

A close-up photograph of a butterfly with dark wings and bright orange bands, perched on a cluster of small purple flowers. The background is filled with green leaves and more flowers, creating a natural, vibrant setting.

Daily Manna September

From
Haus Barnabas
in the Black Forest

Explanation

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

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

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

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

Len Holder

1st September

Scripture readings

You will guide me with Your counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. - The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. - For this is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. - God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me.

Ps 73:24 - Ps 32:8; Ps 25:9; Ps 48:14 - Prov 3:5-7 - Isa 58:11 – John 14:3; Ps 49:15

Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 48:12-22

Meditation

You will guide me with Your counsel and afterward receive me to glory. - Psalm 73:24

The Psalmist felt his need of divine guidance. He had just been discovering the foolishness of his own heart, and to avoid being constantly led astray by his own short-sighted judgements he resolved that God's counsel should from now on be his only guide.

A sense of our own foolishness is a great step towards being wise, when it leads us to rely on the wisdom of the Lord. The blind man leans on his friend's arm and gets home safely, and in the same way we would give ourselves up implicitly to divine guidance, nothing doubting; assured that though we cannot see, it is always safe to trust the All-seeing God.

“*You will,*” is a blessed expression of confidence. He was sure that the Lord would not refuse to guide him, however busy He might be with more important tasks. This is a word for you, O believer; rest in it. Be assured that your God will be your counsellor and friend; He will guide you; He will direct all your ways. In His written word you have this assurance, in part, already fulfilled, for the Holy Scriptures are His counsel to you. Happy are we to have God's word always to guide us! Where would the mariner be without his compass? And where would the Christian be without the Bible? This is our unerring chart, the map in which every shoal is described, and all the channels from the quicksands of destruction to the haven of salvation mapped and marked by one who knows all the way. We bless You, our God, that we can trust You to guide us now, and to guide us even to the end!

At the end of this guided journey through life, the Psalmist anticipates a divine reception at last — “*and afterward receive me to glory.*” What a thought, O believer! God Himself will receive *you* to glory — *you*! Wandering, erring, straying, yet He will bring you safe at last to His home in glory! This is your portion; live on the reality of it today, - *You will guide me!* - and if perplexities should begin to overwhelm you, remind your heavenly Father immediately of what He has promised.

Prayer

Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, for in You do I trust. Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to You. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.

Ps 143:8-10

Scripture readings

Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once.

The sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.". He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him.

At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ... Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons.

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

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.

Mark 1:30 - John 11:3; Ps 91:15 - Mark 1:32-34 - Isa 53:4-5 - James 5:15-16 Ps 103:2-4

Suggested additional reading: Mark 5:22-43

Meditation

Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. - Mark 1:30

This glimpse into the house of one of the fisherman apostles is very interesting. We see at once that family joys and cares are no hindrance to a full-time Christian ministry but in fact can be a

valuable asset in our witness. A home and family give God the scope to teach us valuable lessons in ways that touch us deeply and personally. We can expect to experience many problems in family life but also the joys of seeing His grace at work in the lives of those we love dearly.

Although God calls some of his children to unmarried lives of service, Christianity and family life agree well together. Peter's house was probably a poor fisherman's hut, but the Lord of glory entered it, lodged in it, and worked this miracle there. If your home is but a humble place let this incident encourage you to invite King Jesus there. God is more often to be found in little cottages and town flats than in rich mansions. Jesus is looking round your room now and is waiting to be gracious to you

Illness had come into Simon's house and a severe fever had confined his mother-in-law to bed and all the household were worried. As soon as Jesus came they told Him about it and He hurried to the patient's bed. Do you have sickness in your home today? You will find Jesus by far the best doctor, go to Him at once and tell Him all about the matter. It concerns one of His people, and therefore cannot be too trivial for Him.

Note that the Saviour restored the sick woman at once. None can heal as He does. We may not always find that the Lord removes all disease from those we love at once, but we can be certain that believing prayer for the sick is far more likely to be followed by healing than the best medication without it. If healing doesn't come as quickly or a completely as we would like, we must meekly bow to His will knowing that life and death are in His hands. The tender heart of Jesus waits to hear our griefs, let us pour them into His patient ear.

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

Scripture readings

You whom I love.

"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." - I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

I will love You, O Lord, my strength. - He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Song of Solomon 1:7 - John 21:15; Ps 116:1 - Rom 5:5; 1 Peter 1:8 - 1 John 4:19-20 - Ps 18:1 - Matt 10:37-39

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 7:36- 50***

Meditation

You whom I love. - *Song of Solomon 1:7*

It is well to be able, without any "if" or "but," to say of the Lord Jesus - "*You whom I love.*" Many can only say of Jesus that they *hope* they love Him; they *trust* they love Him; but only those satisfied with a poor and shallow experience will be content to stay here. No one ought to give any rest to his spirit till he feels quite sure about a matter of such vital importance. We didn't ought to be satisfied with a superficial *hope* that Jesus loves us, and with a bare

trust that we love Him. The old saints did not generally speak with “buts,” and “ifs,” and “hopes,” and “trusts,” but they spoke positively and plainly. *“I know whom I have believed,”* (2 Tim 1:12) says Paul. *“I know that my Redeemer lives,”* (Job 19:25) says Job. Get positive knowledge of your love of Jesus, and don't be satisfied till you can speak of your interest in Him as a reality, which you have made sure by having received the witness of the Holy Spirit, and His seal upon your soul by faith.

True love to Christ is in every case the Holy Spirit's work, and must be wrought in the heart by Him. He is the efficient cause of it; but the logical reason why we love Jesus lies in Himself. Why do we love Jesus? Because He first loved us. Why do we love Jesus? Because He gave Himself for us. We have life through His death; we have peace through His blood. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. Why do we love Jesus? Because of the excellency of His person. We are filled with a sense of His beauty! an admiration of His charms! a consciousness of His infinite perfection! His greatness, goodness, and loveliness, in one resplendent ray, combine to enchant the soul till it is so ravished that it exclaims, *“Yes, He is altogether lovely”* (Song 5:16). Blessed love this - a love which binds the heart with chains more soft than silk, and yet more firm than adamant!

Prayer

I will love You, O Lord, my strength.

He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy.

You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. You enlarged my path under me, so my feet did not slip.

The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock!

Psalms 18:1; 16-17; 35-36; 46

Scripture readings

"I am willing; be cleansed."

Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. - For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. - And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Mark 1:41 - Mark 1:40 – 42 - John 5:25; 2 Cor 4:6 - 1 John 1:9; 1 Cor 6:11

Suggested additional reading: 1 John 1:1 - 2:2

Meditation

"I am willing; be cleansed." - Mark 1:41

Primeval darkness heard the command of the Almighty, "*Let there be light,*" (Gen 1:3) and straightaway light came into being. The word of our Lord Jesus is equal in majesty to that ancient word of power. Redemption like Creation has its word of might. Jesus speaks and it is done. Leprosy yielded to no human remedies, but it fled at once at the Lord's "I will." The disease was showing no hopeful signs or indications of recovery, and natural causes contributed nothing to this healing. The unaided word of our Lord achieved the entire work on the spot and for ever.

The sinner is in a more miserable condition than the leper. Each needs to imitate this man's example and go to Jesus, *“imploing Him and kneeling down to Him.”* (Mark 1:40) On exercising what little faith they have, even though it should go no further than *“Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean”* (Mark 1:40); there can be no doubt as to the result of such a prayer. Jesus heals all who come, and rejects none.

