



Daily Manna

February

from

Haus Barnabas

in the Black Forest

# Explanation

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

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

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

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

Len Holder

## Scripture readings

### **Your love to me was wonderful**

"I have loved you," says the Lord. - What manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! - The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." - I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love.

My beloved spoke, and said to me: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." - Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honoured, and I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. - I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. - I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

**2 Sam 1:26** - Mal 1:2; 1 John 3:1; Jer 31:3; Hos 11:4 - Song 2:10; Isa 43:4 - John 15:13-14; Gal 2:20; Phil 3:8-11

*Suggested additional reading: **Hosea 2:14-23***

## Meditation

### ***Your love to me was wonderful.* - 2 Samuel 1:26**

Come, dear readers, let each of us speak for himself of a wonderful love, not of a human friend but of Jesus. Let's not be content to merely relate in a theoretical way things that we've been told about Jesus, but rather those things which we have felt in our hearts and experienced of the love of Christ.

Your love to me, O Jesus, was wonderful when I was a stranger wandering far from You, *“fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.”* Eph 2:3. Your love restrained me from committing *“the sin leading to death”* 1 John 5:16-17, and withheld me from self-destruction. Your love held back the axe when Justice cried, *“Cut it down! why does it use up the ground?”* Luke 13:7. Your love drew me into the wilderness, stripped me of my self-satisfaction, exposed me to myself and made me feel the guilt of my sin, and the burden of my iniquity. Your love spoke so kindly to me when, I was so distressed - *“Come to Me ... and I will give you rest.”* Matt 11:28. Then oh, how wonderful Your love was when, in a moment, You washed my sins away, and showed me that because of your atoning death on the cross God saw me as white and innocent as driven snow and as pure as the finest wool.

What love it was that whispered in my ears, “I am yours and you are mine.” and “the Father Himself loves you, as I love you.” How precious too when You declared to me “the love of the Spirit.” Never shall my soul forget those places where in moments of fellowship You revealed Yourself to me. Moses, from the cleft in the rock, saw only the back parts of God as He passed by, but in the person of Christ I have seen far more of the splendours of the Godhead. When David was discouraged he remembered his Lord and Master from *“the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar.”* Ps 42:6. and I too have special places where my Lord revealed His love to me. Places which I hold precious in my memory.

Dear Lord Jesus, give me a fresh draught of Your wondrous love as I begin another month with You. Amen.

## Prayer

*Remember me, O Lord, with the favour You have toward Your people. Oh, visit me with Your salvation. Ps 106:4*

## Scripture readings

### **Now the records are ancient.**

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. - The mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. - Eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.

Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

**1 Chron 4:22** - 1 Cor 2:7-8; Eph 3:9-11 - 2 Thess 2:13-14; Titus 1:2 - Rom 8:29-31

*Suggested additional reading: Proverbs 8 12-31*

## Meditation

### ***Now the records are ancient. - 1 Chron. 4:22***

But they are not so ancient as some of those precious things which we lay hold of in faith to the delight of our souls! Let's for a moment consider some of these, turning them over with delight as misers might count up their gold coins.

Think first on the sovereign choice of the Father, when He chose us to holiness and eternal life in Christ before the foundation of the world. *Eph 1:4*. This is a matter of vast antiquity. No date can be conceived for it in the human mind as Scripture states it was “*before the foundation of the world*”. But then think, it was not merely an act of divine will which set us apart, everlasting love was behind the choice. The Father loved us in and from the beginning: “*The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.”* Jer 31:3. What a theme this is for our daily contemplation. God’s eternal purpose to redeem us from our foreseen ruin, to cleanse and sanctify us, and at last to glorify us, was of infinite antiquity, and runs side by side with His unchangeable love and absolute sovereignty.

The covenant is always described as being everlasting, and our Lord Jesus, the second party in the eternal agreement is described as He “*whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting*”. *Mic 5:2*. He shook hands in sacred suretyship long ere the first of the stars began to shine, and it was in Him that the elect were ordained unto eternal life. Thus in the divine purpose a most blessed covenant union was established between the Son of God and His elect people, which will continue as the foundation of their eternal security when time shall be no more.

Isn’t it comforting to be aware of these ancient things? And isn’t it shameful that they should be so much neglected and even rejected by many who consider themselves Christians? If we knew more of our own sin, wouldn’t we be more ready to adore the mystery of distinguishing grace? Let us both admire and adore today, as we sing:

*“A monument of grace, a sinner saved by blood;  
The streams of love I trace up to the Fountain, God;  
And in His sacred bosom see, eternal thoughts of love to me.”*

## Prayer

*The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty. ... He has girded Himself with strength ... Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. Ps 93:1-2*

## Scripture readings

**Tell me, ... where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon.**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. - He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.

How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. - O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.

My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word. My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying, "When will You comfort me?" For I have become like a wineskin in smoke, yet I do not forget Your statutes.

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." - "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." - "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

**Song 1:7** - Ps 23:1-2; Isa 40:11 - Ps 84:1-2; Ps 63:1 - Ps 119:81-83 - John 7:37; Matt 11:28; John 10:27 - Matt 5:6

## Meditation

***"Tell me... where You feed Your flock, where You make it rest at noon." - Song of Solomon 1:7***

These words express the desire of the believer after Christ; his longing to sense Christ's presence, to feel His love and hear His voice.

*Where do You feed Your flock?* In Your house? Then I will go to find You there. In private prayer? Then I will pray without ceasing. In the Word? Then I will read it diligently. In Your ordinances? Then I will walk in them with all my heart. Tell me where You feed, for wherever it is You are standing as the Shepherd, there I will lie down as a sheep; for none but You can meet my need. I cannot be satisfied unless I'm near You. My soul hungers and thirsts for the refreshment of Your presence.

*Where do You make Your flock to rest at noon?* for whether it's dawn or noon, my only rest can be where You are and Your beloved flock. I've tried to find peace and rest in myself, in my family, in trying to escape from the pressures of my work but it's all in vain. Rest for my soul must come from You and Your presence with me. It's Your gracious gift to me. Where is *"the shadow of that great rock in weary land"*? Isa 32:2. Why shouldn't I rest beneath it?

*"Why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?"* Song 1:7. I can't be content with merely being with other Christians. I can't feel the freedom and openness I know with You. Satan tells me I am unworthy; but I have always been unworthy, and yet You have long loved me. My unworthiness can't be a bar to me having fellowship with You now. It's true I am weak in faith, and prone to fall, but my feebleness is the very reason why I need to be always near You, where You are feeding Your flock, that I may be strengthened, and kept safe beside the still waters.

Jesus beckons me to come and if He sometimes seems illusive, it's in order to make me prize His presence more. When I'm grieved and distressed at being away from Him, I praise Him that He leads me back again to that sheltered nook where the lambs of His fold are sheltered from the burning sun.

## Prayer

*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Ps 42:1-2*

## Scripture readings

### **Your refuge from the avenger of blood.**

The Lord also spoke to Joshua, saying, ... "Appoint ... cities of refuge, ... that the slayer who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood."

The eternal God is your refuge. - The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. - 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."

Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. - Who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. ... Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

**Josh 20:3** - Josh 20:1-3 - Deut 33:27; Ps 18:2; Ps 91:1-2 - Matt 11:28; Rom 6:23; Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 1:30 - Acts 4:10;12

*Suggested additional reading: Joshua 20*

## Meditation

### ***Your refuge from the avenger of blood. - Joshua 20:3***

It is said that in the land of Canaan, cities of refuge were so arranged, that where ever anyone lived they could reach the safety of one of them within half a day. In the same way God's salvation is near to everyone. Our Saviour Jesus is never 'off-duty' and the way to

Him is short. To positively renounce all trust in our own merit and a hope of salvation from any other source, and to simply embrace Jesus in faith and trust will provide immediate security from God's righteous anger against our sin.

We are further told that the roads to the cities of refuge were strictly preserved, every river was bridged, and every obstruction removed, so that the man who fled might find an easy passage to the city. Once a year the elders went along the roads themselves to ensure they were maintained in good order. There must be nothing to impede the flight of any one, and cause him, through delay, to be overtaken and killed. How graciously do the promises of the gospel remove stumbling blocks from the way to Jesus! Wherever there were cross-roads and forks, there were fixed up signposts with the wording - "To the city of refuge!" This is a picture of the road to Christ Jesus. It is no circular route via the law. The way is not through obeying this, that, and the other. It is a straight road: "Believe, and live." It is a road so hard, that no self-righteous man can ever tread it, but so easy, that every sinner, who knows himself to be a sinner may by it find his way to heaven.

No sooner did the man-slayer reach the outlying areas of the city than he was safe. It wasn't necessary for him to enter within the walls, but the suburbs themselves provided sufficient protection. Learn from this, that if you do but touch the hem of Christ's garment, you shall be made whole; if you do but lay hold upon him with "*faith as a grain of mustard seed,*" you are safe.

*"A little genuine grace ensures  
The death of all our sins."*

Only waste no time, don't loiter by the way, for the avenger of blood is swift of foot, and maybe he is at your heels this very moment.

## Prayer

*Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by. Ps 57:1*

## Scripture readings

### **At that time Jesus answered ...**

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse. ... The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. - I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. - I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgement is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

It is My Father who honours Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know 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.

O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. - He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**Matt 11:25** - Isa 11:1-2; John 8:16; John 5:30 - John 8:54-55; Luke 6:12 - John 17:25-26 - John 17:3; Matt 11:15 - 1 Thess 5:16-18

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 12*

## Meditation

***"At that time Jesus answered."*** — *Matthew 11:25*

This is an very unusual way to commence a verse — *"At that time Jesus answered."* If you look at the context you'll see that there's no mention of anyone having asked Him a question nor any indication that He was in conversation with anyone. Yet it is written,

*“Jesus answered and said, I thank You, Father.”* When a man answers, he answers a person who has been speaking to him. Who, then, had spoken to Christ? It is clearly indicated that it was His Father, yet there is no record of it. From this we can surely learn that Jesus had constant fellowship with His Father, and that God spoke into His heart so often, so continually, that there was no need for it to be recorded. It was the habit and life of Jesus to talk with God.

Now, even as Jesus was in this world, so are we; let us therefore learn the lesson which this simple statement about Him teaches us. May we in a similar way have silent fellowship with the Father so that we find ourselves often answering Him. The unbelievers around us will have no idea to whom we are speaking but we will be responding to that secret voice which our own ear, opened by the Spirit of God, recognizes with joy. God has spoken to us and we will answer Him. We will want either to thank Him for His faithfulness, confess the sin which He is convicting us of, acknowledge a particular blessing just given or express appreciation and praise for the awareness of great truths which God the Holy Ghost has opened to our understanding. What a privilege to have such intimate communion with the Father, to have the sensitivity of spirit to hear and respond to Him. It is a secret hidden from the world and a joy which even those closest to us cannot contribute to or take away.

If we would hear the whispers of God’s love, our ear must be sanctified by the Holy Spirit and fitted to listen to His voice. Even now, today, let it be our prayer that our hearts be so in tune with God that when He speaks, we, like Jesus, may be prepared at once to answer Him.

## Prayer

*O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. Ps 63:1*

## Scripture readings

### Pray for one another

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. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

There they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." - And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

We ... do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. - We also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling ... that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**James 5:16** - James 5:15-16 - Luke 23:33-34; Acts 7:59-60 - Matt 5:44-45 - Col 1:9; 2 Thess 1:11-12

*Suggested additional reading: Gen 18:16-33*

## Meditation

**“Pray for one another.” — James 5:16**

It should encourage us to pray earnestly, confidently and joyfully for one another when we realise that such intercessory prayer is to our God the most precious of prayers. They are exactly the character of our Saviour's prayers. In all the incense which our Great High Priest now puts in the golden censer, there is not a single

grain for Himself. His intercession must be the most acceptable of all supplications and the more our prayer is like Christ's then the more precious it will be to God. While petitions for ourselves will certainly be accepted, our pleadings for others show more of the fruit of the Spirit. They demonstrate more love, more faith, more brotherly kindness and when brought to God in the name of His dear Son reflect more of the essential nature of the divine spiritual life implanted in us. They are the sweetest oblation that we can offer to God, the very fat of our sacrifice.

Remember also, that intercessory prayer is exceedingly powerful. What wonders it has wrought! The Word of God teems with its marvellous deeds. Believer, you have a mighty power in your hand, use it well, use it constantly, use it with faith, and you will surely bring much blessing on your brothers and sisters. When you have the King's ear, speak to Him for the suffering members of His family. When you are favoured to draw very near to His throne, and the King says to you, "Ask, and I will give you whatever you want," don't let your petitions be just for yourself but for the many who need His help.

If you are a Christian at all but are not praying for others, then God's grace in you must be very small. You have just enough grace to float your soul clear from the quicksands of death through your God-given faith in Christ, but you lack the blessings of real fellowship with your Saviour or you would most certainly be caring for the needs of your brothers and sisters as He does. As healthy believers we should be bringing back from our times of prayer and fellowship with our God, rich blessings for others which, but for our prayers they might never have obtained: —

*"Oh, let my hands forget their skill,  
My tongue be silent, cold, and still,  
This bounding heart forget to beat,  
If I forget the mercy-seat!"*

## Prayer

*Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up. Ps 5:1-3*

## Scripture readings

**They heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here."**

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, ... He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. - 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. - For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labour; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

**Rev 11:12** - John 17:24-25 - Ps 24:3-5; Matt 25:34 - 2 Cor 5:7- 9; Phil 1:21-24 - 1 Thess 4:16-17

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 21*

## Meditation

***They heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here" - Revelation 11:12***

Without considering these words in their prophetic connection, let's see them today as the invitation to all His sanctified people from our Saviour, our Jesus, who has entered heaven ahead of us and is preparing a place for us. (*John 14:2-3*)

In due time every believer will hear “*a loud voice from heaven saying to them 'Come up here'.*” How we should be looking forward to this, the call to leave this world and to go home to our heavenly Father! As the deer pants for the water brooks so we should be panting for the moment which will set us free from the sin, suffering and pain of this world. Our song should be:

*“My heart is with Him on His throne,  
And ill can brook delay;  
Each moment listening for the voice,  
'Rise up and come away.'”*

We are not to be called down to the grave, but up to the skies. Our heaven-born spirits should long for their native air and this celestial summons should be the most important thing for which we are patiently waiting. Our God knows best when to call us home and we should be happy to leave the timing in His hands “*Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*” (James 1:4). God has ordained with accurate wisdom the most suitable length of time for the redeemed to live below. If it were possible to have regrets when we get to heaven, the saints might well mourn that they hadn't lived longer here to do more good. Oh, for more sheaves for my Lord's garner! more jewels for His crown! And how can we help in this unless we are serving Him here below? True, there is the other side of the picture, living only briefly, means that our sins are fewer! but when we are fully committed to serving God, and He is allowing us to scatter precious seed and reap a hundredfold, we would even say it's good for us to stay down here a bit longer. So, whether our Master should say “come” or “stay,” let us be equally happy as long as He is blessing us with His presence.

