the rain, as the sea receives the streams, as night accepts light from the stars, so we, giving nothing, partake freely of the grace of God. Believers are not, by nature, wells, or streams, they are but cisterns

into which the living water flows. They are empty vessels into which God pours His salvation.

The idea of receiving implies *a realisation of reality*. You can't very well receive a shadow. In order for us to take hold of something and possess it, it must have substance. So it is in the life of faith, Christ becomes real to us. All the time we are without faith, Jesus is a mere name to us; a person who lived a long while ago; in fact so long ago that His life has become only a fact of history! But now by an act of faith Jesus becomes a real person in the consciousness of our heart

But receiving also means *grasping or getting possession of something*. The thing which I receive becomes my own: I appropriate to myself that which is given. When I receive Jesus, He becomes my Saviour and becomes so much mine that neither life nor death can rob me of Him. All this is what it means to receive Christ; to take Him as God's free gift; to realise Him in my heart, and to appropriate Him as mine.

Salvation is described in different ways; as the blind receiving sight, the deaf receiving hearing, the dead receiving life; but although we do receive all these blessings, in essence it means receiving CHRIST JESUS Himself. It is true that He gives us life from the dead. He gives us pardon of sin; He gives us imputed righteousness. These are all precious things, but we should not be content with them; we have received *Christ Himself*. The Son of God has been poured into us, and we have received Him, and appropriated Him. With an experimental realisation of this wonder Paul could exclaim: "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*" (Gal 2:20)

## Prayer

*My Lord and my God!* John 20:28

## Scripture readings

### **Let us not sleep, as others do**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. Arise, shine; for your light has come! and the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.

It is high time to awake out of sleep; for 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. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

**1 Thess 5:6** - Isa 9:2; Isa 60:1 - Rom 13:11-14 - 1 Thess 5:6-10

*Suggested additional reading: Matthew 25 1-13*

## Meditation

### ***Let us not sleep, as others do*** - — *1 Thessalonians 5:6*

How do we keep ourselves spiritually awake as Christians? The subtle influence of this world where we are called to live for our Lord, has a serious tendency to lull us to sleep and we need to take the warning of the text seriously. There are a variety of ways of counteracting spiritual drowsiness but I would suggest that one of the most effective is through our fellowship with other believers. Not just fellowship at any level but through talking positively together

about the Lord, sharing experiences of His blessings, discussing things that He's teaching us through our quiet times and books that we are finding spiritually helpful. In John Bunyan's famous story, on one occasion as Christian and Hopeful were journeying in fellowship together towards the Celestial City the environment seemed particularly oppressive and Hopeful wisely suggested to his friend that to keep them from drowsiness they should make a positive effort to talk together about spiritual things. "Brother, where shall we begin?" responded Christian. "Let's start where God started with us." said Hopeful.

We can learn from this. Christians who isolate themselves are very liable to grow drowsy. Keep company with spiritually minded Christians and you will not only be kept awake but will find refreshment and encouragement to help you make quicker progress along the road to heaven. But in talking together make sure that your main theme is the Lord Jesus. Keep your eye of faith constantly on Him; let your heart be full of Him and let your lips be constantly speaking and singing of His preciousness. Friend, live near to the cross, and you won't sleep.

Then in addition think about the place you are travelling to. Find out as much as you can about it: *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit."* (1 Cor 2:9-10) If you remember you're on the road to heaven, you won't be falling asleep on the way. When you remind yourself how your Saviour has set you free from the powers of hell but that the devil is still pursuing you, you won't loiter. Christian, you won't fall asleep once you have the awareness that the pearly gates are open for you, that there is a place reserved for you in the angelic choir and that a crown of gold is reserved for your brow? No! No!. In holy, spiritual fellowship continue to watch and pray that you don't enter into temptation.

## Prayer

*Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him". Ps 13:3-4*

## Scripture readings

### **You must be born again**

What is man, that he could be pure? And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous? - Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. - Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes. - Love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. - Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

**John 3:7** - Job 15:14; 1 Cor 15:50; John 3:3 - Ezek 36:26-27; 1 Peter 1:22-23 - John 1:12-13; Eph 4:22-24

*Suggested additional reading: **John 3:1-18***

## Meditation

### ***You must be born again.*** - John 3:7

These words of Jesus appear to have come like a foreign language to Nicodemus, one of the leading Jewish theologians of the day, but they form the very basis of salvation. It is important that we search our hearts to see whether we are really "*born again*," for there are many who think they are, who are not. Firstly, we need to be clear that to have the name of a Christian is not the same as

having the nature of a Christian. It is not sufficient to be born into a Christian family or baptised into a Christian Church, for without new birth these make us neither God's children nor citizens in His kingdom.

When Jesus here speaks of being born again He indicates that this is something so *mysterious* that human words can't really describe it. "*The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.*" (John 3:8). Nevertheless, it is a change which is known and felt. It is known by the spiritual fruit it produces and is felt by an inner awareness.

This great work is therefore *supernatural*. It is not an operation which a person performs for himself. As the term "new birth" implies, a new principle is infused within a person, which works in the heart, renews the soul, and affects the entire personality. It is not a change of my name, but a renewal of my nature. I am no longer the person I used to be, but I'm a new creation in Christ Jesus. To wash and dress a corpse is quite different from making it alive; man can do the one, God alone can do the other. If therefore you've been "*born again,*" your acknowledgment will be, "O Lord Jesus, the everlasting Father, You are my spiritual Parent; unless Your Spirit had breathed into me the breath of a new, holy, and spiritual life, I would still be '*dead in trespasses and sins.*' (Eph 2:1). My new heavenly life has its source in You and comes to me as Your gift of grace. My '*life is hidden with Christ in God.*' (Col 3:3). '*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*' (Gal 2:20)."

May the Holy Spirit assure us of our new birth. It is vital, for to be unregenerate is to be unsaved, unpardoned, without God, and without hope.

## Prayer

*Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts. ... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*Ps 51:6;10*

## Scripture readings

### Have faith in God

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

He who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. - For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. - "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." ... when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." - And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

**Mark 11:22** - Heb 11:6 - James 1:6; Mark 11:23-25 - Ps 62:8; 2 Chron 20:20;22 - Mark 9:23; Acts 3:16

*Suggested additional reading: **Heb 11:23-40***

## Meditation

### *Have faith in God. - Mark 11:22*

Faith is the soul's feet on which it can march along the road of God's will. Love can make the feet move more swiftly; but it's faith

which carries the soul along. Faith is the oil enabling the wheels of holy devotion and sincere Christian living to move smoothly. Without faith the wheels squeak and groan and will eventually seize up completely.

With faith I can do all things; without faith I shall neither have the inclination nor the power to do anything in the service of God. If you would find the men and women who serve God the best, you must look for those with the most faith. Little faith will save a man, but little faith can't do great things for God. Poor Little-faith couldn't have fought "Apollyon;" it needed "Christian" to do that. Poor Little-faith couldn't have slain "Giant Despair;" it required "Great-heart's" arm to knock that monster down. Little faith will go to heaven most certainly, but it often has to hide itself in a nut-shell, and it frequently loses everything except its jewels. Little-faith says, "It's is a rough road with many sharp thorns and full of dangers; I'm afraid to go;" but Great-faith remembers the promise, "*Your sandals shall be iron and bronze; as your days, so shall your strength be*" (Deut 33:25): and so she goes forward boldly. Little-faith stands desponding, adding her tears to the flood water around her; but Great-faith sings, "*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you:*" (Isa 43:2) and she fords the stream at once.