In reading the narrative in which our morning's text occurs, it is significant to notice that Jesus touched the leper. This unclean person had broken through the regulations of the ceremonial law and pressed his way into the house, but Jesus, so far from reproaching him for this, disregarded the law Himself in order to meet him. He made an interchange with the leper, for in cleansing him He contracted by that touch a Levitical defilement. Even so Jesus Christ was made sin for us, although in Himself He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor 5:21)

Our prayer is that sinful men and women will go to Jesus, believing in the power of His blessed substitutionary work, and they will soon learn the power of His gracious touch. That hand which multiplied the loaves, which saved sinking Peter, which upholds afflicted saints, which crowns believers, that same hand will touch every seeking sinner, and in a moment make him clean. The love of Jesus is the source of salvation. He loves, He looks, He touches us, WE LIVE.

Prayer

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! ... Son of David, have mercy on me!
Luke 18:38-39

You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
Ps 23:5-6

Scripture readings

Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!

"Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the Lord. - "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith."

God --- delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)

You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. - He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world - You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned?

Ps 120:5 - Jer 9:6; Rev 2:13-14 - 2 Peter 2:7-8; Col 1:13-14 - John 17:15-16; Matt 5:13

Suggested additional reading: 2 Peter 2

Meditation

Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar! - Psalm 120:5

As a Christian you have to live in the middle of an ungodly world, and it is of little use for you to cry "Woe is me." Jesus didn't pray that you should be taken out of the world, and what He didn't

pray for, you shouldn't want. It's far better in the Lord's strength to meet the difficulty, and glorify Him in it. The enemy is ever on the watch to detect inconsistency in your conduct; therefore be very *holy*. Remember that the eyes of all are watching you, and that more is expected from you than from other men. Aim in His strength to give no occasion for blame. Let the only fault they can discover in you to be your faithfulness in obeying God. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, "*We shall not find any charge against this Daniel, unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*" (Daniel 6.5)

Seek to be *useful* as well as consistent. Perhaps you think, "If I were in a more favourable position I might serve the Lord better, but I can't do any good where I am". Don't you believe it, the worse the people are among whom you live, the more they need your godly influence; if they are crooked, there is more need for you to show what honesty is; and if they are perverse, there is more need for you to be a witness to God's truth to their proud hearts. Where would you expect to find the doctor, surely to be surrounded by sick people. Where is honour to be won by the soldier if it isn't in the hottest fire of the battle?

When you are worn out with the struggle of coping with the sin that confronts you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried to heaven in comfort and you mustn't expect to travel more easily than they. They had to risk death in the most exposed places of the globe, and you won't be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. So! "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*" (1 Cor 16:13)

Prayer

*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 6:13

Scripture readings

In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. - For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. - As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Phil 2:15 - Matt 5:14-16 - Rom 12:1; Eph 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:15 - Prov 4:18-19

Suggested additional reading: 1 Peter 2:9-25

Meditation

***In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world* - Phil 2:15**

We use lights to *illuminate and reveal*. A Christian should so shine in his life, that anyone living or working with him for a single week would know the gospel. His conversation should be such that all who are about him will clearly recognise whose he is, and whom he serves; and see the character of Jesus reflected in his daily actions.

Lights are intended for **guidance**. We are to help those around us who are in the dark 'holding out to them the Word of life.' (*Phil 2:16*). We are to point sinners to the Saviour, and the weary to a divine resting-place. Men sometimes read their Bibles, and fail to understand them; we should be ready, like Philip, to explain to the inquirer the meaning of God's Word, the way of salvation, and the life of godliness. (*Acts 8:31-35*)

Lights are also used for **warning**. It was normal to build light-houses around the coast on our rocks and shoals. As Christians we should realise that there are many false lights shining out everywhere in the world, and therefore the true light is needed. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure; they hoist the wrong light. It's our responsibility to put up the true light on every dangerous rock, to point out every sin, and tell what it leads to, that so we may be clear of the blood of all men, shining as lights in the world.

Lights also have a very **cheering** influence, and so have Christians. A Christian ought to be a comforter, with kind words on his lips, and sympathy in his heart; he should carry sunshine wherever he goes, and diffuse happiness around him.

*Gracious Spirit dwell with me;
I myself would gracious be,
And with words that help and heal
Would thy life in mine reveal,
And with actions bold and meek
Would for Christ my Saviour speak.*

Prayer

Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ... Now, Lord, grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." Acts 4:24; 29-30

Scripture readings

And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. - Andrew .. first found his own brother Simon ... and he brought him to Jesus.

Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more. Now this I do for the gospel's sake. - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. For the love of Christ compels us. - I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Mark 2:4 - Mark 16:15-16; John 1:40;42 - Mark 8:38 - 1 Cor 9:19;23; Rom 1:16 - 2 Cor 5:13-14; 2 Tim 2:10

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 5:17-26***

Meditation

And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. - Mark 2:4

Faith is full of inventions. The house was full, a crowd was blocking the door, but faith found a way of getting to the Lord and placing the paralysed man in front of Him. If we cannot get men and

women to Jesus by ordinary methods we must use extraordinary ones. It seems that roof tiles had to be removed (*Luke 5:19*). This would have made dust and caused some danger to those below, but where the need is very urgent we must not mind running some risks and flouting a conventional religious standard or two! Jesus was there to heal, and therefore fall what might, the faith of these four men risked everything so that their poor paralyzed friend might have his sins forgiven.

O that we had more daring faith among us! Let's pray today for ourselves and our fellow-workers, that we might have the enthusiasm and initiative to exert ourselves in new ways for the love of souls and the glory of the Lord. The world is constantly inventing new things. Human genius finds all sorts of ways of providing for our desires and conveniences. Can't our faith be inventive too and reach out by some new means to rescue those who lie perishing around us?

It was the presence of Jesus which excited victorious courage in this palsied man's four friends. Is not the Lord among us now? Have we seen His face for ourselves this morning? Have we felt His healing power in our own souls? If so, then, whether it's through door, window, or roof, let's break through all obstacles and make efforts to bring dying souls to Jesus. All honest means are good and acceptable when faith and love are truly set on winning souls. If hunger for food can break through stone walls, surely hunger for spiritual healing is not to be hindered in its efforts. O Lord, make us quick to suggest methods of reaching Your poor sin-sick children, and bold to carry them out whatever it may cost us.

Prayer

My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only. Ps 71:15-16

Scripture readings

Your fruit is found in Me.

I am the true vine. 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. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. - Of His fullness we have all received and grace for grace.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. - The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. - It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Hos 14:8 - John 15:1;4;5 - John 1:16 - Phil 1:11; Gal 5:22-23 - James 1:17; Phil 2:13; Phil 4:12. - Rom 11:36

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 92***

Meditation

Your fruit is found in Me. - Hosea 14:8

Our fruit comes from our God through *union* with Him. The fruit of the branch is directly traceable to the root. Sever the connection, the branch dies, and no fruit is produced. By virtue of our union with Christ we bring forth fruit. Each bunch of grapes has had its origin in the root. It has passed through the stem, and flowed through the sap vessels, and then formed externally into fruit, But it

was first in the stem; so also every good work was first in Christ, and then is brought forth in us. O Christian, prize this precious union to Christ; for it must be the source of all the fruitfulness which you can ever hope to know. If you aren't joined to Jesus Christ, you will be a completely barren bough.

