

Malcolm's Monday Musings: 1 June 2020

(i) Scripture.

'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold (better 'flock'), and one shepherd.

'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father'.

John 10. 15-18 (*King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

Holy and just.

God is 'holy', and therefore cannot 'look on' sin favourably (Hab. 1. 12-13).

God is just, and therefore cannot 'overlook' sin finally (Acts 17. 30-31; Rom. 3. 25).

With God all things 'are possible'.

Therefore God is able:

(i) to fulfil His word (Luke 1. 37);

(ii) to respond to imperfect faith (Mark 9. 23-24);

(iii) to save the otherwise hopeless (Matt. 19. 26; Mark 10. 27; Luke 18. 27); and

(iv) to hear and answer prayer (Mark 14. 36).

God's permissive will.

'God permits what He hates to accomplish what He loves'.

(Steve Estes, quoted by Joni Eareckson Tada, *'Why Do God's Children Suffer?'*).

God can use great things or small.

A rope basket proved as effective for Paul's escape and safety on one occasion (Acts 9. 25; 2 Cor. 11. 33) as did several hundred armed troops on another (Acts 23. 23).

God can use 'the base things of the world'..

'The base ('the ignoble') things of the world ... God has chosen' (1 Cor. 1. 18a).

By way of example, consider some of the 'things' which He chose to use in the Book of Judges:

(i) an ox goad (Judg. 3. 31);

(ii) a tent-peg and hammer (Judg. 4. 21);

(iii) trumpets, empty earthenware vessels, and burning torches (Judg. 7. 20);

(iv) a piece of an upper millstone (Judg. 9. 53), and

(v) the fresh jawbone of an ass (Judg. 15. 15).

God can use even 'the things which are not'.

'... and the things which are despised God has chosen, and *the things which are not*, to bring to nothing the things that are' (1 Cor. 1. 28b,c).

God brought about:

(i) the defeat of one of Israel's enemies by causing them *to see that which was not there* (2 Kings 3. 22-23), and

(ii) the defeat of another of Israel's enemies by causing them *to hear that which was not there* (2 Kings 7. 6-7).

'Great joy'.

Luke both begins and ends his gospel with 'great joy' (Luke 2. 10; 24. 52). Our Lord, that is, brought 'great joy' both when He entered the world, and when He left it.

'Father'.

In his gospel, Luke reports our Lord's first and last recorded utterances as both including the words, 'My Father' (Luke 2. 49; 24. 49). On the first occasion, the Lord Jesus had 'tarried' Himself in Jerusalem (Luke 2. 43); on the other occasion, the Lord Jesus instructed His disciples to 'tarry' in Jerusalem (Luke 24. 49).

Interestingly, in His first recorded words after His birth, He spoke of His 'Father's house' (Luke 2. 49 RV); in His last recorded words before His death, He spoke of His 'Father's hands' (Luke 23. 46).

Prayers.

In his gospel, Luke records seven occasions when our Lord prayed (Luke 3. 21; 5. 16; 6. 12; 9. 18; 9. 28; 11. 1; 22. 41-44).

The two women who came to Jesus in Luke 7 and 8.

- (i) The first was 'a woman ... who was a sinner', who came to *give something* to Him (Luke 7. 37-38). The second was 'a woman who had a discharge of blood', who came to *obtain something* from Him (Luke 8. 43-44, 47).
- (ii) They both came 'behind Him' (Luke 7. 38; 8. 44).
- (iii) They both 'touched Him' (Luke 7. 39; 8. 44-47).
- (iv) In the case of the first, *Simon* didn't believe that Jesus could possibly have known what kind of woman she was (Luke 7. 39) – *but He did* (Luke 7. 47)! In the case of the second, *Peter* didn't believe that Jesus could possibly have detected the special touch she gave (Luke 8. 45) – *but He had* (Luke 8. 46)!
- (v) The Lord's last words to both women were exactly the same: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace' (Luke 7. 50; 8. 48 {literal translation}).

Colossians 1. 16-17.

The Lord Jesus is (i) the *power* of creation, (ii) the *preserver* of creation, and (iii) the *purpose* of creation.

Hebrews 3. 1.

Our *character* – 'holy'.
Our *calling* – 'heavenly'.
Our *consideration* – 'Jesus'.

Holy.

The Lord Jesus is specifically said to be 'holy':

- (i) in His birth (Luke 1. 35);
- (ii) in His life (Mark 1. 24);
- (iii) in His death (Acts 3. 14; 4. 27-28);
- (iv) in His resurrection (Acts 2. 27); and
- (v) in His priesthood (Heb. 7. 26).

1 Peter: 'called to'.

- (i) Called to holiness (1 Pet. 1. 15).
- (ii) Called to marvellous light (1 Pet. 2. 9).
- (iii) Called to suffering (1 Pet. 2. 21).
- (iv) Called to bless those who abuse us and thereby inherit a blessing ourselves (1 Pet. 3. 9).
- (v) Called to glory (1 Pet. 5. 10).