Do you want to be comfortable and happy? Do you want to enjoy the Christian life? Do you want to be a smiling Christian and not a long faced pessimist? Then "*have faith in God.*" If you love darkness, and are satisfied to live in gloom and misery, then be content with little faith; but if you love the sunshine, and would sing songs of rejoicing, covet earnestly this best gift, "great faith."

## Prayer

*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief! Mark 9:24*

## Scripture readings

### **We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.**

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." - You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me.

We ... sent Timothy ... to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened.

God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

He said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."

**Acts 14:22** - Matt 10:38-39; Luke 22:28-29 - 1 Thess 3:1-4 - 1 Cor 10:13 - Rev 7:14-15

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Thess 2:13-3:13*

## Meditation

### ***We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.*** - Acts 14:22

God's people have their trials. God never intended, when He chose them that they should be an untried people. They were "*chosen in the furnace of affliction*" (Isa 48 10) and they were never chosen to worldly peace and earthly joy. Freedom from the sicknesses and pains of a mortal body was never promised them. On the contrary,

when their Lord drew up the charter of privileges, He included suffering among the things which would be part of their heritage here below.

Trials are a part of our lot; they were predestinated for us in Christ's last legacy (*John 16:1-4*). As surely as the stars are fashioned by his hands, and their orbits fixed by Him, so surely are our trials allocated to us: He has planned their season and their place, their intensity and the effect they will have on us. Good men must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they will be disappointed, for none of their predecessors have been without them. Mark the patience of Job; remember Abraham, for he had his trials, and by his faith under them, he became the father of the faithful. (*Gal 3:9*). Read the biographies of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and you'll discover that coping with difficulties and testings played an important role in shaping them as men and women of honour for Him. The cross of trouble, as the means of bringing blessing, can be identified almost as God's signature on those He loves, it is like the royal mark which distinguishes those honoured to belong to the King.

But although tribulations lie around many corners of the pathway God's children must walk, they have the comfort of knowing that their Master has walked this path before them and is even now with them. They have His presence and sympathy to cheer them, His grace to support them, and His example to teach them how to endure; and when they reach "*the kingdom*" the glorious experience they will enter into will more than make up for the "*many tribulations*" they have encountered along the way.

## Prayer

*Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God. Why are you cast down, O my soul? and why are you disquieted within me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God. Ps 43:3-5*

## Scripture readings

### **Yes, He is altogether lovely**

For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD? - No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. - For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ... and His name will be called Wonderful ... - The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever. - All bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. - Jesus ... said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God." ... and He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear ... He who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

What is your beloved more than another beloved ... My beloved is ... chief among ten thousand. ... He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

**Song 5:16** - Ps 89:6; John 1:18; Isa 9:6; John 1:14 - Ps 45:2; Luke 4:22; Mark 10:14;16 - 1 John 4:18-19 - Song 5:9;10;16

*Suggested additional reading: **Song 5:2-16***

## Meditation

***Yes, He is altogether lovely*** - *Song of Solomon 5:16*

The superlative beauty of Jesus is overwhelmingly attractive. This beauty is not so much to be admired as to be loved. Jesus is more than pleasant and fair, He is lovely. Surely the people of God

can fully justify using this golden word, for He is the object of their warmest love. A love which is founded on the intrinsic excellence of His person, the complete perfection of His character.

Look, O disciples of Jesus, to your Master's lips, and say, "Are they not the most precious?" Isn't it true that His words cause your hearts to burn within you as He talks with you? (*Luke 24:32*). You worshippers of Immanuel, look at His head, "*as of the most fine gold*", (*Song 5:11*) and tell me, are not His thoughts precious to you? Isn't your adoration sweetened with affection as you humbly bow before that countenance which "*is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars*"? (*Song 5:15*). Isn't there a charm in His every feature, and isn't His whole person so fragrant that we too can say "*Your name is like ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love You*"? (*Song 1:3*). Is there one single part of His glorious body which is not attractive? - one portion of His person which doesn't draw your soul to Him? - one of His names which doesn't warm your heart to Him?

Our love is not just as a seal set upon His heart of love alone; it is fastened on His arm of power also; (*Song 8:6*), nor is there a single part of Him upon which it doesn't fix itself. We anoint His whole person with the sweet spikenard of our fervent love. (*Mark 14:3; John 12:3*). We want to imitate His whole life; we want to represent His whole character to the world. Having seen and known Him and recognised His perfection we see lack and failure in everything else. Even the best of His favoured saints have had blots upon their garments and wrinkles upon their brows; He is nothing but loveliness. All earthly suns have their spots; creation around us has its wildernesses; the loveliest things have their defects; but Christ Jesus is gold without alloy; light without darkness; glory without cloud - "*Yes, He is **altogether** lovely.*"

## Prayer

*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. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield.*

*Ps 5:11-1*

## Scripture readings

### **In my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved."**

I said, "I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand. My root is spread out to the waters ... my glory is fresh within me, and my bow is renewed in my hand." - "Come," one says, "I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; tomorrow will be as today, and much more abundant."

The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?" - And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"

Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. - We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

**Ps 30:6** - Job 29:18-20; Isa 56:12 - Dan 4:30 - Luke 12:19-20 - 2 Cor 12:7-8; Rom 5:3-5

*Suggested additional reading: Daniel 4*

## Meditation

### ***In my prosperity I said I shall never be moved* - Psalm 30:6**

*“Moab has been at ease from his youth; he has settled on his dregs, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel.” (Jer 48:11).* Give a man wealth; let his ships continually bring home rich cargoes; let the winds and waves appear to be his servants; let his lands yield abundant harvests and the weather favour his crops; let uninterrupted

success attend him; let him stand among his fellowmen as a prosperous, successful businessman; let him enjoy settled good health; allow him to march through the world with enlivened spirit and sparkling eye, to live happily with a loving and loyal family and have a perpetual song on his lips – and the natural consequence of such an easy, happy state for any man, even if he is one of the best Christians who ever breathed, will be *presumption*. It was David here who said in his prosperity, “*I shall never be moved;*” and none of us can claim to be better than David, or to have a closer relationship to the Lord than he.

Brother, if you are treading the smooth and easy places along the narrow way to glory, thank God but watch yourself. But if the way is rough be even more thankful. If God were always to rock us in the cradle of prosperity; if we were always dandled on the knees of fortune; if we hadn't a stain or two on the alabaster pillar; if there weren't at least a few clouds in the sky; if we hadn't any bitter drops in the wine of this life, we would become intoxicated with pleasure and would imagine that we were standing secure and immoveable. We would be standing, but we would be standing on a pinnacle; we would be like the man asleep up a mast, each moment in great danger of falling fatally.

So let's bless God, then, for our afflictions; let's thank Him for those circumstances which force us to rethink and make changes in our lives. We should extol His name for losses, being aware that if, in his parental love, He hadn't dealt with us in this way, we might well have become too secure. Continued worldly prosperity is a fiery trial but afflictions, even when they seem severe, are in fact mercies in disguise.