## Prayer

*One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. Ps 27:4*

## Scripture readings

### **He will save His people from their sins.**

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them. - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us. - Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. - If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**Matt 1:21** - John 1:29 - Ezek 36:25-27; Eph 5:25-27 - Titus 2:13-14; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 John 1:6-7

*Suggested additional reading: Eph 2*

## Meditation

***“He will save His people from their sins.” — Matthew 1:21***

Many persons, if they were asked what they understood by salvation, would reply, “Being saved from hell and taken to heaven.” This is one of the great blessings of salvation, but it is only one aspect of it. It is true that our Lord Jesus has redeemed all His people

from the wrath to come; He has saved us from the fearful condemnation which our sins have brought upon us, but His triumph is far more complete than this. He saves His people *“from their sins.”* Not only from the consequences of them but from the sins themselves. This is a wonderful deliverance from our worst enemies.

When Christ works His saving work, He throws Satan down from his throne in our hearts and won't allow him to be master any longer. No man is a true Christian if sin reigns in his mortal body. Sin will never be utterly expelled till the spirit enters glory; but it will never more have dominion. It will struggle for dominion, lusting against the new law and the new spirit which God has implanted, and at times may seem to be winning, but sin will never get the upper hand so as to be absolute monarch of our nature. Christ is the new Master in every believer's heart and sin must be mortified. The Lion of the tribe of Judah shall prevail, and the dragon shall be cast out.

I would ask all those professing to be Christians, this question, is sin subdued in you? If your life is unholy then your heart is unchanged, and if your heart is unchanged you are an unsaved person. If the Saviour isn't sanctifying you, renewing you, giving you a hatred of sin and a love of holiness, then He is doing nothing yet to save you from your sins. The grace which doesn't make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not in their sins, but from them. *“Pursue ... holiness, without which no man will see the Lord.”* (Heb 12:14) and *“Let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* (2 Tim 2:19). If we aren't saved from sin, how can we hope to be counted among God's people. Lord, save me now from all evil, and enable me to honour my Saviour.

## Prayer

*To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev 1:5-6*

## Scripture readings

### **Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. - Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. - Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. - May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**Luke 11:4** - 1 Peter 5:8-9; Matt 26:41 - 1 Cor 10:12-13; Ps 19:13 - Rev 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10-11

*Suggested additional reading: Eph 6:10-20*

## Meditation

***“Do not lead us into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one”***

*Luke 11:4*

Things that the Bible teaches us to pray for should not only be matters for prayer but also things to actively pursue. How can we seriously pray that our heavenly Father should not lead us into temptation if we are not doing our utmost to avoid temptation ourselves.

We should be seeking to walk so carefully in the path of obedience to God's revealed will that we give little or no opportunity for the devil to tempt us. We are not to enter the thicket in search of the lion. Such presumption could be our downfall. This lion may cross our path or leap out at us from the thicket, but let us never go looking for him. If he meets up with us and then if we manage with God's help to win the day, it will be only be after a strenuous struggle. This prayer our Lord gave His disciples teaches us to pray to be spared such an encounter. Our Saviour, who had first-hand experience of what temptation meant, on another occasion earnestly admonished His disciples: "*Pray that you may not enter temptation.*" Luke 22:40.

But however careful and prayerful we are, there will be times of temptation; hence the further prayer "*deliver us from the evil one.*" God had one Son without sin; but He has no son without temptation. The natural man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, (*Job 5:7*) and the Christian man is born to temptation just as certainly. We must be always on our watch against Satan, because, like a thief, he gives no intimation of his approach. Believers who have had experience of the ways of Satan, know that there are certain seasons when he will most probably make an attack, just as at certain seasons of the year we can expect cold winds. The Christian needs to have a double guard by being firstly aware of his weaknesses and then secondly by bracing himself for attack. Prevention is better than cure: it is far better to be so well armed that the devil will not attack you than to endure the dangers of the fight, even though you come off a conqueror. Pray today, firstly that you may be spared the temptation, but if God allows it to come that you may be delivered from the evil one.

## Prayer

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

## Scripture readings

**I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. - "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins."

But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. - Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. - The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Isa 44:22** - Ps 103:11-12; Isa 43:25 - Isa 43:1; 1 Peter 1:18-19 - Ps 32:1-2; Isa 51:11 - Heb 4:16

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 103*

## Meditation

***"I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."*** -

*Isaiah 44:22*

Note firstly the picture of *our sins as a thick cloud*. As clouds have many shapes and shades, so have our transgressions. As clouds obscure the light of the sun, and darken the landscape below, so our

sins hide from us the light of Jehovah's face, and bring us under the shadow of death. They are earth-born things, rising from the miry places of our nature, and when they are full they threaten us with storm and tempest. But unlike the clouds of nature, our sins, far from bringing refreshing showers, threaten to drown us in a flood of destruction. O thick black clouds of sin, how can our souls enjoy the sunshine of God's love while you are over us?

But secondly we have a wonderful expression of God's mercy: "***I have blotted out ... your sins***". God Himself appears on the scene, and in divine mercy, instead of showing His anger, reveals His grace. He at once and for ever effectively removes the mischief, not by blowing away the cloud, but by blotting it out of existence once for all. Against the justified believer no sin remains, the great transaction of the cross has eternally removed his transgressions from him. On Calvary's hill, where the Good Shepherd lay down His life for His sheep, the sins of all who hear His voice and follow Him were completely and effectually blotted out for ever.

Finally there follows a gracious and encouraging command: "***return to Me, for I have redeemed you.***" Why should pardoned sinners live at a distance from their God? If all your sins have been forgiven, then don't allow doubts and fears to keep you from boldly drawing near to your Lord. Certainly we need to acknowledge and sorrow over our backslidings, but our redemption is not only for past sins, "*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from **all** sin*" (1 John 1:7). But to fulfil the conditions of this promise we must return and walk in fellowship with Him in the light of His truth. Through the influence and power of the Holy Spirit let us return today and seek the greatest possible nearness of fellowship with our Lord.

## 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. Mic 7:18-19*

## Scripture readings

### **You have left your first love.**

Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. - This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ... being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**Rev 2:4** - Matt 24:11-13; Phil 1:9;11 - Heb 6:10-12 - Rom 12:9-13 - Phil 3:13-14

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

## Meditation

### ***You have left your first love. - Revelation 2:4***

Each believer's experience is different but can you, like me, remembered as your best and brightest hour that moment when you first saw the Lord! You lost your burden, received the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, rejoiced in full salvation, and went on your way in

peace. It was spring time in the soul. The winter was past. The mutterings of Sinai's thunders were hushed and the flashings of its lightnings had disappeared. God was seen to be reconciled. The law threatened no vengeance and justice demanded no punishment. Then the flowers appeared in your heart; hope, love, peace, and patience sprung up from within; the hyacinth of repentance, the snowdrop of pure holiness, the crocus of golden faith, the daffodil of early love, these all decked the garden of the soul. The time of the singing of birds was come, and you rejoiced with thanksgiving and magnified the holy name of our forgiving God, Did you at that time with determination make a commitment to dedicate your life to the Lord? Were the words of your prayer similar to mine? "Lord, I am Yours, wholly Yours; all I am, and all I have, I would devote to You. You have bought me with Your blood, let me spend myself and be spent in Your service. In life and in death let me be consecrated to You alone."