Our fruit comes from God through *spiritual providence*. When the dew falls from heaven, when clouds look down from above and are about to distil their liquid treasure, when the bright sun swells the berries of the cluster, each of these heavenly blessings could whisper to the tree and say, "*From me is your fruit found.*" Certainly the fruit owes much to the root which is essential to its fruitfulness but it owes much also to these external influences. Similarly how much we owe to God's providences in grace! through which He provides us constantly with spiritual quickening, teaching, encouragement, comfort, strength, and everything else we need. To this we owe our all of usefulness and virtue.

Our fruit comes from God through His *wise husbandry*. The gardener's sharp-edged knife increases the fruitfulness of the tree by thinning the clusters and cutting off superfluous shoots. So is it, Christian, with the Lord's pruning in your life. "*My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*" (John 15 1-2.)

Since our God is the author of all our spiritual graces let us give Him all the glory of our salvation.

Prayer

O Lord, we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name. ... With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; ... Lord, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us.

Isa 26:8;9;12

Scripture readings

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. - I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel: 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.

Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You. - The unsearchable riches of Christ.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Jer 33:3 - Ps 50:15; Rom 10:12; Isa 45:3 - Ps 31:19 - Eph 3:8 - 1 John 3:2-3

*Suggested additional reading: **Job 28***

Meditation

Call to Me and I will answer you, and shew you great and mighty things which you do not know. - Jeremiah 33:3

There are different translations of these words. One version renders it, "I will shew you great and **fortified** things." Another, "Great and **reserved** things." There are reserved and special things in

Christian experience. All the developments of spiritual life are not equally easy for the Christian to attain. There are the general sensation and feelings of repentance, and faith, and joy, and hope, which are enjoyed by the entire family; but there is a higher realm of rapture, of communion, and conscious union with Christ, which is far from being the general experience of believers. We don't all have the high privilege of John, to lean on Jesus' bosom; nor of Paul, to be caught up into the third heaven. There are heights in experimental knowledge of the things of God which the eagle's eye of acumen and philosophic thought has never seen. God alone can carry us there; and the chariot in which He takes us and the fiery horses which pull us, are prevailing prayers. Prevailing prayer is victorious over the God of mercy, *"In his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favour from Him. He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us."* (Hos 12:3-4).

Prevailing prayer takes the Christian to Carmel, and enables him to cover heaven with clouds of blessing, and earth with floods of mercy. Prevailing prayer carries the Christian up to Pisgah, and shows him the inheritance reserved for him; it elevates us to Tabor and transfigures us, till we become increasingly like our Lord Himself was in this world. If you would reach to something higher than the ordinary grovelling experience, look to the Rock that is higher than you, and gaze with the eye of faith through the window of earnest, importunate prayer. When you open the window on your side, you won't find it bolted on the other.

Prayer

I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

Luke 10:21

Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.

Ps 119:18

Scripture readings

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted and they came to Him.

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit. - Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus." - Let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Mark 3:13 - Luke 6:12-13 - John 15:16; Jer 1:5 - John 10:27-28 - John 12:21 - Heb 13:13; Phil 3: 7,8,12

Suggested additional reading: Galatians 1:11-24

Meditation

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. - Mark 3:13

Here was sovereignty. Impatient christians may fret and fume, because they are not called to some more important type of ministry; but reader, we can be happy that Jesus calls whom He wills. If He leaves me to be a doorkeeper in His house, I will cheerfully bless Him for His grace in allowing me to do this for Him.

The call of Christ's servants comes from above. Jesus stands on the mountain, for ever above the world in holiness, earnestness, love and power. Those whom He calls must go up the mountain to Him, they must discipline themselves and take time to rise to His level by living in constant communion with Him. They may not be able to pass exams and get degrees in theology but they must, like Moses go up into the mount of God and have times of close contact with the unseen God or they will never be fit to really witness for Him or preach the gospel of His love.

Jesus went off by Himself to have personal times with His Father, and we must know our Saviour in a similar way if we really want to be a blessing to others. No wonder the apostles were full of power when they came down fresh from the mountain where Jesus was.(Mark 3:14) We must aim to climb the mountain of fellowship, so that He can ordain us for the lifework He has chosen for us. Let's be determined not to let the day get under way before we have spent time with Jesus. Time spent with Him is always precious time.

Like the disciples we too shall be able to cast out devils and work wonders if we go down out into the world equipped with that divine energy which Christ and Christ alone can give us. It is of no use going to the Lord's battle till we are armed with heavenly weapons. We *must* see Jesus, that is essential. We must remain in prayer at His mercy-seat until He shows Himself to us in a way that the unbelieving world will never be able to understand, and until we can truthfully say, "*We were with Him in the Holy Mount.*" (2 Peter 1:18)

Prayer

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. --- If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. ...Please, show me Your glory.

Ex 33:10;15;18

Scripture readings

Be separate, says the Lord.

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

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

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. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

2 Cor 6:17 - 2 Cor 6:17-18 - Col 1:13; 2 Cor 7:1 - John 17:13-17 - Rom 12:2

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

Meditation

Be separate, says the Lord. - 2 Corinthians 6:17

The Christian, whilst living in the world should not be of the world. (*John 17:16*). This means that the great object of his life should be to be distinguishable from the world in thought, word and deed. For him, to live, should be Christ. (*Phil 1:21*). Whether he is eating or

drinking, or whatever he is doing, everything should be done for God's glory. As a follower of Jesus Christ you may lay up treasure; but make sure you lay it up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupts and where thieves can't break through nor steal. (*Matt 6:20*). You may strive to be rich; but your ambition should be to be "rich in faith," (*James 2:5*) and good works. You may enjoy yourself but your happiness should lead you to sing psalms and spiritual songs and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. (*Eph 5:19*)

You should also aim to be different in your spirit and your inner soul. Waiting humbly before God, always conscious of His presence, delighting in communion with Him, and seeking to know His will, you will prove that you are a citizen of heaven.

And you should be separate from the world in your *actions*. If a thing be right, though you lose by it, it must be done! If something is wrong, though it might bring you profit and save you from problems you must reject that sin for your Master's sake. You must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity. Remember, O Christian, that you are a son of the King of kings. Therefore, keep yourself unspotted from the world. Soil not the fingers which are soon to play music in the celestial city! Don't let these eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in His beauty! Don't allow those feet to be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets! Don't let that heart be filled with pride and bitterness which before long is to be filled with heaven and overflowing with ecstatic joy.

Prayer

Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Ps 25:4-5

Scripture readings

God is jealous

Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the Lord!"

My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you."

I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. - For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.

"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. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Nah 1:2 - Josh 24:19, 21; Jer 2:11,13,14 - 2 Cor 11:2-3; Isa 54:5 - John 14:23; Rev 3:19-20

Suggested additional reading: 2 Cor 11:1-15

Meditation

God is jealous - Nahum 1:2

Your Lord is very jealous of your love, O believer. Didn't He choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another. Didn't He buy you with His own blood? He can't endure that you should think that you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you so much that He wouldn't stay in heaven without you

being there with Him; He would sooner die than let you perish, and He can't endure that anything should stand between your heart's love and Himself.