## Prayer

*You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

*Ps 73:24-26*

## Scripture readings

### **Sin ... exceedingly sinful**

Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

Sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. - When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

It shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel. - To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. - The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. - We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. - Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed.

**Rom 7:13** - Rom 5:12; Jer 17:9 - Rom 7:8; James 1:15 - Josh 7:15; James 4:17; Rom 6:23 - 1 John 3:8 - 2 Cor 5:20-21 - 1 Peter 2:24

*Suggested additional reading: **Romans 7:7-25***

## Meditation

### ***Sin... exceeding sinful*** - *Romans 7:13*

Beware of thinking lightly of sin. For many Christians at the time of their conversion, their conscience was so tender that they were afraid of the slightest sin. Young converts have a holy timidity,

a godly fear lest they should offend against God. But sadly very soon the freshness of these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world. The sensitive plant of young piety and godliness often turns into a willow, too pliable, too easily yielding. It is sadly true, that even a sincere Christian may by degrees grow so morally insensitive that the sin which once startled him soon doesn't alarm him in the least. By degrees men get familiar with sin. The soldier's ear, accustomed to the boom of the cannon becomes deaf to softer sounds. At first a little sin startles us; but soon we say, "It's only a little one!" Then there comes another, larger, and then another, until by degrees we begin to regard sin as almost an insignificant thing. So much so that in unholy presumption we deny that we have fallen into sin at all. True, we tripped a little, but most of the time we stand upright. We may have uttered one unholy word, one small lie, one revengeful remark, but most of our conversation has been consistently Christlike.

So we excuse sin; we throw a cloak over it; we call it by dainty names. Christian, beware how you think lightly of sin. Be very careful lest you fall little and little.

Sin, just a little thing? Isn't it a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin, a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the grapes? Doesn't the tiny coral insect build a rock which wrecks a navy? Don't little strokes fell lofty oaks? Won't continual droppings wear away stones? Sin, a little thing? It placed a mocking crown of thorns on our Redeemer's head and pierced His heart! It made Him suffer anguish, bitterness, and separation from His holy Father. If you could weigh the smallest sin in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent, and you would abhor the slightest appearance of evil. Look upon all sin as the evil which crucified your Saviour, and you will see it to be "*exceeding sinful.*"

## Prayer

*With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*

*Ps 119:10-11*

## Scripture readings

### **You shall love your neighbour**

"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart ... soul ... strength and ... mind, and your neighbour as yourself". And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

**Matt 5:43** - Luke 10:25-28 - Gal 5:13-14 - James 2:8-10 - 1 Cor 13:4-8

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 10:25-37***

## Meditation

### ***You shall love your neighbour*** - *Matthew 5:43*

"*Love your neighbour.*" Perhaps he is rolling in money, and you are poor, and living in your little cottage side-by-side with his lordly mansion. Every day you see one or more of his mercedes roll by, his frequent, well-to-do guests look in disdain at your humble home and you sense that even his gardener despises your poverty. God has

given him these gifts, don't covet his wealth, and don't think hard thoughts about him and his household. Work to improve you own situation as far as you can, but be content and don't look enviously at your neighbour and wish your poverty on him. Love him, and then you won't envy him.

Maybe it's the other way round, God has blessed you with more than sufficient, and your neighbours are poor with a correspondingly different lifestyle. Don't scorn to think of them as neighbours who God wants you to love. The world would call them your inferiors but in what way are they really inferior? They have far more in common with you that you might want to acknowledge, for God *"has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."* (Acts 17:26). It's your coat and car which are better than theirs not the essential you. They are human beings, and what are you more than that? Make the effort and take time to love your neighbour however he may dress and behave.

But, perhaps, you say, "I can't love my neighbours, for whatever I try to do they return only ingratitude and contempt." So much the more room for the heroism of love. Do you want to be a feather-bed warrior, instead of knowing the rough fight of love? He who dares the most, will win the most; and if your path of love be rough going, tread it boldly, continuing to love your neighbours through thick and thin. Heap coals of fire on their heads, (*Prov 25:21-22*), and if they are hard to please, don't seek to please *them*, but to please your *Master*. Remember if *they* spurn your love, your Master hasn't spurned it, and your action is just as acceptable to Him whether they accept it or not. *"Love your neighbour"*, for in so doing you are following the footsteps of Christ.

## Prayer

*I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; the upright shall dwell in Your presence. Ps 140:12-13*

## Scripture readings

### **Why are we sitting here until we die?**

And behold, a leper came and worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. - The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!" Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yes, our God is merciful.

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. - All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. - Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

**2 Kings 7:3** - Matt 8:2-3; Ps 116:3-5 - Isa 1:18-19; John 6:37 - Isa 55:7; Luke 23:42-43

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Kings 7*

## Meditation

### ***Why are we sitting here until we die?*** - 2 Kings 7:3

Although these daily meditations are intended mainly for the encouragement and edification of Christian believers there may be someone reading this today who doesn't really know Jesus. Here is something for you. Open your Bible and read the story of these lepers (2 Kings 7). Think firstly about their hopeless condition; they

had an incurable disease and were soon going to die anyway. Don't you see that your position is very similar. Sin will destroy you for all eternity if it's not dealt with. *"Nothing ventured, nothing gained"*, says an old proverb. The lepers took courage in both hands, left their comfort zone, which had become increasingly uncomfortable, and ventured cautiously over to the other camp. You need to follow their example. If you stay as you are you will perish, God's righteous law condemns you, so you have nothing to lose in going to Jesus. If you stay as you are in stubborn unbelief, no one will pity you when your ruin comes; but if you are taking steps to find God's mercy and forgiveness and He rejects you, you will have universal sympathy. None escape who refuse to look to Jesus; *"For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"*, (Acts 4:12), and you know that some are saved who believe in Him, for you've seen this happen for some for your family and friends. Why shouldn't it be the same for you? The Ninevites said, *"Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?"* (Jonah 3:9). Act on this same hope, and test the Lord's mercy. To perish is so awful, that when there is even a straw to catch at, the instinct of self-preservation should lead you to stretch out your hand.

Up to now we have been reasoning with you from your own unbelieving point of view but we can in fact assure you, that *"the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever"*. (1 Chron 28:9). Jesus turns away none who come unto Him. You won't perish if you trust Him; on the contrary, you will find treasure far richer than the poor lepers gathered in Syria's deserted camp. May the Holy Spirit give you the courage and grace to go at once, and you won't believe in vain.

## Prayer

*I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. ... You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Ps 32:5;7*

## Scripture readings

### **Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he.

Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*? - And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

**1 Cor 10:12** - Prov 16:18-20 - Matt 26:33-35 - 1 Cor 4:7; 8:2 - John 15:4-6

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Cor 9:24 – 10:13*

## Meditation

### ***Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall***

*1 Cor 10:12*

It's a curious fact that it's possible to be proud of God's grace in your life. A man says, "I have great faith, I won't fall; poor little faith may, but I never shall." "I have fervent love," says another, "I can stand, there is no danger of my going astray." The fact is he who boasts of grace really has little grace to boast of. Most who think like this imagine that the grace they have today will continue to keep

them for ever, not realising that the source of this grace is not in themselves and that the flow must come constantly from the fountain head, or else the brook will soon run dry. If a lamp doesn't have a continuous stream of oil feeding it, although it burns brightly to-day, it will smoke to-morrow and soon give out an obnoxious smell! Be very careful that you never think boastfully about spiritual fruit in your life but always give all the glory to Christ. Your confidence for the future needs to be Him and not in yourself. Only Christ's strength can keep you from falling.