But how have we kept this resolve? Our first love burned with a holy flame of devotion to Jesus; is it the same now? Might not Jesus well say to us, "I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love"? Alas! it is but little we have done for our Master's glory. The winters in our lives have lasted all too long. We are as cold as ice when we should feel a summer's glow and bloom with sacred flowers. We give to God pence when He deserves pounds, nay, deserves our heart's blood to be coined in the service of His church and of His truth.

But will we continue in our lukewarmness? O Lord, You have so richly blessed us, can I remain so ungrateful and indifferent to You and the work of Your kingdom? O quicken me that I may return to my first love, and do my first works! Send me a new Springtime O Sun of Righteousness.

## Prayer

*Let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; with favour You will surround him as with a shield. Ps 5:11-12*

## Scripture readings

**He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.**

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you - The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. - He will testify of Me - If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not His.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. - Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. - Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. - The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Do not quench the Spirit. - For without Me you can do nothing.

**John 14:16** - John 14:18; John 14:26; John 15:26; Rom 8:9 - John 14:12-14 - Acts 9:31; Eph 1:13-14 - Rom 8:15-16; Rom 5:5 - 1 Thess 5:19; John 15:5

*Suggested additional reading: **John 14 12-29***

## Meditation

***“He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” - John 14:16***

Our heavenly Father often revealed Himself to believers of old, in the ages before the coming of His Son, and to Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob he made Himself known as the God Almighty. Then Jesus came, and the ever-blessed Son of the Father, as the Son of Man was recognised with delight by those close to Him. *“We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* writes the apostle John (John 1:14). After our Redeemer had completed His work and ascended back to heaven the Holy Spirit was given to the Church. He displayed His power wonderfully in those early days and remains to this hour our Immanuel - God with us, dwelling in and with His people, quickening, guiding, and ruling in their midst.

Is His presence recognized as it ought to be? We cannot control His working; He is most sovereign in all His operations, but are we sufficiently anxious to obtain His help, or sufficiently watchful lest we provoke Him to withdraw His influence? Without Him we can do nothing, but by His almighty energy the most extraordinary results can be produced: everything depends upon Him revealing or concealing His power. Do we always look up to Him both for our inner life and our outward service with the respectful dependence which is fitting? Don't we too often run ahead of His call and act independently of His aid? Let us humble ourselves today for past neglects, and now entreat the heavenly dew to rest upon us, the sacred oil to anoint us, the celestial flame to burn within us. The Holy Ghost is no temporary gift, He abides continually with the saints. *“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not His”* (Rom 8:9). We have but to sincerely seek Him, and He will be found of us. He is jealous, but He is full of pity; if He withdraws His influence in anger, He returns in mercy. Condescending and tender, He does not get weary of us, but waits to be gracious still.

*Sin has been hammering my heart unto a hardness, void of love,  
Let supplying grace to cross his art, drop from above.*

## Prayer

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

## Scripture readings

### **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.**

- In the Lord all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory. - “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgement you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the Lord.

Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! - God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned.

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. - Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.

**Rom 8:1** - Isa 45:25; Isa 54:17 - John 1:29; John 3:17-18 - Rom 5:1-2; Titus 3:5-7 - John 5:24

*Suggested additional reading: **Romans 8:1-17***

## Meditation

### **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” - *Romans 8:1***

Come, my soul, think about this. On believing in Jesus, you are actually and effectually cleared from all guilt. You are no more in chains as a bond-slave to sin and Satan; you are delivered from the

bondage of the law; you are freed from sin, and can walk at large as a free person. Your Saviour's blood has procured you a full pardon. You have a right now to approach your Father's throne and none can hinder you. No flames of vengeance are there to scare you; no fiery sword; justice cannot smite the innocent. Everything that prohibited your access to God has been removed. Once it was impossible for you to know your Father's smile but now He is delighted to reveal Himself to you. You had no right to speak with Him, but now you can approach Him with boldness. Once there was a fear of death and hell, but all fear has now gone, (*Heb 2:14-15*) for how can there be punishment for the one who has no guilt? The person who truly believes in Jesus, as the Son of God, is not condemned, and cannot be punished. And more than all this, all the privileges lost through sin are now yours. You are justified and every blessing which you would have had if you had been able to keep the law, and in fact far more, are yours, because Christ has kept the law for you. All the love and the acceptance which perfect obedience could have obtained of God, belong to you, because Christ was perfectly obedient on your behalf, and He has imputed all His merits to your account. He who for your sake became exceeding poor has made you exceedingly rich. (*2 Cor 8:9*). Oh! How great the debt of love and gratitude you owe to your Saviour!

*“A debtor to mercy alone,  
Of covenant mercy I sing;  
Nor fear with Thy righteousness on,  
My person and offerings to bring:  
The terrors of law and of God,  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Saviour's obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions from view.*

## Prayer

*Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness' sake, O Lord. Ps 25:6-7*

## Scripture readings

### **She was healed immediately.**

But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well. - And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

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. - Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed.

**Luke 8:47** - Mal 4:2; Luke 4:18-19 - Mark 6:56; Matt 9:20-22 - Ps 103:2-4; 1 Peter 2:24

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 8:40-54***

## Meditation

### ***She was healed immediately. - Luke 8:47***

Here in the context of this statement we have one of the most touching and instructive of our Saviour's miracles. The woman was very ignorant. She imagined that virtue came out of Christ in some mechanical sense without His knowledge or direct will. Moreover,

she was also a stranger to the generosity of Jesus' character, or she would not have gone behind Him to steal the cure which He was so ready to give.

Our misery and need doesn't need to be hidden from mercy but rather be placed directly before it. Had she known the love of Jesus' heart, she would have said, "I have only to put myself where He can see me, His omniscience means He already knows all about me and His love will at once work my cure." We admire her faith, but we marvel at her ignorance. After she had found healing, she rejoiced with trembling. She was so glad that the divine virtue had worked such a miracle in her body but she feared lest Christ should take away the blessing and withdraw His grace. How little she understood the fullness of His love! None of us have as clear a view of Jesus as we would like to have and we don't understand the heights and depths of His love, but we know of a certainty that He is too good to take away from a trembling man or woman the blessing which by faith they have been able to experience.

Here is the wonder of this miracle, despite very little knowledge, her faith, because it was real faith, saved her, and saved her at once. There was no tedious delay, faith's miracle was instantaneous. If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, salvation is our present and eternal possession. If we are written as the weakest of the family in the list of the Lord's children, yet, being heirs through faith, no power, human or devilish, can cause us to lose our salvation. If we dare not lean our heads upon His bosom with John, yet if we can venture in the press behind Him, and touch the hem of his garment, we are made whole. Courage, timid one! your faith has saved you; go in peace. *"Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Rom 5:1

## 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

### **By which they have made You glad**

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul. - 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 also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 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 your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

**Psalm 45:8** - Jer 32:40-41; Zeph 3:17 - Ps 147:11; Ps 149:2-4 - Isa 62:3-5

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 62*

## Meditation

***“By which they have made You glad.” - Psalm 45:8***

And who are those privileged people who make the Saviour glad? It's His church, all who are trusting Him as their Saviour, His beloved ones. But is this possible? He makes us glad, but how can we make Him glad? Firstly we make Him glad by our love. Ah! We

consider it so faint, so lukewarm and even cold. This is true and we must sorrowfully confess it to be so, but yet it's very precious to Christ. Hear His own eulogy of that love prophetically given in Solomon's Canticle: *"How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love!"* Song 4:10. See, loving heart, how He delights in you. When you lean your head on His bosom, you not only receive, but you give Him joy; when you gaze with love upon His all-glorious face, you not only obtain comfort, but impart delight.