He is very jealous of your trust. He won't permit you to trust in an "arm of flesh" (2 Chron 32:8). He can't bear that you should make for yourself "broken cisterns", (Jer 2:13), when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we lean upon Him, He is glad, but when we transfer our dependence to somebody or something else, when we rely on our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend, or worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, He is not pleased, and will discipline us in order to bring us back to Himself.

He is also very jealous of our company. There should be no one we like talking to so much as Jesus. To abide in Him only, this is true love; but to fellowship with the world, to be content with our earthly comforts, to prefer even the society of our fellow Christians to secret fellowship with Him, this is grievous to our jealous Lord. He wants us to abide in Him and enjoy constant fellowship with Him; and many of the trials which He sends us are for the purpose of weaning our hearts from the creature, and fixing them more closely upon Himself.

But let this jealousy of God, which would keep us near to Christ, *be a comfort* to us. Firstly it is for our own good. A close relationship with our Lord Jesus is the greatest blessing and comfort we can have here on this earth. Secondly God loves us so much as to want our undivided love we can be sure that He won't allow anything to harm us, and He will protect us from all our enemies.

Let us pray now, today, for the grace to keep our hearts in holy chastity for our Beloved alone, and with a holy jealousy for Him strive to shut our eyes to all the fascinations of the world!

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. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

Ps 116:5-9

Scripture readings

**As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring.
The rain also covers it with pools.**

Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it. The well the leaders sank, dug by the nation's nobles, by the lawgiver, with their staves."

My soul shall make its boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul. When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass.

The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. - Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And in that day you will say: Praise the Lord, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth.

Ps 84:6 - Num 21:17-18 - Ps 34:2; Ps 66:16; Isa 66:14 - 2 Cor 1:3-4; Ps 66:16 - Isa 12:3-5

Suggested additional reading: Numbers 21

Meditation

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well, the rain also fills the pools. - *Psalm 84:6*

Using an illustration from biblical times, when wells in the earth dug out by one company of travellers are there to provide water for the next, this verse teaches us that the *comfort* we ourselves find may often provide invaluable help to those following us.

We may read a biography and find it full of encouragement. It is just like Jonathan's rod, dropping with honey. Ah! we think our brother has been here before us, and dug this well for our blessing. Some of Psalms are particularly helpful in this way; "*Why are you cast down, O my soul?*" (Ps 42:11)

Travellers have been delighted to see a human footprint on a barren shore, and we love to see the waymarks of pilgrims while passing through the vale of tears.

In this verse pilgrims dug the well, but, strangely it fills from the top instead of the bottom. We use the means, but the blessing does not spring from the means. We dig a well, but heaven fills it with rain. "*The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the Lord.*" (Prov 21:31). The means are connected with the end, but they do not of themselves produce it. See here the rain fills the pools, so that the wells become useful as reservoirs for the water; labour is not lost, but at the same time it is only God's blessing which can make it successful.

Grace may well be compared to rain for its purity, for its refreshing and life-giving influence, for the fact it comes from above, and for the sovereignty with which it is given or withheld. May you experience showers of blessing, and may the wells others have dug be filled with water for you! But what are means and ordinances without the smile of heaven! They are as clouds without rain, and pools without water. O God of love, open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing!

Prayer

Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain! 1 Chron 4:10

14th September

Scripture readings

Other little boats were also with Him.

They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

Who is mighty like You, O Lord? You rule the raging of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them. He calms the storm, so that its waves are still. Then they are glad because they are quiet; so He guides them to their desired haven.

Mark 4:36 – Ps 107:26-28 – Ps 93:3-4 - Mark 4:39-40; Ps.89:8-9; Ps 107:29-30

Suggested additional reading: Psalm 107:1-32

Meditation

Other little boats were also with Him. - Mark 4:36

Jesus was the Lord High Admiral of the sea that night, and His presence preserved the whole fleet. It is good to sail with Jesus, even though it's only in a little boat. When we sail in Christ's company, we are not going to be exempt from wild weather! Great storms tossed the vessel which carried the Lord Himself, and we must not expect to find the sea less boisterous around our little boat. When we sail with Jesus we need to be content to experience what He

experiences and when the waves are rough around Him, they will be rough around us too. It will be through tempest and rough seas that we shall come to land, just as it was for Him before us.

When the storm swept over Galilee's dark lake all faces reflected the blackness, and all hearts dreaded shipwreck. When all human help was useless, the sleeping Saviour woke up and with a word, transformed the riot of the tempest into the peace and stillness of a calm. Then, not only was Jesus' boat at rest but also all the other little vessels which were with Him. Our Lord Jesus is master of the sea and although there will almost certainly be sorrows as we journey, when He is sailing the sea of life with us there will be times of deep joy too. Jesus has promised to be our anchor, our rudder, our lighthouse, our life-boat, and our harbour. May our hearts look to Him today to be all this to us.

His Church is the Admiral's flagship. Let us notice all her movements, and cheer her officers with our presence. He Himself is the great attraction; let us constantly follow in His wake, mark His signals, steer by His chart, and never fear while He is within hailing distance. Not one ship in the convoy will suffer wreck; the great Commodore will steer every barque in safety to the desired haven.

In faith we can slip our cable for another day's cruise, and sail forth with Jesus into a sea of tribulation. Winds and waves there may well be, but they all obey Him; and, therefore, whatever squalls may occur outside of us, faith can give a blessed calm within. Our Commodore is always there, in the centre of the weather-beaten company: let us rejoice in Him. His vessel has reached the haven, and so shall ours.

Prayer

You have a mighty arm; strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!

Ps 89:13-15

Scripture readings

He will not be afraid of evil tidings.

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Psalms 112:7 - Ps 91:1-2 - Prov 3:25-26; Ps 27:1 - Ps 56:3-4 - 2 Kings 19:14 - Rom 8:28-29.

Suggested additional reading: 2 Kings 19 14-20; 32-34

Meditation

He will not be afraid of evil tidings. - Psalm 112:7

Christian, you don't need to be frightened by bad news. If you are, *what's the difference between you the unbelieving world?* Others don't have your God to fly to; they have never proved His faithfulness as you have, and it is no wonder if they are bowed down with alarm and cowed with fear. But you profess to be of another spirit; you have been born again unto a lively hope, and your heart lives in heaven and not on earthly things. Now, if you are seen to be

distracted as other men, what is the value of that grace which you profess to have received? Where is the dignity of that new nature which you claim to possess?

Again, if you are be filled with alarm, as others are, *you are in danger of being led into the sins so common to others under testing circumstances.* When unbelievers are suddenly confronted with bad news they often react against God. They murmur, and think that God deals unjustly with them. Will you fall into that same sin? Will you provoke the Lord as they do? Moreover, unconverted men often run to wrong means in order to escape from difficulties, and you will be sure to do the same if your mind gives in to the present pressure. *'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.'* (Ps 37:7) Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea, *"Stand still and see the salvation of God."* For if you give way to fear when you hear bad news, you will be unable to meet the trouble with that calm composure which nerves for duty, and sustains under adversity.

How can you glorify God if you play the coward? Saints have often sung God's high praises in the fires, but will your doubting and desponding, as if you had no one to help you, magnify the Most High? Then take courage, and relying in sure confidence upon the faithfulness of your covenant God, *"let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* (John 14:1)

Prayer

O Lord God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see;

O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone.