*"Take heed lest you fall"* - Spend much time in prayer, and ensure that adoration and worship form a significant part of your quiet time. Read the Scriptures earnestly and constantly and aim to apply what you read in your daily life. Live near to God. See Christ Himself as your great example and often challenge yourself with the question, "What would Jesus have done in this situation?" Let your lifestyle reflect your anticipation of heaven and cultivate a love and concern for your fellowmen and their eternal salvation. Living with such a vital relationship with your Lord will enable you to unconsciously reflect His character to all you meet.

When that happy day comes when the One you love will say: "Come up higher," it will then be your happiness to hear Him say, "You have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, you have kept the faith and henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness which will never fade away." (2 Tim 4:7-8). So Christian, with care and caution press on! You need to realise your own weakness but have full faith and confidence in Jesus. He is able and He alone, *"to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."* (Jude 24)

## 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

### **Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**

Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel, says the LORD; and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land, says the LORD, and work; for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts. According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!

He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. - Of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. - He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. - We, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

**2 Tim 2:1** - Hag 2:4-5 - 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13 - Col 1:10-11 - 1 Cor 1:9; John 1:16; John 6:56-57 - 2 Peter 3:18

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Tim 1:1-2:1*

## Meditation

***Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. - 2 Tim 2:1***

Christ is full of grace, grace without measure, but He doesn't retain it for Himself. As a reservoir empties itself into pipes and

channels, so Christ pours out His grace for His people. *“Of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace.”* (John 1 16). Grace by its very nature must be used and it seems as though Christ only has grace in order to dispense it to us. He stands like the fountain, always flowing, but only running in order to fill the empty glasses and to satisfy the thirsty lips which are attracted to it in their need. Like a tree, He bears juicy, sweet fruit, not as ornaments to decorate its boughs, but to be picked by those who are hungry. Grace in every form that we need it, whether it's to pardon, to cleanse, to preserve, to strengthen, to enlighten, to quicken, or to restore, is always freely available and there is no form of grace which Christ hasn't given to His people.

Also, as the blood in our bodies, although flowing through the heart, belongs equally to every organ and cell, so the influences of grace are the inheritance of every individual saint united to Christ their head. In this we can begin to see the precious communion there is between Christ and His Church. Christ is the head upon which the oil is first poured; but the same oil runs to the very skirts of the garments, (*Ps 133:2*) so that the most insignificant saint receives unction from the same costly moisture which fell first on the head. This is true communion and can also be compared to the sap which flows from the stem to the branches. It's the same sap which nourishes the whole tree, the stem and the branches. Day by day we are receiving grace from Jesus, which maintains our spiritual lives, and the more we recognize that it is coming from Him, so the more we shall find joy in the awareness that He is giving of His precious self to us in fellowship. Let us therefore make daily use of the riches we have in Him, coming to Him as our very own Lord and Saviour under the terms of the covenant, taking from Him all we need with as much boldness as men take money from their own purse.

## Prayer

*I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy.*

*Ps 59:16-17*

## Scripture readings

### **For I am a stranger with You**

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. - I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! - Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

And the LORD said to Samuel ... they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, ... they have forsaken Me and served other gods, so they are doing to you also. - Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

These all died in faith, ... and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ... They desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. - Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Ps 39:12** - John 1:10-11; John 17:14 - Matt 10:25-26; Matt 5:11-12 - 1 Sam 8:7-8; Matt 28:20 - Heb 11:13-16; Phil 3:20

*Suggested additional reading: **Matt 5: 1-16***

## Meditation

***I am a stranger with You.*** - Psalm 39:12

Yes, O Lord, I'm a stranger *with* You, but not a stranger *to* You. Your grace has effectively removed all my natural alienation from You and now, in fellowship with You I am walking through this sinful world as a pilgrim in a foreign country.

*You* are a stranger in your own world. Men have forgotten *You*, dishonoured *You*, set up new laws and alien customs and don't know *You*. When *Your* dear Son came unto *His* own, *His* own didn't receive Him. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world didn't know Him. (*John 1:10-11*). Never was a foreigner so like a speckled bird among the native inhabitants of a country as *Your* beloved Son was among *His* mother's brothers. It's no wonder, then, if I who live the life of Jesus, should be unknown and a stranger here below. Lord, I don't want to be a citizen where Jesus was an alien. His pierced hand has loosened the cords which once bound my soul to earth, and now I find myself a stranger in my own land. My words often seem like a foreign language to my own compatriots, my thinking is different and my actions are strange. A Romany Gypsy would be more at home in New York than I could ever be amongst those who reject my Saviour.

But this is what makes my situation so precious that I wouldn't exchange it for a million pounds: I am a stranger *with You*. You are my fellow-sufferer, my fellow-pilgrim. How privileged and honoured I am to have *You* with me. What a joy to travel through life with such a companion! My heart burns within me when *You* talk to me along the road (*Luke 24:32*) and although I'm a traveller with no settled home, I'm far more blest than those who sit on thrones, and far more at home than those who live in their dream cottages.

*To me remains nor place, nor time:  
My country is in every clime;  
I can be calm and free from care  
On any shore, since God is there.  
While place we seek, or place we shun,  
The soul finds happiness in none:  
But with a God to guide our way,  
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.*

## Prayer

*I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me. My soul breaks with longing for Your judgments at all times. Ps 119:19-20*

## Scripture readings

### **Remember the poor**

Whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. - If someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.

**Gal 2:10** - 1 John 3:17-18 - Heb 13:15-16; James 2:14-17 - 2 Cor 9:6-8 - Matt 25:40

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Cor 9*

## Meditation

### ***Remember the poor*** - Galatians 2:10

Why does God allow so many of His children to be poor? He could make them all rich if He pleased; He could lay bags of gold at their doors; He could send them a large annual income; or He could

scatter abundant supplies around their houses as he once made the quails lie in heaps round the camp of Israel, and rained bread from heaven to feed them.

There is no need for them to be poor, except that He sees it to be best. *“The cattle upon a thousand hills are His”* (Ps 50 10); He could supply them with far more than they needed; He could make the richest, the greatest, and the most influential of this world to bring all their power and riches to the feet of His children, for the hearts of all men are in His control. But He doesn't choose to do so; He allows them to suffer in need, He allows them to just scrape by, saving the pennies. Why is this? There are many reasons: one is, to give us, who are favoured with enough, an opportunity of showing our love to Jesus. We show our love to Christ when we sing of Him and when we pray to Him; but if there were no poverty in the world we would lose the privilege of proving our love by serving His poorer brethren. He has ordained this as a way we can show that our love is not mere empty words, but a reality that we want to express in deed and in truth.

When we truly love Christ, we will care for those who are loved by Him. Those who are dear to Him will be dear to us. Let us then look upon it not as a duty but as a privilege to minister to the needs of the poor of the Lord's flock, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, *“Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to Me.”* (Matt 25:40). Surely this assurance is sweet enough, and this motive strong enough to lead us to help others with a willing hand and a loving heart, remembering that all we do for His people is graciously accepted by Christ as having been done to Him.

## Prayer

*Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You. 1 Chron 29:13-14*

## Scripture readings

### **You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**

I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.