Then our praise too gives Him joy. Not songs which come merely from our lips, but the melody of our heart's deep gratitude. Our gifts, too, are greatly pleasing to Him. He loves to see us lay our time, our talents, our substance sacrificially on the altar in His service. It's not the value of what we give that's important but the love motive which lie behind our giving. (*1. Cor 13:3*). To Him the lowly offerings of His saints are far more acceptable than gold and silver worth thousands. Holiness is like frankincense and myrrh to Him. Forgive your enemy, and you make Christ glad; distribute of your substance to the poor, and He rejoices; be the means of bringing others to faith and you give Him to see that for which His soul travailed (*Isa 53:11*); proclaim His gospel, and we are to God the fragrance of His beloved Son (*2 Cor 2:15*); go among the ignorant and lift up the cross, and you are giving Him honour. In these ways it's in your power even now to break the alabaster box and pour the precious oil of joy on His head, as did that woman in the Gospels whose memorial is to this day set forth wherever the gospel is preached. (*Mark 14 3-8*).

Will you be backward then? Will you not perfume your beloved Lord with the myrrh and aloes, and cassia, of your heart's praise? (*Ps 45:8*). Yes, you ivory palaces, you shall hear the songs of the saints!

## Prayer

*Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. Mic 7:18*

## Scripture readings

### **Your good Spirit.**

For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. - The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. - When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. - Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Neh 9:20** - 2 Peter 1:21; John 14:26; John 16:13-14 - Rom 5:5; Rom 8:14-17 - Rom 8:26; Rom 15:13

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

## Meditation

### ***Your good Spirit.- Nehemiah 9:20***

Common, too common is the sin of forgetting or misrepresenting the Holy Spirit. This is both foolish and ungrateful. He well deserves more thought and respect for He is good, supremely good.

As God, **He is good essentially**. He shares in the threefold ascription of Holy, holy, holy, which ascends to the Triune Jehovah. (*Isa 6:3*). He is unmixed purity, truth and grace.

**He is good benevolently**, patiently bearing with our waywardness, striving with our rebellious wills; quickening us from our death in sin, and then training us for the skies as a loving nurse fosters her child. How generous, forgiving, and tender is this patient Spirit of God.

Then **He is good operatively**. All His works are good to the highest degree: He suggests good thoughts, prompts good actions, reveals good truths, applies good promises, assists in good attainments, and leads to good results. There is no spiritual good in all the world of which He is not the author and sustainer, and heaven itself will owe the perfect character of its redeemed inhabitants to His work.

**He is good officially**; whether as Comforter, Instructor, Guide, Sanctifier, Quickener, or Intercessor, He fulfils His office well, and each work results in the highest good for the church of God. They who yield to His influences become good, they who obey His impulses do good and they who live under His power receive good.

Let us then give Him the due gratitude and respect He deserves. Let us revere His person and adore Him as God over all, blessed for ever. Let us own His power and our need of Him by waiting upon Him to guide and empower us in all our Christian service. Let us hourly seek His aid in everything, be very sensitive not to grieve Him or reject His counsel and finally to consciously honour and praise Him in word and worship. The church will never prosper until it believes in the Holy Ghost with more reverence. He is so good and kind and it is truly sad when we grieve Him by slights and negligences.

## Prayer

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

## Scripture readings

### **The Lord was there.**

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. ... Her saints shall shout aloud for joy." - Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!

Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge. - Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever.

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the Lord. "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

**Ezekiel 35:10** - Ps 132:13-16; Isa 12:6 - Ps 48:2-3; Ps 125:1-2 - Zech 2:10-11 - Matt 28:20; 1 John 4:4

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 48*

## Meditation

### ***"The Lord was there." - Ezekiel 35:10***

Edom's princes saw the whole country left desolate after its invasion by Babylon and counted upon its easy conquest; but there was one great difficulty in their way, quite unknown to them, "*the Lord was there*"; and in His presence lay the special security of the chosen land. Whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of God's people, there is still this same effectual barrier to thwart their design.

The saints are God's heritage, and He lives with them and in them, and will protect His own. What comfort this assurance gives us in our troubles and spiritual conflicts! We are constantly opposed, and yet perpetually preserved! How often Satan shoots his arrows against our faith, but our faith defies the power of hell's fiery darts; they are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon its shield, for "*the Lord is there.*" Every outward expression of our faith in Jesus is attacked by Satan. Every fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the target for hellish bullets: whether it's hope bright and sparkling, or love warm and fervent, or patience all-enduring, or zeal flaming like coals of fire, the old enemy of everything that is good tries to destroy it. The only reason why anything virtuous or lovely survives in us is this, "*the Lord is there*".

Then also if the Lord is with us through life we needn't fear that we shall lack the confidence to die peacefully; for when that day comes we shall find that "*the Lord is there*" too. Where the waves are most tempestuous, and the water is most chill, we shall feel the bottom and know that it is good. When our time on earth draws to a close our feet shall stand firm upon the Rock of Ages.

Believer, from the first day of your Christian life to the last, the only reason why you don't perish is because "*the Lord is there*". Only when the God of everlasting love should change and stand aside to allow His elect to perish, can His beloved Church be destroyed. But of this we need have no fear, for it is written, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, "*The Lord is there*" and that's for all eternity.

## Prayer

*You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head. Ps 3:3*

## Scripture readings

### “Father, I have sinned”

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. - He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him, he shall see His face with joy, for He restores to man His righteousness. Then he looks at men and says, 'I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it did not profit me.' He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit, and his life shall see the light.

I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight; that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.

**Luke 15:18** - 1 John 1:8-9; Prov 28:13-14 - Ps 32:3-5; Job 33:26-28; Ps 51:3-4

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 51*

## Meditation

### “Father, I have sinned.”- Luke 15:18

It is quite certain that those whom Christ has washed in His precious blood don't need to make a confession of sin, as culprits or criminals, before God the Judge. In a legal sense Christ has taken away all their sins for ever. They are no longer in a position to be

condemned but are once for all time accepted in the Beloved. However having become children of God, and offending as children, didn't they ought to go every day to their heavenly Father acknowledge their failings and confessing their sin? Nature teaches us that naughty children should confess their naughtiness to their human parents and say sorry for the things they do wrong, and surely the grace of God in the Christian's heart teaches him that he should do the same to his heavenly Father!

We offend our heavenly Father every day and we didn't ought to feel able to go to bed at night without seeking His forgiveness. For, if my trespasses against my Father aren't acknowledged to Him and washed away by the cleansing power of the Lord Jesus what will this lead to? Firstly, I'm likely to become hardened in regard to these failures and soon not recognise them as sins at all. This will lead to a lose of nearness to God and I shall begin to doubt His love to me. I shall be afraid to talk to Him and what is far worse may not see the need to talk to Him. I shall grow like the prodigal, who, although still a child, was yet far off from his father.