'No ...'.

For the Christian:

- (i) no *accusation* (Rom. 8. 33);
- (ii) no *condemnation* (Rom. 8. 34); and
- (iii) no *separation* (Rom. 8. 35, 38).

'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'

When Paul personified seven potential troubles which might threaten to separate the believer from Christ (Rom. 8. 35), he was writing out of his own experience.

We know this because in his second known letter to the Corinthians (written shortly before his letter to Rome), he specifically mentioned having already faced personally the first six of the seven trials; (i) 'tribulation' (2 Cor. 7. 4), (ii) 'distress' (2 Cor. 12. 10), (iii) 'persecution' (2 Cor. 12. 10), (iv) 'famine' ('hunger', 2 Cor. 11. 27), (v) 'nakedness' (2 Cor. 11. 27), and (vi) 'peril' (2 Cor. 11. 26).

He had not yet, of course, encountered item (vii) (the 'sword', the common symbol of capital punishment), but he would face that too in time. There is an early tradition that, some seven or so years after dictating Romans, Paul was beheaded in Rome. At that point he proved for himself that the 'sword' also was incapable of coming between him and the love of Christ.

Surpassing.

The New Testament epistles speak of surpassing 'glory' (2 Cor. 3. 10); 'gift' (2 Cor. 9. 15); 'words' (2 Cor. 12. 4); 'love' (Eph. 3. 19); 'peace' (Phil. 4. 7); and 'joy', 1 Pet. 1. 8.

Faith.

A *workless* faith is a *worthless* faith. (See James 2.14-18).

Singing.

'Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord' (Eph. 5. 19).

'Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep ... attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually'.

(John Wesley, '*Directions for Singing*', appended to 'Select Hymns', 1761.)

'Left, right.

Elijah thought (wrongly), '*I, even I only, am left*' (1 Kings 19. 10, 14; cf. Rom. 11. 3).
Alas, many since his day have thought (equally wrongly), '*I, even I only, am right!*'

Sin.

'Sin will take you farther than you ever expected to go; it will keep you longer than you ever intended to stay; and it will cost you more than you ever expected to pay'.

This great quote is attributed to numerous people! But, if you have any doubt about the truth of it, you have only to ask King David! (See 2 Sam. 11. 2-4 and onwards.)

Sins covered.

King Solomon made it clear that the man whose sins are *covered by himself* will not prosper (Prov. 28. 13). But Solomon's father, King David, made it clear that the man whose sins are *covered by God* is blessed indeed (Psa. 32. 1; cf. 85. 2).

(This last '*Food for thought*' is quoted from the closing section of the attached document.)

Detailed notes. [See the attached Word document, 'Taken, bound and led away'.](#)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Two hunters were way out in the woods when one of them suddenly collapsed. He didn't seem to be breathing, and his eyes were glazed.

The other hunter quickly whipped out his mobile phone and called the emergency services. 'My friend is dead!' he gasped out. 'Whatever should I do?'

'Now calm down', the medic replied, 'I can help. But, first, we need to be sure he *is* dead'.

There is a silence. Then the sound of a gunshot. Back on the phone, the hunter says, 'OK, *now what?*'

The story goes that the morning of their wedding anniversary, a woman woke her husband. 'Sam', she said, 'I just had a weird dream. I dreamt that you gave me a real pearl necklace for our anniversary. What do you think that means?'

Smiling, he said, 'Don't worry about it. You'll find out later'.

That evening, when Sam came home, he brought with him a small package. Smiling again, He handed the package to his wife. Excitedly, she tore off the wrapping paper ... to find a book entitled, '*The Meaning of Dreams*'.

Many years ago, an able-bodied seaman met up with a pirate in a tavern. They took it in turns to recount their adventures at sea.

Observing the pirate's peg-leg, hook, and eye patch, the seaman asked, 'Tell me, ow'd ye end up with that peg-leg?'

'Ya see ...', the pirate replied, 'We got caught in a monster of a storm off the cape and this giant o' a wave swept me right overboard. Just as the crew were pullin' me up, some sharks swam in and one of 'em bit me leg right off'.

'That's 'orrible!' said the old salt. 'But what about yer hook?'

'Ahh...', mused the pirate, 'We were boardin' a trader ship, pistols blastin' and cutlasses swingin' this way and that. In the fight me hand got chopped off'.

'Ouch!' the seaman exclaimed. 'And 'ow'd ye come by the eye patch?'

'Well, it was like this, matey', the pirate replied, 'a seagull droppin' fell in me eye'.

'Blow me down', the sailor gasped. 'Ye don't mean to tell me that ye lost your eye to a seagull dropping!'

'Yeah', said the pirate, '*it was me first day with the hook ...*'.

With seagulls and droppings in mind, see the attached 'Watch out for seagulls' and '... 8,7,6 ...' pictures.