God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. - As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! - By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

**Gal 3:26** - 2 Cor 6:18 - Gal 4:4-7; Joh 1:12 - Rom 8:14-17 - 1 Joh 3:1; Eph 2:8

*Suggested additional reading: 1 John 3*

## Meditation

### ***You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***

- Gal 3:26

God is the Father of all his children. Perhaps you feel that you have a very small measure of faith and are a very insignificant Christian. You look at others who seem to be able to use spiritual weapons to much greater advantage while every little straw in the

path seems to trip you up and every shadow makes you afraid. Listen, Little-faith! Great-heart is God's child, and you are God's child too; and Great-heart is not one little bit more God's child than you are. Peter and Paul were highly-favoured apostles and clearly members of the family of the Most High but you have the same Father and they are therefore your brothers. The weak Christian is as much a child of God as the strong one.

*This cov'nant stands secure,  
Though earth's old pillars bow;  
The strong, the feeble, and the weak,  
Are one in Jesus now.*

The names of all God's children are in the same family register. Some have received a greater measure of grace and more spiritual gifts than others, but God, our heavenly Father, has the same tender heart towards all. One may be more active and bring more glory to his Father through his ministry and service, but he whose name is the least in the kingdom of heaven is as much the child of God as he who stands among the King's mighty men. Let this cheer and comfort us when we draw near to God with the words, "*Our Father*".

Yet, while this should bring you comfort, don't rest content with weak faith, but with the Apostles ask for an increase. (*Luke 17:5*). However weak our faith may be, if it is real faith in Christ, we shall nevertheless reach heaven at last, but a weak faith doesn't honour our Father as much and doesn't give us so much joy and peace. If then you want to live to Christ's glory, and be happy in His service, seek to be filled with the spirit of adoption more and more completely, till perfect love shall cast out all fear.

## Prayer

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. ... Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

*Matt 6:9-13*

## Scripture readings

### **The eternal God is your refuge.**

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. - The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever. - I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

**Deut 33:27** - Ps 90:1-2; Ps 18:2 - Ps 91:9-11 - Ps 125:2; Ps 4:8 - Isa 41:10 - Luke 13:34

*Suggested additional reading: Deuteronomy 33 24-29*

## Meditation

### ***The eternal God is your refuge.*** - Deuteronomy 33:27

The word refuge may be translated “mansion,” or “abiding-place,” which gives the thought that *God is our abode, our home*. There is a fulness of meaning in this metaphor, for even if it's a humble terraced cottage or a cramped apartment our home is somewhere precious to us; and our blessed God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being is even more precious.

It is at home that *we feel safe*: we can shut the world out and

relax in quiet security. So when we are with our God we have no fear. (*Ps 46:1-3*). He is our shelter and retreat, our abiding refuge.

At home, ***we take our rest***; it is there we find relaxation after a tiring day. And in the same way our hearts find rest in God. When wearied with life's pressures and struggles we can turn to Him and our soul can be at peace.

At home, also, ***we can open our hearts freely***; we are not afraid of being misunderstood, nor of our words being misconstrued. So when we are with God we can commune freely with Him, laying open all our hidden desires. If the "*secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him,*" (*Ps 25:14*) then the secrets of those that fear Him ought to be, and must be, known by their Lord.

Home, too, is the place of our ***truest and purest happiness***: and it is in God that our hearts find their deepest pleasure. We have joy in Him which far exceeds all other joy.

It is also for our home that we ***work and labour***. The thought of it gives us strength to bear the daily pressure of our work; it gives renewed energy to persevere, and in this sense we may also say that God is our home. Love to Him strengthens us. We think of Him in the person of His dear Son; and a glimpse of the suffering face of our Redeemer constrains us to labour on for Him. We feel that we must work, for there are brothers and sisters still to be saved, and we have our Father's heart to make glad by bringing home His wandering children. Then also for our Father's sake we would play our part in encouraging and blessing all the family living with us in the loving embrace of the triune God. Happy are those who have thus the God of Jacob for their refuge!

## Prayer

*How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.* Ps 36:7-9

## Scripture readings

### **My beloved**

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? - My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. - 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.

Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. - Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.

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. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.

We love Him because He first loved us.

**Song 2:8** - Ps 42:1-2; Ps 84:2; Isa 26:8-9 - Ps 73:25-26; Song 2:5 - Ps 116:1-2; John 14:15-16 - 1 John 4:18-19

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 116***

## Meditation

### **My beloved** - *Song of Solomon 2:8*

This was a golden name which the Old Testament Church in her most joyous moments would give to the Lord's Anointed. When the

time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtledove was heard in her land, *her* love-note was sweeter than either, as she sang, “*My beloved is mine and I am His: He feeds His flock among the lilies.*” (Song 2:16). Ever in her song of songs she calls Him by that delightful name, “*My beloved!*” Even in the long winter, when idolatry had caused the garden of the Lord to wither, her prophets found opportunity to put on one side the burden of the Lord's judgement for a moment and to say, as Isaiah did, “*Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard.*” (Isaiah 5:1).

Though these saints had never seen His face, and though as yet He had not revealed Himself as a man, nor lived among them, and no man had yet seen His glory in human form, yet He was the “*Consolation of Israel*” (Luke 2:25), the “*hope*” (Jer 17:13) and “*joy*” (Ps 43:4) of all the chosen, the “*beloved*” of all those who were upright before the Most High. We, living now in the summer days of the Church, are also in the habit of speaking of Christ as the best beloved of our soul, and to feel that He is very precious, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. The Church loves Jesus so much and so claims Him as her beloved, that the apostle dares to defy the whole universe to separate her from His love, and declares that neither tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword have been able to do it; rather, he joyously boasts, “*In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” (Romans 8:35-37)

*My Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art mine  
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign  
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now*

## Prayer

*Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.*

*John 21:15*

## Scripture readings

**You will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone.**

Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'

My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, and my relatives stand afar off. - Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." ... And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. - Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. - At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.

Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul would soon have settled in silence. ... In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.

**John 16:32** - Mark 14:27 - Ps 38:11; Ps 69:20 - Luke 22:41-46; Matt 26:40-41; Phil 3:10 - 2 Tim 4:16-17 - Ps 94:17;19

*Suggested additional reading: Matthew 26:36-56*

## Meditation

***You will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone.*** - John 16:32

Few had the privilege of sharing with Christ the sorrows of Gethsemane. The majority of the His followers were not sufficiently mature in their faith to be allowed to witness the mysteries of "the

agony.” That evening they were occupied with keeping the passover feast in their own houses, and they represent the many who are earnest to live up to the letter of the Christian faith but are just infants in their grasp of the spirit of the gospel. There were just eleven who were given the privilege of entering Gethsemane and out of the eleven, eight were left at a distance. These had a degree of fellowship, but not the intimate kind which is reserved for those more dearly loved and trusted. Only the three highly favoured disciples could come nearer to the curtain which in fact veiled our Lord’s mysterious sorrow. Within that veil not even these could intrude; the distance of a stone’s-throw must be left between the favoured disciples and their Lord. (*Luke 22:41*). He must tread the wine-press alone, (*Isa 63:3*) and none could be with Him.

Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, represent the few eminent, experienced saints, who in their fellowship with Christ have themselves done business on great waters and can to some degree measure the huge Atlantic waves of their Redeemer’s passion.