But by way of contrast, if, with a child's sorrow at offending so gracious and loving a Parent, I go to Him and tell Him everything and don't rest till I know that I'm forgiven, then I shall feel a holy love to my Father, and shall be able to live my Christian life not only knowing that I'm saved, but in the enjoyment of an overwhelming sense of peace in God through Jesus Christ my Lord.

There is a wide distinction between confessing sin as a culprit, and confessing sin as a child. The Father's bosom is the place for penitent confessions. We have been cleansed once for all, but our feet still need to be washed from the defilement of our daily walk as children of God.

## Prayer

*For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. ... Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.*

*Ps 25:11;18*

## Scripture readings

### **He first found his own brother Simon**

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 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."

Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. - That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." - "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" - I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

**John 1:41** - John 1:40-42 - John 1:45 - 2 Kings 7:9; 1 John 1:3-4 - Luke 8:38-39; John 4:29; Ps 22:22 - Acts 1:8

*Suggested additional reading: **John 1:29-51***

## Meditation

***"He first found his own brother Simon." - John 1:41***

This recorded incident is an excellent example of what happens when spiritual life is active. As soon as a person has found Christ he begins to find others. I can't believe that you have tasted of the honey

of the gospel if you can eat it all yourself! True grace puts an end to a selfish spiritual attitude. Andrew first found his own brother Simon, and then others. Relationships should have a very strong influence on our first individual efforts to share our faith. Andrew, you did well to begin with Simon. I don't doubt that there are some Christians giving away tracts at other people's houses when they would do well to speak of Jesus in their own; Christians who are engaged in useful work for God abroad who are neglecting a special sphere of spiritual need amongst their own family. You may or may not be called to evangelise the people in any particular locality, but you are most certainly called to have a burden for the souls of your own family and the friends and acquaintances God brings into your life. Let your Christianity begin at home!

Many tradesmen export their best commodities, but this is not the practise for a Christian. His behaviour everywhere should diffuse the fragrance of Christ, but the sweetest fruit of his spiritual life and testimony should be seen by his own family. When Andrew went to find his brother, he little imagined how eminent Simon would become. Simon Peter was worth ten Andrews so far as we can gather from sacred history, and yet Andrew was instrumental in bringing him to Jesus. You may lack many talents yourself, and yet you may be the means of drawing someone to Christ who will become prominent in grace and service. Ah! dear friend, you little know the possibilities which are in you. You may simply speak a word to a child, and in that child there may be slumbering a noble heart which shall stir the Christian church in years to come. Andrew had but few talents, but he finds Peter. Go and do likewise.

## Prayer

*Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come. Ps 71:18*

## Scripture readings

### **Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**

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

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. - Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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

**Matt 4:1** - Heb 4:15-16; Heb 2:18 - 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Cor 16:13 - 1 Peter 5:8-11 - Rev 2:10

*Suggested additional reading: Eph 6:10-23*

## Meditation

***“Then Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” - Matthew 4:1***

To have a holy character doesn't remove the risk of temptation. Jesus was tempted. When we are tempted Satan's sparks fall on dry

tinder, but in Christ's case it was like striking sparks on water; yet the enemy continued his evil work. Now, if the devil goes on striking when there is no result, how much more will he do it when he knows what inflammable stuff our hearts are made of.

Even when the Holy Spirit is doing His gracious sanctifying work within you and me we can't expect the great dog of hell to stop barking at us. And although we may expect temptations to come in the rough and tumble of daily life in the world of men, to live in seclusion won't guard us from similar trials. Jesus Christ was led away from human society into the wilderness, and was there tempted of the devil. Solitude has its charms and its benefits and may be useful in checking the lust of the eye and the pride of life; but the devil will follow us into the most lonely retreats.

Don't suppose that it is only the worldly-minded who have dreadful thoughts and blasphemous temptations, for even most spiritual-minded Christians endure the same; and in fact in the holiest of positions we may suffer the worse temptations. The utmost consecration of spirit will not insure you against Satanic attacks. Christ was consecrated through and through. It was His meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent Him: and yet He was tempted! Your hearts may glow with a seraphic flame of love to Jesus, and yet the devil will try to bring you down to Laodicean lukewarmness. If there were to be a place where God allows a Christian to take off his spiritual armour, there and only there could we be sure Satan has no power to tempt us, but Scripture gives us no hope of such a place this side of heaven. Like the old knights in war time, we must sleep with helmet and breastplate buckled on, for the arch-deceiver will seize our first unguarded hour to make us his prey. Let it be our prayer that the Lord will keep us watchful at all times and give us a final escape from the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear.

## Prayer

*And 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

### "Do you understand what you are reading?"

"Here the parable of sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ... But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, To understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. - Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law. - Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life. ... You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.

**Acts 8:30** - Matt 13:18-19;23 - Prov 1:5-7 - Ps 119:105; Ps 119:18; John 5:24;39-40 - Eph 1:16-18

*Suggested additional reading: Proverbs 8*

## Meditation

***"Do you understand what you are reading?" - Acts 8:30***

We should aim to be able to teach the Scriptures to others. We would be less liable to be "*carried about by every wind of doctrine*" (Eph 4:14) if we had a more intelligent understanding of the Word of

God. The Holy Ghost, the Author of the Scriptures is the only One who can enlighten us rightly to understand them and we need constantly to pray for His teaching and guidance into all truth.

When the prophet Daniel needed to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, what did he do? He set himself to earnest prayer that God would open up the vision. (*Daniel 2*). The apostle John, in his vision at Patmos, saw a book sealed with seven seals which none was found worthy to open, or even so much as look upon. The book was eventually opened by the "Lion of the tribe of Judah", who had prevailed to open it; but it is written first, "*I wept much.*" (Rev 5:4). The tears of John, which were his liquid prayers, were the sacred keys by which in his vision the folded book was opened to his understanding. Therefore, if, for the profit of yourself and others you desire to be "*filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,*" (Col 1:9), remember that prayer is your best means of study. Like Daniel, you will understand the dream and its interpretation when you have sought unto God, and like John you will see the seven seals of precious truth unloosed, after you have wept much.

Stones are only broken by the strenuous use of a hammer, and the stone-breakers of the past would often have to go at their work on their knees. Use the hammer of diligence, and let the knee of prayer be exercised, and there is not a stony doctrine in revelation, useful for you to understand, which will not fly into shivers under the exercise of prayer and faith. You may force your way through anything with the leverage of prayer. Thoughts and reasonings are like the steel wedges which give a hold upon truth; but prayer is the lever, the prise which forces open the iron chest of sacred mystery, that we may get the treasure hidden within.

## Prayer

*You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name. Ps 86:10-11*

## Scripture readings

### **The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power.**

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.” - You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness. - So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. - Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground. Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God.

Making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ... that you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.

God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered? - Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

**Nahum 1:3** - Ex 34:6; Neh 9:17; Joel 2:13 - Lam 3:22-23; Ps 147:5-6 - Eph 1:16-20 - Job 9:4; Rom 2:4

*Suggested additional reading: Nehemiah 9*

## Meditation

### ***The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power. Nahum 1:3***

Jehovah “*is slow to anger.*” When He sends His mercy into the world it's as if she rides on winged horses and the axles of her chariot-wheels are red hot with speed! but when His wrath and anger

is displayed it is often delayed and comes but slowly, for God takes no pleasure in the sinner's death. In this day of His grace God's hand of mercy is stretched out daily but His sword of justice is retained in its scabbard, held down by that pierced hand of love which bled for the sins of men.