2 Kings 19: 15-16;19

Scripture readings

Partakers of the divine nature

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God. - Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. - For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,

My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you. - 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. - Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We all, ... beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. - You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

2 Peter 1:4 - John 1:12; John 3:3; Rom 8:29 - Gal 4:19; John 14:23; Col 1:27 - 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9-10 - 1 John 3:2

Suggested additional reading: Col 2:6-22

Meditation

Partakers of the divine nature - 2 Peter 1:4

To be a partaker of the divine nature is not, of course, to become God. That cannot be. The essence of Deity is not to be shared by the creature. The creature and the Creator will always remain distinctly separate in this respect; but as the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we, by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, are in a yet diviner sense made in the image of the Most High, and are partakers

of the divine nature. We are, by grace, made like God. “*God is love*”; we become love: “*He that loves is born of God.*” God is truth; we become true, and we love that which is true: God is good, and He makes us good by His grace, so that we become the pure in heart who shall see God.

Moreover, we become partakers of the divine nature in even a higher sense than this, in fact, in the highest sense we could ever imagine short of our being absolutely divine. Isn't it stated that we become members of the body of the divine person of Christ? Yes, just as the same blood which flows in the head flows in the hand, so the same life which quickens Christ quickens His people, for “*You are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*” (Col 3:3) Nay, as if this were not enough, we are married to Christ. He has betrothed us to Himself in righteousness and in faithfulness, and “*he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him*” (1 Cor 6:17). Oh! marvellous mystery! we look into it, but who can understand it? One with Jesus, so one with Him that the branch is not more one with the vine than we are a part of the Lord, our Saviour, and our Redeemer!

While we rejoice in this, let us remember that those who are made partakers of the divine nature will reveal their high and holy relationship with their Lord in their relationships with others, and make it evident by their daily behaviour and conversation that they have “*escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*” (2 Peter 1:4). Let's seek and pray for more divine holiness of life!

Prayer

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Ps 139:23-24

Scripture readings

"Bring him to Me"

Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." - The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. That the generation to come might know them, ... that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God.

Andrew ... first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah." And he brought him to Jesus. - Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Mark 9:19 - Mark 9:27-29; James 5:16 - Ps 78:4,6,7 - John 1:40-42; 45-46

*Suggested additional reading: **Mark 9:14-29***

Meditation

"Bring him to me." - Mark 9:19

Despairingly the poor disappointed father turned away from the disciples to their Master. His son was in the worst possible condition, and all means had failed, but the demon-possessed child was soon delivered from the evil one when the parent in faith obeyed the Lord Jesus' word, "*Bring him to me.*"

Children are a precious gift from God, but much anxiety comes with them. They may be a great joy or a great burden to their parents.

They may be filled with the Spirit of God or possessed with the spirit of evil. In all cases, the Word of God gives us one receipt for the curing of all their ills, “*Bring him to me.*”

O for more agonizing prayer on their behalf while they are yet babies! Sin is there, let our prayers begin to attack it. Our cries to God on behalf of our children should precede their own first cry when air first fills their lungs and they enter this world of sin! In the days of their youth we will see sad signs of that dumb and deaf spirit in them which hinders them from either praying aright, or hearing the voice of God in their soul, but Jesus still commands, “Bring them to me.” When they are grown up they may wallow in sin and foam with enmity against God; then when our hearts are breaking we should remember the great Physician’s words, “Bring them to me.” Never must we allow ourselves to cease from prayer until they cease to breathe. No case is hopeless while Jesus lives.

The Lord sometimes allows His people to be driven into a corner that they may experimentally know how dependent they are on Him. Ungodly children, when they show us our own powerlessness against the depravity of their hearts, drive us to flee to the Strong One for strength, and this is a great blessing to us. Whatever our need today let it like a strong current carry us to the ocean of divine love. Jesus can soon remove our sorrow, He delights to comfort us. Let us go at once to Him while He waits to meet us.

Prayer

Return, O Lord! How long? and have compassion on Your servants. Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days! Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil. Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

Psalm 90:13-17

Scripture readings

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. - It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. - You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. - If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

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.

Gal 5:25 - Acts 6:5; John 6:63; Rom 8:9 - Gal 5:22-26 - James 2:14;26; 1 John 4:20 - Gal 2:20

*Suggested additional reading: **Rom 8:1-1***

7

Meditation

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. - Gal 5:25

The two most important things in true Christian religion are the *life of faith* and the *walk of faith*. To rightly understand and practise these is to bring us very near to becoming a master in experimental theology and they are vital for the Christian life.

You will never find true faith which is not accompanied by true godliness and on the other hand, you will never discover a truly holy life which hasn't as its root a living faith in the righteousness of Christ. Woe to those who seek for the one without the other! There are some who claim to have faith in Christ who forget practical holiness. These may be very high in orthodoxy regarding the simple evangelical Gospel but they will prove to be very deep in condemnation, for they “*hold the truth in unrighteousness*” (Rom 1:18). On the other hand there are others who have strained after holiness of life but who have denied the necessity of personal faith in Christ. They are no better than the Pharisees of old, of whom the Master said, they were like “*whitewashed tombs*” (Matt 23:27).

We must have faith, for this is the foundation, but we must also have holiness of life, for this is the superstructure. Of what use is the mere foundation of a building on a stormy day? Can anyone shelter there? No, he needs a building to cover him, as well as a foundation for his house. In the same way we need the superstructure of spiritual, holy life if we are to find security when tempted to doubt and despair. But don't try to build a holy life without personal faith in Christ, for that would be like erecting a house which can never provide lasting shelter. It would be a house without foundation, built on sand and not on rock. But let faith and life be put together, and, like the two abutments of an arch, they will support our righteousness for all eternity. Like light and heat streaming from the same sun, they are equally full of blessing. Like the two pillars of the temple, they are for glory and beauty. They are two streams from the fountain of grace; two lamps lit with holy fire; two olive trees watered by heavenly care.

O Lord, give us today Your life within us, and it will show itself through our daily life for Your glory.

Prayer

Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes! Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments. I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments. Ps 119:5-7

Scripture readings

The liberty by which Christ has made us free

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. - Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself.

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. - For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. - For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. That we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. - Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Gal 5:1 - Col 1:13-14; Eph 1:5 - Gal 4:6-7; Rom 8:2; Rom 6:14; Rom 7:6 – 2 Cor 1:20; Heb 4:16

Suggested additional reading: Gal 5:13-6:2

Meditation

The liberty by which Christ has made us free.- Gal 5:1

This "*liberty*" into which Christ has made us free entitles us to all the blessings of being sons and daughters of God. All the ***promises of the Bible***, heaven's charter, are ours. Here is a precious verse, believer, "*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you*" (Isa 43:2). You are free to that. Here is another: "*The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you.*" (Isa 54:10); you are free to that. You are a welcome

guest at the table of the promises. Scripture is a never-failing treasury, filled with boundless stores of grace. It is the bank of heaven; you may withdraw from it as much as you need, without let or hindrance. Come in faith and you are welcome to all ***covenant blessings***. There is not a promise in the Word which is prohibited to you. In the depths of tribulations let this freedom comfort you; amidst waves of distress let it cheer you; when sorrows surround you let it be your solace. This is your Father's love-token; you are free to it at all times.

You are also free ***to approach the throne of grace***. It is the believer's privilege to have access at all times to His heavenly Father. Whatever our desires, our difficulties, our wants, we are at liberty to talk to Him about them at any time of day or night. It doesn't matter how much we may have sinned, He sees our heart and if we are truly sorry we may ask and expect pardon. It signifies nothing how poor we are, we may plead His promise that He will provide all things needful. We have permission to approach His throne at all times; at midnight's darkest hour, or at midday's most burning heat. Exercise your right, O believer, and live up to your privilege.