Some selected saints are privileged, for the benefit of others and in order to be strengthened themselves for special and tremendous conflict, to enter the inner circle and hear the pleadings of the suffering High Priest. As Paul desired, they know something of having fellowship with Him in his sufferings, and being made conformable unto His death. (*Phil 3:10*). Yet even these cannot really penetrate the secret places of our Saviour’s suffering. “Your unknown sufferings” is a remarkable expression in the Greek liturgy. There was an inner chamber in our Master’s grief, shut out from human knowledge and fellowship. There Jesus is “*left alone.*” and in this unknown suffering we see Him more than ever as God’s “*indescribable gift*” (2 Cor 9:15) to us. Isn’t Issac Watts right when he sings: -

*And all the unknown joys he gives,  
Were bought with agonies unknown.*

## Prayer

*Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. Ps 69:6-7*

## Scripture readings

### **He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed,**

"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." - "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name."

In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears. - Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear.

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. - Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

**Matt 26:39** - Matt 26:39; John 12:27-28 - Ps 18:6; Heb 5:7 - 1 Peter 5:6-7 - James 4:8; Heb 10:22; Ps 95:6-7

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 22:1-11***

## Meditation

***And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed. -***

*Matthew 26:39*

In this verse we see our Saviour praying in His hour of trial and there are several significant things for us to learn for our instruction.

It was ***lonely prayer***. He withdrew even from His three favoured disciples. Believer, be much in solitary prayer, especially in times of

trial. Family prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church, is not enough, these are very precious, but what is most precious to God and brings you personally closest to Him is the prayer that ascends from your private devotions, where no ear hears but God's.

It was **humble prayer**. Luke says He knelt, but Matthew here adds to this and says He "*fell on His face.*" If this was the attitude of of the Son of God before His Father, what should your attitude be, you humble servant of the great Master? Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of prevailing with God unless we abase ourselves before Him. He has then promised to exalt us in due time. (*1 Peter 5:6*)

It was **filial prayer**. "Abba, Father." You will find it your confidence in your trouble to plead your adoption before your God. Merely as His subject You have no rights; you have forfeited them through the treason of your sin and rebellion; but nothing can take away a child's right to his father's protection. Don't be afraid to say, "My Father, hear my cry."

Observe that it was **persevering prayer**. He prayed three times. Don't stop until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continual coming earned for her what a single prayer could not win. "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.

Lastly, **it was the prayer of resignation**. "*Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will*". When you yield, then God yields. Seek that it should be as God wants and He in His greater wisdom will decide what is for the best. Be content to leave your prayer in His hands. He knows best when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading, earnestly, importunately, yet with humility and resignation, you will surely prevail.

## Prayer

*O My God, ... Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed. ... Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* Ps 22:2;4-5;1

## Scripture readings

### **His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

It pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labour of His soul, and be satisfied.

"Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has been brought on me, which the LORD has inflicted in the day of His fierce anger."

Without shedding of blood there is no remission. - Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

"I lay down My life for the sheep. ... 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. This command I have received from My Father."

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

**Luke 22:44** - Isa 53:10-11 - Lam 1:12 - Heb 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19 - John 10:15;18 - Rev 1:5-6

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 53:3-12*

## Meditation

***His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*** - Luke 22:44

The mental pressure arising from our Lord's struggle with temptation put so great a strain on His human frame that his pores

sent forth “*great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*” This indicates how tremendous the weight of sin must have been that it was able to so crush the Saviour that he distilled great drops of blood! It demonstrates *the extent of his love.*

It is a very thought provoking observation of old Isaac Ambrose that gum which exudes from the tree without it being cut is always the best. As we reverently use this picture for our Saviour, He as a precious camphire-tree yielded sweet spices when He was scourged with the cruel knotted whips and when it was pierced by the nails on the cross; but see, He gives forth this best spice when there is no whip, no nail, no wound. In this we also see the *voluntary nature of Christ’s sufferings*, for without a scalpel the blood flowed freely. There was no need to apply the knife; it flowed spontaneously. No need for Israel to cry, “*Spring up, O well;*” (Num 21:17), for this wonderful fountain for sin and for uncleanness (*Zech 13:1*) flows of itself.

The normal bodily reaction when men suffer shock and great mental stress is for the blood to rush to the heart. The cheeks become pale and the person will often faint because the blood has gone inward as if to nourish the inner man while he is passing through this trial. But in the case of our Saviour we see a different physical reaction, which perhaps we can interpret in this way. He is so utterly oblivious of Himself that instead of his agony drawing his blood to His heart to nourish Himself, it drives it outward to nourish us and it falls to the earth in great drops. He was offering Himself a sacrifice to purchase our salvation: “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*” (John 1:29)

## 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.*

*Rev 5:9-10*

## Scripture readings

### **He was heard because of His godly fear**

And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch." - And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me. The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. - For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.

The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!" Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful.

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last.

**Heb 5:7** – Mark 14:33-34; Luke 22:41-43 – Ps 18:18-20; Ps 22:24 – Ps 116:3-5 – Luke 23:46

*Suggested additional reading: **Heb 5:1-11***

## Meditation

***He was heard in that he feared.*** - Hebrews 5:7

Did this fear arise from Satan suggesting to our Saviour that He was completely and finally forsaken? There may be other trials as

hard as this one but this is surely one of the worst to bear? “See,” says Satan, “You have no friend anywhere! Your Father has no feelings of compassion for You and therefore no heavenly angel will dare to come to help You so all heaven is alienated from You. You are left alone. See the companions whom You thought were your followers and friends, what are they worth? Son of Mary, look there is James, see there Your beloved disciple John, and Your bold apostle Peter, they are sleeping just when You so need their prayers, encouragement and support! You have no friend left in heaven or earth. All hell is against You. I have stirred up my army of devils; I have sent messages throughout all my kingdom summoning every prince of darkness to attack You tonight. We will spare no arrows, we will use all our infernal power to overwhelm You: and what can You do? You are isolated, completely alone.”

Maybe, this was the temptation; we think it was, because the appearance of an angel coming to strengthen Him removed that fear. He was heard in that He feared; He was no more alone, but heaven was with Him. It may be that this is the reason of His coming three times to His disciples — as Joseph Hart puts it —

*Backwards and forwards thrice He ran,  
As if He sought some help from man.*

He wanted to see for Himself whether it were really true that everyone had forsaken Him; He found them all asleep; but perhaps He gained some faint comfort from the thought that they were sleeping, not from treachery, but from sorrow, (*Luke 22:5*), the spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak. (*Matt 26:41*). At any rate, He was heard in that He feared. Jesus was heard in His deepest need; my soul, you will also be heard.

## Prayer

*O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry. Ps 88:1-2*

## Scripture readings

### **Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?**

Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely." As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. - Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. - Then Joab said to Amasa, "Are you in health, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not notice the sword that was in Joab's hand. And he struck him with it in the stomach, ... Thus he died.

So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. - 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.

Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.