*"The Lord is slow to anger,"* **because** He is *"great in power."* The One who has power over himself is truly great. When God's power restrains Himself, then it is power indeed: the power that binds omnipotence is omnipotence surpassed. A man who has a strong mind can withstand personal insults and only resents the wrong when a sense of right demands his action. The weak mind is irritated at very little but the strong mind bears it like an immovable rock, though a thousand breakers dash against it, and cast their pitiful malice in spray upon its summit. God marks His enemies, and yet He doesn't rise up against them but restrains His anger. If He were less divine than He is, He would long ago have sent forth the whole of His thunders, and emptied the magazines of heaven. He would long ago have blasted the earth with the wondrous fires of its lower regions, and man would have been utterly destroyed. But the greatness of his power brings us mercy.

Dear reader, where do you stand today? Can you by humble faith look to Jesus, and say, "My substitute, You are my rock, my trust"? Then, beloved, don't be afraid of God's power; for by faith you have fled to Christ for refuge, the power of God need no more terrify you, than the shield and sword of the warrior need terrify those whom he loves. Rather rejoice that He who is *"great in power"* is your Father and Friend.

## Prayer

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

*Ps 66:10-12*

## Scripture readings

### **"Take up the cross, and follow Me."**

And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the centre.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.- If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.

We are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. - He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

**Mark 10:21** - John 19:17-18 - Matt 16:24-25; John 12:26 - Rom 8:16-18 - James 1:2-4; 2 Cor 12:9

*Suggested additional reading **Matthew 16 21 - 28***

## Meditation

### ***"Take up the cross, and follow Me." - Mark 10:21***

It's not up to you to make your own cross, although unbelief is a master carpenter at cross-making. Neither are you permitted to choose your own cross, although self-will would love to be Lord and

master over its own life. Your cross however is prepared and appointed for you by divine love, and it is for you to cheerfully accept it. You are to take up the cross willingly as your badge and burden, and not to stand cavilling at the nature of it. Jesus calls you to submit your shoulder to His “easy yoke”. Don't kick at it in petulance, trample on it in vain-glory, fall under it in despair, nor run away from it in fear, but take it up like a true follower of Jesus. Jesus was a cross-bearer. He leads the way in the path of sorrow. Surely you could not desire a better guide! And if He carried a cross, what nobler burden would you desire? The Via Crucis is the way of safety; don't fear to tread its thorny paths.

My friend, the cross is not made of feathers or lined with velvet. It is heavy and galling to disobedient shoulders, but it is not an iron cross. Although your fears may have painted it with iron colours, it is a wooden cross and a man can carry it, for the Man of sorrows tried the load. Take up your cross, and by the power of the Spirit of God you will soon be so in love with it, that like Moses, you would not exchange the reproach of Christ for all the treasures of Egypt. Just remember that Jesus carried it, and you will sense His presence as you shoulder it. Remember that it will soon be followed by the crown, and the thought of the coming weight of glory will greatly lighten the present heaviness of trouble. The Lord help you so to bow your spirit in submission to His divine will, that as you wake afresh to each new day you will be able to go forward with that holy and submissive spirit which should characterise a faithful follower of the crucified Jesus.

## Prayer

*Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Ps 73:25-26*

## Scripture readings

**“O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem?” ... And the Lord answered the angel ... with good and comforting words.**

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God?” Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. - Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. - The Lord 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."

I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

**Zech 1:12-13** - Isa 40:27-28; Isa 49:15-16 - Isa 40:1-2 - Jer 31:3; Zeph 3:17 - Ps 85:8

*Suggested additional reading: Isa 40*

## Meditation

***“O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem?” ... And the Lord answered the angel ... with good and comforting words. Zechariah 1:12,13***

What a wonderful answer to an anxious question! Can it not bring comfort to us too? O Zion, there are good things in store for

you; your time of travail will soon be over; your children will be born and your time of captivity end. Bear the rod patiently for a little longer and in the darkness still trust in God, for His love burns towards you. God loves His chosen ones with a love too deep for human imagination, He loves her with all His infinite heart. Therefore let every believing child of God take courage. Prosperity can't be far away for those to whom God speaks "*good and comforting words.*"!

What these comfortable words are the prophet goes on to tell us: "*I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal.*" The Lord loves His church so much, that He can't bear for her to go astray to others; and when she has done so, He cannot bear that she should suffer too much or too heavily for it. He won't allow His enemies to afflict His children for long and He is angry with these when they add to the misery of those He loves. When God seems to leave His church still His heart yearns for her. History shows that whenever God uses a rod to discipline His servants, afterwards He always breaks it, as if He loathed the rod which gave his children pain. "*As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.*" (Ps 103:13). God hasn't forgotten us because He disciplines us; His reprimands are no evidences of want of love.

If this is true of His church collectively, then it is of necessity also true of each individual member. Maybe you are afraid the Lord has overlooked you, but it's not so. He who counts the stars, and calls them all by name, is in no danger of forgetting His own children. He knows you and everything about you as thoroughly as if you were the only creature He ever made or the only saint He ever loved. Approach Him and be at peace.

## Prayer

*Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations? Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, Lord, and grant us Your salvation. Ps 85:5-7*

## Scripture readings

### **But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa.**

“Should such a man as I flee?” - If I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

The word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. Then I said, “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name.” But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not.

“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.

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

**Jonah 1:3** - Neh 6:11; 1 Cor 9:16-17 - Jer 20:8-9 - Est 4:14 - Ezek 3:14 - Ps 51:10-13

*Suggested additional reading: **Jonah 1:1 – 4:11***

## Meditation

### ***But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa .- Jonah 1:3***

Instead of going to Nineveh to preach the Word, as God had directed him, Jonah decided he didn't like this mission and went down to Joppa to escape from it. There are occasions when God's

servants shrink from duty. But what is the consequence? What did Jonah lose by his conduct? He lost the presence and comfortable enjoyment of God's love. When we serve our Lord Jesus as believers should do, our God is with us; and though we have the whole world against us, if we have God with us, what does it matter? But the moment we resist and follow our own ideas we are at sea without a pilot. Then we find ourselves bitterly repenting and crying out with groans "O my God, where have You gone? How could I have been so foolish as to reject Your guidance and the honour of serving You and so losing all the brightness of Your face? This is a price too high! I'll gladly take up my commitment to You afresh, if that means I can enjoy Your presence again."

In the next place, Jonah lost all peace of mind. Sin soon destroys a believer's comfort. It is like the poisonous upas tree, whose leaves distil deadly drops which destroy the life of joy and peace. Jonah lost everything on which he was used to drawing comfort and blessing. He couldn't plead the promise of divine protection, for he was not in God's ways. He couldn't say, "Lord, I have met with these difficulties in the course of my duty, please help me through them." He was reaping the harvest of his own actions and his course of life was completely the result of his own wilful decision. Christian, don't play the Jonah, unless you want to have all the waves and the billows rolling over your head. You will find in the long run that it is far harder to shun the work and will of God than to yield to it willingly. Jonah simply lost time, for in the service of God he couldn't get out of this mission to Nineveh! It is hard to contend with God for He will have His way in the end. Let us yield ourselves to Him joyfully and He will provide the grace and strength to do things we thought impossible.