You are free ***to all that is treasured up in Christ*** - wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It makes no difference what your need is, for there is fulness of supply in Christ, and it is there *for you*. O what a "freedom" is yours! freedom from condemnation, freedom to the promises, freedom to the throne of grace, and at last freedom to enter heaven!

Prayer

Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? ... You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.

Exodus 15:11-13

Scripture readings

The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!

"Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" ... "O my Lord, how can I save Israel?... I am the least in my father's house." ... The LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Judg 7:20 - Judg 6:14-16 - Matt 28:18-20 - Acts 18:9-10 - 1 Cor 2:2; Rom 1:16 - Phil 4:13

*Suggested additional reading: **Judges 6:11-7:25***

Meditation

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. - Judg 7:20

At God's command Gideon ordered his men to do two things. Firstly, holding a flaming torch hidden inside an earthenware pot, they were, at an appointed signal, to break the pot and allow the flaming light to blase forth. Then secondly together with the blast of their trumpets they were to shout the following specific words: "*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon! the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*" In this we have a very clear message for ourselves as Christians which I would like to direct to each of you personally.

Firstly, ***you must shine!*** Break the pot which conceals your light; throw aside the covering which has been hiding your candle, and shine. Let your light shine before men; let your good works be such, that when men look upon you, they shall know that you have been with Jesus. Then ***there must be the sound,*** the blowing of the trumpet. There must be an active effort to bring sinners to Jesus by proclaiming the message of Him crucified. Take the gospel to them; carry it to their door; put it in their way; do not allow them to avoid it; blow the trumpet right against their ears.

But note too that the true war-cry of the Church must be Gideon's watchword, "*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*" God must do it, it is His own work. But we are not to be idle; God has purposed to use instruments - "*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*" If we only cry, "*The sword of the Lord!*" we are being guilty of an idle presumption that God will do it all without us; and if we shout, "*The sword of Gideon!*" alone, we are revealing an idolatrous reliance on human ability. We must blend the two in practical harmony, "*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*" We can do nothing of ourselves, but we can do everything by the help of our God. Let us, therefore, in His name determine to go out personally and serve with the flaming torch of our holy example and the trumpet tones of our earnest declaration and testimony. Then God will be with us, Midian shall be put to confusion, and the Lord of hosts shall reign for ever and ever.

Prayer

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples, and I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your mercy is great above the heavens, and Your truth reaches to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and Your glory above all the earth. That Your beloved may be delivered, save with Your right hand, and hear me. Ps 108:3-6

Scripture readings

I will rejoice over them to do them good

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

The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy. - Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.

You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord delights in you ... And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me. - Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am.

Jer 32:41 - Zeph 3:17 - Ps 147:11; Ps 149:2-4 - Isa 62:4-5 - John 16:27; John 17:24

*Suggested additional reading: **Zephaniah 3:8-20***

Meditation

***I will rejoice over them to do them good.* - Jeremiah 32:41**

How it should cheer the hearts of believers to read of the pleasure God takes in His saints! We can't see any obvious reason for it. Mostly we find it difficult to take any satisfaction in ourselves, being so often conscious of our sinfulness, and deploring our unfaithfulness and inability to daily trust our God as we should. And certainly there's no reason for our Christian brothers and sisters to rejoice over us! They must surely recognise that our imperfections and our follies far out-weigh our graces!

But let's meditate on this transcendent truth, this glorious mystery: that as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so the Lord rejoices over His people. (*Isaiah 62:5*). We don't read anywhere that God delights in the snow-capped mountains, or the sparkling stars, but we do read that He delights in the habitable parts of the earth, and that His delights are with the sons of men. (*Proverbs 8:31*) We don't find it written that even angels give His soul delight; nor does He say, concerning cherubim and seraphim, "You shall be called Hephzibah, for the Lord delights in you". But He does express this to poor fallen creatures like ourselves, debased and depraved by sin, but saved, exalted, and glorified by His grace.

In what strong language He expresses His delight in His people! Who could have conceived of the eternal One bursting forth into a song? Yet it is written, "*He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*" (*Zeph 3:17*) As He looked upon the world He had made, He said, "It is very good"; but when He beheld those who are the purchase of Jesus' blood, His own chosen ones, it seemed as if the great heart of the Infinite could restrain itself no longer, but overflowed in divine exclamations of joy.

Surely we will want to respond and express our heart-felt gratitude for such marvellous declarations of love, and sing with the Psalmist, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation?"

Prayer

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honour. Psalm 8:3-5

Scripture readings

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory."

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation .Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods.

Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; ... though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Ps 149:2 - Rev 19:6-7 - Ps 100 1-3 - Ps 95:1-3 - Hab 3:17-18

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalms 149 and 150***

Meditation

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker. - *Psalm 149:2*

You have every reason to be happy, O believer, but make sure that the basis and spring of this happiness is in God Himself, your Maker. David could say "*God, my exceeding joy.*" (Ps 43:4), can you?

Look away from yourself and be glad that the Lord reigns, that Jehovah is King! Rejoice that He sits upon the throne, and rules over all things! Then every attribute of God should become a fresh beam

in the sunlight of our gladness. That He is wise should make us glad, knowing as we do our own foolishness. That He is mighty, should cause us to rejoice who tremble at our weakness. That he is everlasting, should always be a theme of joy when we know that we wither as the grass. That He is unchanging, should perpetually cause us to sing, since we change every hour. That He is full of grace, that He is overflowing with it, and that He has in covenant given this grace to us; grace to cleanse us, grace to keep us, grace to sanctify us, grace to perfect us, grace to bring us to glory — all this must surely make us worship Him and sing for joy.

This rejoicing in God is like a deep river; til now we have really only just dipped our toes into the edge of it, we have felt a little of its clear sweet, heavenly streams, but further in it gets deeper and deeper and the current more impetuous in its joy.

The Christian feels that he may delight not only in who God is, but also in all that God has done. The Psalms show us that God's people in olden times would often think about God's actions, and they had a song about each of them. So let us as God's people today recount in song the deeds of the Lord! Let's tell of His mighty acts, and "*sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.*" (Ex 15:1). And don't let us stop singing, for as new mercies flow to us day by day, so should our gladness in the Lord's acts of love in providence and in grace show itself in continued thanksgiving. Be glad you children of Zion and rejoice in the Lord your God

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. Ps 43:3-4

Scripture readings

Accepted in the Beloved

Through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. - For there is no difference; for 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. - For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. - Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. ... Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Eph 1:6 - Rom 3:21-25; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 8:1 - Eph 2:16-18; Rom 5:1-2 - Heb 10:22

Suggested additional reading: 1 John 5

Meditation

Accepted in the beloved. - Ephesians 1:6

What a privileged position - Accepted in the beloved! It includes our *justification* before God but the term “acceptance” in the Greek means more than a legal reconciliation. It signifies that we are the objects of God's pleasure and even of His delight. How marvellous that we, worms, mortals, sinners, should be those whom God loves! But it is important to note that this acceptance is “*in the beloved.*” Some Christians seem to imagine that their acceptance by God must

be reflected in their feelings. When their spirit feels alive and their hopes bright, they can believe that God is accepting them, for they feel so high, so heavenly-minded, so drawn above the earth! But when they are depressed and their soul '*clings to the dust*' as the Psalmist expressed it, they soon become victims of the fear that this is because God has rejected them. If you are inclined to think in this way it is important that you lay hold of this verse. '*Accepted in the beloved*'. Our high joys make us no more acceptable to the Father than our low despondencies. We stand accepted in One who never alters, in One who is always the beloved of God, always perfect, always without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, How much happier we would be and how much more we would honour the Saviour if could really grasp this fact and live in the light of it!