**Luke 22:48** – Mark 14:44-47 – Ps 55:21; Prov 27:6; 2 Sam 20:9-10 – Ezek 33:31; Matt 15:8-9 – Mark 14:21.

*Suggested additional reading: **John 13: 21-38***

## Meditation

### ***Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?*** - Luke 22:48

*"The kisses of an enemy are deceitful."* (Prov 27:6). Let me be on my guard when the world puts on a loving face, for it will, if possible, betray me as it did my Master, with a kiss. Whenever a man is about to stab the Christian faith, he usually professes to have a great reverence for it. Let me beware of the sleek-faced hypocrisy

which is armour-bearer to heresy and infidelity. Knowing the deceivableness of unrighteousness, let me be wise as a serpent to detect and avoid the designs of the enemy.

The “*young man, devoid of understanding*” was led astray by the kiss of the “*strange woman*”. (*Prov 7:7-27*). Let it be your prayer that the Holy Spirit might give you understanding and spiritual wisdom that the “*enticing speech*” of the world may have no effect on you. Holy Spirit, please don't allow me, despite all my weaknesses, to be enticed and betrayed with a kiss!

But what if I should be guilty of the same accursed sin as Judas, that “*son of perdition*” (*John 17:12*)? I have been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus; I am a member of His visible Church; I sit at the communion table and all these acts of a Christian profession can be seen as the kisses of my lips. AM I sincere in them? If not, I am a base traitor. Do I live in the world as carelessly as others do, and yet make a profession of being a follower of Jesus? Then what I am doing is exposing religion to ridicule, and leading men to think wrongly of the Saviour who I claim to be following. Surely by such inconsistency I am no better than Judas, and it were better for me that I had never been born. Our Lord understands our human weaknesses and has promised us the help of His Holy Spirit to be faithful and consistent in following Him. Hence we find the Christian believers described as those “*who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*” (*Rom 8:4*).

O Lord, make me sincere and true. Preserve me from every false way. Never let me betray my Saviour. I do love You, Jesus, and though I often grieve You, yet I really do want to stay faithful to You even to death. O God, forbid that I should be a high-soaring professor, and then fall at last into the lake of fire through betraying my Master with a kiss!

## Prayer

*Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind. I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

*Ps 73:21-24*

## Scripture readings

**Jesus answered, " ... if you seek Me, let these go their way".**

When Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. - Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

"The hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." - "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion," says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ..., 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. This command I have received from My Father. ... I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

**John 18:8** - John 13:1; John 13:36 - John 16:32; Matt 26:32 - Zech 13:7 - John 10:11;18;28 - Ex 10:3

*Suggested additional reading: **John 13:31-14:13***

## Meditation

***Jesus answered "... If you seek Me, let these go their way."*** -

John 18:8

Meditate here on the care which Jesus as the good Shepherd showed towards His sheep even in His hour of trial! The overriding passion of His life on earth was to save all whom His Father had

given Him. (*John 17:11*). He resigns Himself to the enemy, allows Himself to be captured, but He interposes a word of power to set His disciples free. In regard to Himself, “*as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth*” (*Isa 53:7*), but for His disciples’ sake He speaks with Almighty energy. Here is love, constant, self-forgetting, faithful love.

But isn't there far more here than is to be seen on the surface? Don't we have the very soul and spirit of the atonement in these words? The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep, and pleads that they must therefore go free. The Surety is bound, and justice demands that those for whom He stands a substitute should be allowed to go free. In the midst of Egypt's bondage, that voice rings as a word of power, “*Let my people go.*” Out of slavery of sin and Satan the redeemed must come. In every cell of the dungeons of Despair, the sound is echoed, “*Let my people go,*” and out come the weak, despairing and frightened believers. Satan hears the well-known voice, and is forced to lift his foot from the neck of the fallen. Death hears it, and the grave opens her gates to let the dead arise. Their pathway into freedom has been called the “*Highway of Holiness*”, it leads to triumph and glory and no one can dare stop them. “*No lion shall be on their way, neither shall any ravenous beast go up on it*”. (*Isa 35:8-9*). “The hind of the morning” has drawn the cruel hunters upon himself, and now the most timid roes and hinds of the field may graze in perfect peace among the lilies of his loves. The thunder-cloud has burst over the Cross of Calvary, and the pilgrims of Zion shall never be struck by the bolts of vengeance. Come, my heart, rejoice in the immunity which your Redeemer has secured for you, and bless His name for it every day and all day.

## Prayer

*Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. ... Praise the LORD!*

*Ps 116:7-8;19*

## Scripture readings

### **Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled**

Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked. And they led Jesus away to the high priest.

Surely you have instructed many, and you have strengthened weak hands. Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, and you have strengthened the feeble knees; but now it comes upon you, and you are weary; it touches you, and you are troubled.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. - Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. - For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Without Me you can do nothing. - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

**Matt 26:56** - Mark 14:51-53 - Job 4:3-5 - 1 Cor 10:13; Eph 6:13 - Mark 14:38; Phil 3:3-4 - John 15:5; Phil 4:13

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Kings 19*

## Meditation

***Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.*** - *Matthew 26:56*

He never deserted them, but they in cowardly fear of their lives, forsook Him and fled just as His sufferings were beginning. This illustrates so clearly the frailty of all believers if left to themselves. We are, even at our best, but sheep who will very quickly run when

the wolf comes. The disciples had all been warned of the danger, and had promised to die rather than leave their beloved Master; yet they were seized with sudden panic, and took to their heels.

Perhaps as you got up this morning you could foresee a particular temptation coming and you have now braced yourself to withstand it for the Lord's sake. You are determined to remain faithful to the Lord and His truth and you can't at the moment imagine yourself failing. This verse is a warning to us all. Without the supernatural strength of the Holy Spirit we are all as weak as the disciples were. It is one thing to promise, and quite another to perform. It would have been to the disciples' eternal honour to have stood manfully at Jesus' side, but they ran away from this honour and may you and I be kept from imitating them!

Where else would they have been so safe as near their Master? He had the authority to call for twelve legions of angels for help! (*Matt 26:53*). But they fled from their true safety. O God, let me not play the fool in a similar way.

Divine grace can make the coward brave. The smoking flax can burst again into a flame when the Holy Spirit blows on it. These very apostles who were as timid as hares, grew to be as bold as lions after the Spirit had come upon them, and in the same way the Holy Spirit can make my cowardly spirit brave to confess and own my Lord and to witness for His truth.

What anguish must have filled the Saviour as He saw His friends so faithless! This was one of the bitter ingredients in His cup; but praise His name He endured all and drank that cup dry. Far be it from me to put another drop in it. If I fall away and forsake my Lord, I shall, in a sense, be crucifying Him again and putting Him to an open shame. (*Heb 6:6*). Keep me, O blessed Spirit, from an end so shameful.

## Prayer

*But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! Ps 22:19*

## Scripture readings

### **The love of Christ which passes knowledge**

The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. - That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. - Whoever is wise will observe these things, and they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

**Eph 3:19** - Gal 2:20; Eph 3:17-19 - Phil 2:5-8 - Ps 103:11-12; Ps 107:43

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 103*

## Meditation

***The love of Christ which passes knowledge.*** - Eph 3:19

Christ's love in its preciousness, its enormity, its completeness and its faithfulness is outside all our normal human experience of love and is consequently beyond our understanding. Where shall

language be found to describe His matchless, His unparalleled love towards the children of Adam? It is so vast and boundless that just as the swallow skims the water but never dives into its depths, so all descriptive words but touch the surface, while immeasurable depths lie beneath. Well might the poet say: "*O love, thou fathomless abyss!*" for this love of Christ is indeed measureless and fathomless; none can attain unto it.