## Prayer

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

*. Ps 51:10-13*

## Scripture readings

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

"How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." - "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."

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. .... For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

The tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, .... for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

**Lev 13:13** - Mark 2:16-17; Isa 1:18 - .Eph 2:4-5;8-9 - Luke 18:13-14 - Rom 8:1-2

*Suggested additional reading: Luke 18: 9-14*

## Meditation

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

Although this regulation appears strange yet there was wisdom in it, for in throwing the disease outward the body proved that its constitution was sound. Let's consider what we can learn from the principle established by this strange rule.

We, too, are like lepers, and may read the law of the leper as applicable to us. When a man sees himself to be altogether lost and ruined, his character defiled by sin with no part free from this pollution; when he disclaims any righteousness of his own, and confesses himself guilty before the Lord, then he is clean through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of God. It is hidden, unfelt, and unacknowledged sin that is the true leprosy. Once sin is recognised and felt then it has already received its deathblow and the Lord looks with mercy on this sinful man or woman. There is nothing more deadly than self-righteousness, or, by way of contrast, more hopeful than sorrow for our mistakes and failures. We need however to confess that we are sinful through and through, for no confession short of this will be the whole truth. But if the Holy Spirit is working in us, convincing us of sin, then there will be no difficulty in making such an acknowledgement. It will spring spontaneously from our lips.

What a comfort this text should be to the person who has begun to see himself in the light that God sees him. The very things that caused him to despair are now turned into signs of hope for a complete healing.

Stripping off the old paint comes before redecorating; digging out the foundation before building work commences, and a thorough sense of sin is one of the earliest indications of conversion. O you poor leprous sinner, utterly without any healthy skin and goodness before God, be encouraged from the text, and come as you are to Jesus.

*For let our debts be what they may, however great or small,  
As soon as we have nought to pay, our Lord forgives us all.  
'Tis perfect poverty alone that sets the soul at large:  
While we can call one mite our own, we have no full discharge.*

## Prayer

*Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness' sake, O Lord. Ps 25:6-7*

## Scripture readings

### **Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting**

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. - Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

**Micah 5:2** - Micah 5:2 - Ps 90:2; John 1:1;14 - Eph 1:3-4; 2 Tim 1:9 - 1 Peter 1:20-21 - Jer 31:3

*Suggested additional reading: **Prov 8***

## Meditation

***"Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."*** - Micah 5:2

The Lord Jesus had "*goings forth*" for His people as their representative in heaven, long before they appeared upon the stage of time. It was "*from everlasting*" that He signed the contract with His

Father, that He would pay blood for blood, suffering for suffering, agony for agony, and death for death, on the behalf of His people. It was “*from everlasting*” that He gave Himself up without a murmuring word; that from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot He might sweat great drops of blood; that He might be spat upon, pierced, mocked, forsaken, and crushed beneath the pains of death. His “*goings forth*” as our Surety were from everlasting.

Pause, my soul, and consider this! In the person of Jesus you too have “*goings forth from of old, from everlasting.*” Christ didn't start loving you when you were born into the world, but His “*delight was with the sons of men*” (Prov 8:31) before there were any sons of men! He thought about them constantly; from everlasting to everlasting He had set His affection on them. What! my soul, having been preparing your salvation for so long won't He most certainly accomplish it? Has He been “*going forth*” to save me from everlasting and will He lose me now? What! has He carried me in His hand, as His precious jewel, and will He now let me slip from between His fingers? Did he choose me before the mountains were brought forth, or the channels of the deep were dug, and will He reject me now? Impossible! I am sure He would not have loved me so long if He had been a fickle Lover. If He could grow weary of me, He would have been tired of me long before now. If He had not loved me with a love as deep as hell, and as strong as death, He would have turned from me long ago. Oh, joy above all joys, to know that I am His everlasting and inalienable inheritance, given to Him by His Father before ever the earth was! The realisation of everlasting love will be a comfortable pillow for me to rest on, both now and for all my days here below.

## Prayer

*Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. Ps 63:3-5*

## Scripture readings

**The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.**

My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: He will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.

Fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. - Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

Do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

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.

**1 Kings 17:16** - Ps 62:5-6; Isa 33:15-16 - Ps 34:9-10; Ps 37:3 - Luke 12:29-31 - Ps 33:20-21

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Kings 17 1-16*

## Meditation

***The bin of flour was not used up neither did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Elijah.***

***1 Kings 17:16***

See the faithfulness of divine love. Notice that this woman had daily needs. She had herself and her son to feed in a time of famine;

and now, in addition, the prophet Elijah had to be fed too. But although three people were feeding from it yet the supply of flour remained undiminished, there was a constant supply. Each day the woman took what was needed from the barrel of flour but yet each day it remained the same.

You, dear reader, also have daily necessities, and because they come so frequently maybe you fear that one day the purse will be empty; no flour in the barrel and no oil in the bottle! Rest assured that, according to the Word of the Lord, this won't happen. Each day, though it brings its trouble, it will also bring its help; and though you were to live longer than Methuselah, and though your needs were to be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore, yet will God's grace and mercy provide, one way or another, for all your necessities and you will never know a real lack.

For three long years, in this widow's days, the heavens never saw a cloud and the stars never wept a holy tear of dew upon the wicked earth. Famine, desolation and death made the land a howling wilderness, but this woman was never hungry, and was happy to have just enough. Child of God it will be the same for you. You will see the hope of the world perish for the unbeliever trusts in his own abilities and good fortunes. You will see the proud Pharisee's confidence totter for he builds his hope on the sand of his own righteousness. You may even see your own schemes blasted and withered, but you yourself will find your refuge in God Himself: *"He will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, and his water will be sure."* Is 33:16. Better have God for your guardian, than the Bank of England for your possession. You might spend all the wealth of the richest man of earth, but the infinite riches of God you can never exhaust.

## Prayer

*Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You*

*Ps 33:18-22*

# Holidays and more in the Black Forest



## **Haus Barnabas**

Wiesentalstr 47  
79694 Utzenfeld  
Germany

We provide a caring environment for physical and spiritual refreshment and are open for guests all the year round.

**Come and rest a while**

## **Easter in Haus Barnabas**

Enjoy the warmth and blessing of Christian fellowship and the ministry of the Word.

For full information: [www.haus-barnabas.com](http://www.haus-barnabas.com) or  
tel 01227 363857 for brochure

Further notes can be ordered through us in Haus Barnabas  
or through:

**Mrs Carol Lowther,**  
Trigfan, 7 Ty Canol, Harlech, Gwynedd LL46 2BZ, Wales  
Tel: 01766 780784  
Email: [carol\\_lowther@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carol_lowther@yahoo.co.uk)

Our ministry can be supported through:

**Bible in Action Trust.**  
Treasurer: David McCann:  
4 Westbrook Close, Park Gate  
Southampton, SO31 7AU  
Tel: 01489 57 1601  
Email: [clan.mccann@gmail.com](mailto:clan.mccann@gmail.com)

**Haus Barnabas im Engel**  
Wiesentalstr. 47, 79694 Utzenfeld, Germany  
Email: [len.holder@haus-barnabas.com](mailto:len.holder@haus-barnabas.com);  
Website: [www.haus-barnabas.com](http://www.haus-barnabas.com)  
Tel. 0049 7673 7760