Rejoice then, believer, in this: you are accepted "*in the beloved*." You look within and you say, "There is nothing acceptable here!" But look at Christ, and see if there isn't everything acceptable there. Your sins trouble you; but God has cast your sins behind His back, and you are accepted in the Righteous One. You have to fight with corruption, and to wrestle with temptation, but you are already accepted in Him who has overcome the powers of evil. The devil tempts you; be of good cheer, he cannot destroy you, for you are accepted in Him who has broken Satan's head. Know by full assurance your glorious standing. Even glorified souls are not more accepted than you are. They are only accepted in heaven "*in the beloved*," and you are even now accepted in Christ after the same manner.

Prayer

Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.

Micah 7:18-20

Scripture readings

For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength.... Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy.

Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You.

On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

Ezra 8:22 - Ps 20:7 - Ps 33:16-22 - Ezra 7:9

Suggested additional reading: Ezra 8 21-36

Meditation

For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him." - Ezra 8:22

A military escort would from many points of view have been a comfort for this large group of Israelites returning to Jerusalem, but a holy zeal for the honour of His God would not allow Ezra to request one. He feared lest the heathen king would think his profession of

faith in God be mere words, or would imagine that the God of Israel was not able to look after His own worshippers. He could not bring himself to ask for human support in a matter so evidently of the Lord, and therefore the caravan set out with no visible protection, guarded alone by Him who is the sword and shield of His people.

We sense that far too few believers today feel this holy jealousy for God. Even those who to some degree are walking by faith occasionally mar the lustre of their lives by longing for human help. It is a most blessed thing to have no props and no buttresses but to stand upright on the Rock of Ages, upheld by the Lord alone. Would believers really seek state grants for their Church, if they remembered that the Lord is dishonoured by their asking help from Caesar? as if the Lord could not supply the means himself to further His own work! Would we run so quickly to friends and relations for assistance, if we remembered that the Lord is honoured by our implicit reliance upon Him alone? My soul, wait only on God. "But," says one, "are not means to be used?" Certainly they are; but our fault seldom lies in neglecting them. Far more frequently it springs out of foolishly trusting in them instead of trusting in God. Few go too far in refusing human help, but very many sin greatly in thinking too much of it. Learn, dear reader, to glorify the Lord by rejecting untried means, if by using them you sense you could be dishonouring the name of the Lord.

Prayer

O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You. 2 Chron 20:12

Scripture readings

Just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin. - "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."

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.

Now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, ... even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for 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.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom 3:26 - Rom 4:7-8; Isa 1:18 - 2 Cor 5:20-21 - Rom 3:21-24 - Rom 5:1

*Suggested additional reading: **Romans 3:19-26***

Meditation

Just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. -

Romans 3:26

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus. Rom 5:1. Conscience accuses no longer. The Righteous Judge now pronounces the sinner innocent. Memory looks back upon past sins with deep sorrow but yet with no fear of any penalty to pay. The reason; Christ has paid His people's debt in full, to the last jot and tittle, and through the fact of His resurrection has

received His Father's receipt that the payment has been accepted. Unless God can be so unjust as to demand double payment for one debt, no soul for whom Jesus died as a substitute can ever be cast into hell.

It seems to be one of the very principles of our enlightened nature to believe that God is just. We feel that it must be so. Although this awareness first gives us terror; is it not marvellous that this very same belief in a just God becomes the pillar of our confidence and peace! If God is just, I, a sinner, alone and without a substitute, must be punished; but Jesus took my place and was punished for me; and now, if God is just, I, a sinner, standing in Christ, can never be punished. God must change His nature before one soul, for whom Jesus was a substitute, can ever possibility suffer the lash of the law.

Therefore now, Jesus having taken the place of the believer, having provided the full equivalent through His sufferings and death for all that we, His people, ought to have suffered, we can shout with glorious triumph, *“Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”* (Rom 8:33-34).

My hope doesn't rest on any mistaken idea that I am not a sinner, but on the fact that I am a sinner for whom Christ died. My trust is not in myself as somebody holy, but acknowledging that I am unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith doesn't rest on what I am, or shall be, or what I feel, or know, but on what Christ is, on what He has done, and on what He is now doing for me

On the lion of justice the fair maid of hope rides like a queen.

Prayer

Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.

Ex 15:11-13

Scripture readings

Among the myrtle trees in the hollow

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. - He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. - For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

Zech 1:8 - Isa 26:3; Ps 1:3 - Isa 55:12-13 - Isa 32:17-18; Jer 31:25

Suggested additional reading: Psalm 23

Meditation

Among the myrtle trees in the hollow - Zechariah 1:8

The vision in this chapter describes the condition of Israel in Zechariah's day; but for our thoughts today we want to apply it to the true Church of God as she is now found in the world. The Church is compared to a myrtle grove flourishing in a valley. It is **hidden**, unobserved, expecting no honour from an unbelieving world and attracting no attention from a careless observer. The Church, like her head, has a glory, but it is for the present hidden from human eyes, for the time has not yet come for her to be revealed in all her splendour.

The idea of *tranquil security* is also suggested to us: for the myrtle grove in the valley is still and calm, while the storm sweeps over the mountain summits. Tempests spend their force upon the craggy peaks of the Alps, but down below where the stream flows which makes glad the city of our God, the myrtles flourish by the still waters, all unshaken by the impetuous wind. How great is the inward tranquility of God's Church! Even when opposed and persecuted, she has a peace which the world can never give, and which, therefore, it cannot take away. The peace of God which passes all understanding keeps the hearts and minds of God's people.

Doesn't the metaphor also forcibly picture the peaceful, *perpetual growth* of the saints? The myrtle doesn't shed her leaves, she is always green; and the Church in her worst times still has had a blessed verdure of grace about her; rather she has sometimes shown *most* verdure when her winter has been sharpest. She has prospered most when her adversities have been most severe.

Hence the text *hints at victory*. The myrtle is the emblem of peace, and a significant token of triumph. The brows of conquerors were crowned with myrtle and with laurel; and is not the Church ever victorious? Is not every Christian more than a conqueror through Him that loved him? Living in peace, do not the saints fall asleep in the arms of victory?

Prayer

Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me. Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. Ps 131:1-2

Scripture readings

Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord?

Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, .. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, ... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, ... to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

You shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

You received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father". - Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls. - And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Deut 33:29 - Ps 146:5 - Eph 1:3-6 - Isa 55:12 - Rom 8:15 - 1 Peter 1:8-9; Acts 13:52

Suggested additional reading: 1 Chron 16:23-36

Meditation

***Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord* - Deut 33:29**

Anyone who maintains that being Christian makes us miserable really has no idea what true Christianity is. There is something drastically wrong if our faith makes us feel wretched. Consider for a few moments who we now are in Jesus Christ our Saviour! We have been made sons and daughters of God and do you suppose that God

would give all the happiness to His enemies, and reserve sadness for His own family? Should His foes have laughter and joy and His home-born children inherit sorrow and misery? Is it possible that the sinner, who has no part in Christ, should be full of happiness every day and we, the children of God, mope around as miserable as penniless beggars? No, we have every reason to rejoice in the Lord always, and glory in our inheritance, *“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’.”* (Rom 8:15)

It's true that our Father often sees the need to discipline us, but we can expect the Holy Spirit, the divine Comforter, to use this to produce in us the *“peaceable fruits of righteousness”* (Heb 12:11) so that we, the *“people saved of the Lord,”* will joy in the God of our salvation.

We are married to Christ; and do you think our glorious Bridegroom will permit His spouse to remain unhappy all her earthly life? Our hearts are joined to His: we are His members, and though for a while we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in Him. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit, which are neither few nor small. Joy is our eternal inheritance and we will have foretastes of our portion here and now. There are streaks of the light of joy to herald our eternal sunrising. Our riches are beyond the sea; our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river; gleams of glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts, and urge us onward. Truly is it said of us, *“Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord?”*

Prayer

Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces. and in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You.

Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Exodus 15:6-7;11

Scripture readings

The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men

From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. - The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

The Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, ... for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. - God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. - In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them.

Ps 33:13 - Ps 33:14-15 - Prov 15:3; 2 Chron 16:9 - Ex 3:7-8 - Heb 4:13; John 3:16; Isa 63:9

Suggested additional reading: Psalm 139

Meditation

The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. -

Psalm 33:13

The picture we see of the almighty God in this verse represents Him in a most attractive way. In fact perhaps no figure of speech shows His gracious nature in such a wonderful light as that of Him stooping from His throne, and coming down from heaven to care for the needs of mankind and to take notice of their sorrows.

We love Him who would not destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah until He had visited them personally. We worship in adoration the God who, from the highest glory, bends his ear to hear the cries of a dying sinner longing for reconciliation. We embrace in simple faith the Lord, who seeing every detail of our sinful character, its strengths and weakness, the scars from the past and the wounds which refuse to heal, loves us still and calls us to hold His hand as He leads us along a path best suited to us and which will bring us home to glory.

This great truth becomes even more precious when we begin to experience that the Lord of heaven is attentive to both the temporal and spiritual needs of His creatures. A vast distance separates the finite creature from His infinite Creator, yet the gracious heart of the latter constantly ensures there are possibilities for the two to come together. When an eye brims with tears don't think that God doesn't see; for, *"Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him."* (Ps 103:13) Your sigh is able to move His heart; your whisper can incline His ear; your prayer can stay His hand; your faith can move His arm. Don't think that God sits in glory taking no notice of you. Remember that wherever you are, whatever you're doing, however hopeless your circumstances seem to be, the Lord thinks on you. *"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him"* (2 Chron 16:9)

Prayer

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. ... You understand my thought afar off .. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. Ps 139:1-2;17-18

Scripture readings

If the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean

What is man, that he could be pure? and he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous? If God puts no trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water! - 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.

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

Behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house,.... stood at His feet behind Him weeping; ... Jesus said to him, "Simon, ... I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven."

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Lev 13:13 - Job 15:14-16; Isa 53:6 - 1 John 1:8-9 - Luke 7 - Ps 51:2-3

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 7: 36-50***

Meditation

If the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean. - Leviticus 13:13

Strange although this regulation appears, yet there was wisdom in it. It seems that the fact that the body had thrown out the disease into the skin proved that the inner constitution was sound. It may help and encourage us to see a spiritual application of so strange a

rule. We, too, are lepers, and may read the law of leprosy as applicable to ourselves. When a man sees himself to be altogether lost and ruined, covered all over with the defilement of sin, and no part free from pollution; when he disclaims all righteousness of his own, and pleads guilty before the Lord, then is he clean through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of God.

Hidden, unfelt, unconfessed iniquity is the true leprosy, but when sin is seen and felt it has already received its death blow, and the Lord looks with eyes of mercy upon the soul afflicted with it. Nothing is more deadly than self-righteousness, but nothing is more hopeful than contrition. We must confess that we are “nothing else but sin,” for no confession short of this will be the whole truth, and if the Holy Spirit is at work with us, convincing us of sin, there will be no difficulty about making such an acknowledgment, it will spring spontaneously from our lips.

What comfort this text gives to those under a deep sense of sin! Sin mourned and confessed, however black and foul, will never shut anyone out from the Lord Jesus and from heaven. Whoever comes to Him He will in no wise cast out. (*John 6:37*). Though as dishonest as the thief, though as immoral as the woman caught in adultery (*John 8:3-4*), though as fierce as Saul of Tarsus (*Acts 9:1*), though as cruel as Manasseh (*2 Kings 21:16*), though as rebellious as the prodigal (*Luke 15:13*), the great heart of love will look upon the one who feels himself to have no soundness in him, and will pronounce him clean, as he trusts in Jesus crucified.

Come to Him, then, poor heavy-laden sinner, come in all your need, come with all your guilt, come loathsome and bare; You can't come too filthy, come just as you are.

Prayer

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Psalm 51:1-2

Scripture readings

Sing out the honour of His name; make His praise glorious.

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

Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever! - Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding. - Praise the Lord! for it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! 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.

Ps 66:2 - 1 Chron 29:11; - Neh 9:5; Ps 47:6-7; Ps 147:1 - Isa 6:3 - Ps 103:1-4

Suggested additional reading: Psalm 107

Meditation

Sing out the honour of His name; make His praise glorious.-

Psalm 66:2

To praise our God is more than a voluntary option for the Christian. Our glorious, righteous, holy God not only deserves our praise but has a sacred right to it. Every born-again Christian, the recipient of His grace, is duty bound to bring daily praise to His Saviour.

However since acceptable praise must be from the heart in spirit and in truth we have no authoritative rubric for it; we have no commandment prescribing certain hours of song and thanksgiving. However we do have a law written upon our heart which urges and teaches us to worship and this unwritten mandate comes with as much force as if it had been recorded on the tables of stone, or handed to us from the top of thundering Sinai.

Yes, it is the Christian's sacred *duty* to praise God. It is not only a pleasurable exercise, but it is the absolute obligation of his life. The Christian who is always mourning is failing His loving heavenly Father and is not without sin in this respect. To try to fulfill your duties as a child of God without songs of praise is impossible. You are bound by the bonds of His love to bless His name so long as you live, and His praise should continually be in your mouth, for you are blessed, in order that you may bless Him; "this people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise".

If you don't praise God, you aren't bringing forth the fruit which He, as the Divine Husbandman, has a right to expect at your hands. So don't let your harp 'hang upon the willows', take it down and with a grateful heart make the loudest and melodious music that you can. Stand up and sing His praise. With every morning's dawn, lift up your notes of thanksgiving, and let every setting sun be followed with your song. Play your part along with God's saved ones in every land in creating a continuous circle of praise around the globe! Surround the earth with an atmosphere of melody and song and God Himself will hearken from heaven and be honoured by the sweet savour of worship: It is the evidence of His grace at work in a world of fallen and depraved humanity.

*So shalt Thou Lord. from me, e'en me,
receive Thy glory due;
and so shall I begin on earth
the song for ever new.*

Prayer

You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! for His mercy endures forever. Ps 118:28-29

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