In order to have any right idea of the love of Jesus, we must first understand His previous glory in its height of majesty, and then His life as a man on earth in all its depths of shame. But who can tell us the majesty of Christ? When He was enthroned in the highest heavens He was very God of very God; by Him "*were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth.*" (Ps 33:6); His own almighty hand maintained the stars and planets in their orbits; the praises of cherubim and seraphim perpetually surrounded Him; the full chorus of the hallelujahs of the universe unceasingly flowed to the foot of his throne: He reigned supreme above all His creatures, God over all, blessed for ever. (Rom 9:5).

Who is able to tell the height of His glory then? And on the other hand, who can tell is how low He descended? To become a man was in itself something the angels would have gasped at. To become a man of sorrows was far more, to bleed, and die, and suffer completely inconceivable. But for Him who was the Son of God, to suffer such unparalleled agony, to endure such a death of shame and desertion by His Father, this is a depth of condescending love which the most inspired mind must utterly fail to fathom.

Herein is love! and truly it is love that "*passes knowledge.*" Lord let our hearts fill with adoring gratitude for such love, and may it fill us with purpose and power for practical Christian service.

## Prayer

*You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness' sake, O LORD. Ps 25:5-7*

## Scripture readings

### **Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. "For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed."

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. - And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! - For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

**Heb 5:8** - Heb 2:10-11 - Isa 50:5-7 - John 6:38; Phil 2:8 - Matt 10:25; Heb 4:15

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 2*

## Meditation

### ***Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.* - Hebrews 5:8**

We are told that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering (*Heb 2:10*), therefore we who are sinful, and who are

far from being perfect, must not be surprised if we are called to pass through suffering too. Shall the head be crowned with thorns, and the other members of the body be rocked on the lap of luxury? Must Christ pass through seas of His own blood to win the crown, and we walk to heaven dryshod in silver slippers? No, our Master's experience teaches us that suffering is necessary to prepare us for glory, and the true-born child of God won't escape it and in fact wouldn't if he could!

But there is a very comforting thought in the fact of Christ's "being made perfect through suffering", and this is that He can have complete sympathy with us. For "*we do not have an high priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses.*" (Heb 4:15). In this sympathy of Christ we find a sustaining power. One of the early martyrs said, "I can bear it all, for Jesus suffered, and He suffers in me now; He sympathises with me, and this makes me strong." Believer, lay hold of this thought in every time of pain and agony. Let the thought of Jesus' suffering strengthen you as you follow in His steps. Find precious support in His sympathy; and remember that, to suffer is an honourable thing and to suffer for Christ is glory. The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to do this (*Acts 5:41*). To the extent that the Lord gives us grace to suffer *for* Christ, to suffer *with* Christ, to this extent He honours us. The jewels of a Christian are his sufferings. The regalia of the kings whom God has anointed are their troubles, their sorrows, and their sadnesses. Don't then shun being honoured. Don't reject being exalted. Grievings exalt us, and troubles lift us up. "*If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.*" (2 Tim 2:12).

## Prayer

*Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man! For You are the God of my strength. Ps 43:1-2*

## Scripture readings

### **And He was numbered with the transgressors**

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us - All bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said "Is this not Joseph's son?" - Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

"I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." - They were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will. - There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

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

**Isa 53:12** - John 1:14; Luke 4:22; Matt 13:55 - Luke 22:37; Luke 23:32-33 - 2 Cor 5:21

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 23: 13-43***

## Meditation

***He was numbered with the transgressors.*** - *Isa 53:12*

Why did Jesus allow Himself to be enrolled among sinners, that is to be born as a son of Adam, identified without question among His human contemporaries as being one with them (*Matt 13:55*), and finally sentenced to die hanging between two murderers?

There are some powerful reasons for this wonderful act of condescension. Firstly, ***being numbered with the transgressors He***

*could the better become their advocate.* In some legal trials there is such an identification of the counsellor with the client that the eye of the law can't consider them apart. Now, when the sinner is brought to the bar, Jesus appears there Himself. He stands to answer the accusation against them. He points to His side, His hands, His feet, and challenges Justice to bring anything against the sinners whom He represents; He pleads His blood, and pleads so triumphantly, being numbered with them and having a part with them, that the Judge proclaims, "Set him free; *'deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.'*" (Job 33:24)

But then also our Lord Jesus was numbered with the transgressors in order that *they would feel a closer affinity to Him.* Who needs to be afraid of someone who is one with ourselves, written on the same list? Surely we can come to Him boldly and speak openly with Him, confessing our guilt. He who is numbered with us can't condemn us!

Wasn't He also put down on the transgressor's list *that our names might be written on the roll of the saints?* He was holy, and written among the holy; we were guilty, and numbered among the guilty; He transfers His name from the list of the holy ones on to this black indictment, and our names are taken from the indictment and written in the roll of acceptance! A complete transfer has been made between Jesus and His people. All the misery, sin and condemnation which belongs to us, Jesus has taken; and all that belongs to Jesus has come to us. His righteousness, His blood, and everything that He has He gives us as our dowry.

Rejoice, believer, in your union with the Son of God, who was numbered among the transgressors. Aim now with His help to live a life that demonstrates that, because of what He has done, you are now numbered among the saints!

## Prayer

*Plead my cause, O LORD, with those who strive with me; fight against those who fight against me. ... Stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."* Ps 35:1-3

## Scripture readings

### **By His stripes we are healed.**

So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands. - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. - Who was delivered up because of our offences - Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith. - Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

**Isa 53:5** - John 19:1-3; Isa 53:6 - Ps 80:17; Rom 4:25; Eph 5:2 - Rom 3:23-25; Mic 7:18 - Ps 103:2-4

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 22:1-21***

## Meditation

### ***By His stripes we are healed. - Isaiah 53:5***

Pilate delivered our Lord to the lictors to be scourged. The Roman scourge was a most dreadful instrument of torture. It was made of the sinews of oxen, and sharp bones were inter-twisted every here and there among the sinews; so that every time the lash

came down these pieces of bone inflicted terrible lacerations, and tore off the flesh from the bone. The Saviour was, no doubt, bound to the column, and then beaten. He had been beaten before; but this of the Roman lictors was probably the most severe of His flagellations. My soul, stand here and weep over His poor stricken body.

Believer in Jesus, can you gaze upon Him without tears, as He stands before you the mirror of agonizing love? He is at the same time as fair as the lily for innocence, and red as the rose with the crimson of His own blood. As we experience the sure and blessed healing from sin which His stripes have provided for us, doesn't our heart melt at once with love and grief? If we have ever loved our Lord Jesus, surely as we consider this verse waves of emotion should move us to greater depths of affection.

*“See how the patient Jesus stands,  
Insulted in His lowest case!  
Sinners have bound the Almighty's hands,  
And spit in their Creator's face.  
With thorns His temples gor'd and gash'd  
Send streams of blood from every part;  
His back's with knotted scourges lash'd.  
But sharper scourges tear His heart.”*

Perhaps the business of the day is calling, but first pray that your beloved Saviour will not allow you to forget His sufferings on your behalf, and then try and find time to meditate further on all He has done for you; commune with Him, praise Him and tell Him your sorrow that your sin should have cost Him so dearly.

## Prayer

*Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my praise. Jer 17:14*

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