

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 29 June 2026

(i) Scripture.

Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.

He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the river on foot.

There we will rejoice in Him. He rules by His power forever. His eyes observe the nations ...

Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, who keeps our soul among the living, and does not allow our feet to be moved. For you, O God, have tested us; you have refined us as silver is refined ...

We went through fire and through water; but you brought us out to rich fulfilment ...

Come and hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul.

Psalm 66. 5-16 (*The New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

Psalm 66.

'Remember the beginning and concluding invitations: "Come and see the works of God" (verse 5) and "Come and hear, all you who fear God" (verse 16).

'It's great to see God's wonderful works in creation, history, and providence. But the psalmist also wants to testify what the Lord has done for him personally'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, 'God's Amazing Works', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 17 June 2026.)

'The Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins' (Gal. 1. 2-3).

'In Golgotha is the truest spectacle of sin, and how much God hates it and loves purity, that it may be seen in its proper colours. We make light of sin, but Christ found it not so light a matter to expiate it'.

(Thomas Manton, 'Sermons upon 1 John 3', pages 9-10.)

'We believe that Jesus died and rose again' (1 Thess. 4. 14).

'The late J. Vernon McGee received a letter from a lady who listened to his radio program ("Thru the Bible"). She wrote: "Our preacher said that on Easter Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed him back to health. What do you think?"

'McGee replied, "Dear Sister, beat your preacher with a leather whip. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for six hours. Run a spear through his heart. Embalm him. Put him in an airless tomb for three days. Then see what happens'".

('Jesus Christ—Resurrection' in 'Grace Quotes', accessed at <https://gracequotes.org/topic/jesus-christ-resurrection/>.)

'He who did not spare His own Son' (Rom. 8. 32).

God did not spare His own Son, because it was the only way He could spare us while remaining a just and holy God.

Psalm 56: trust in God banishes fear.

(i) 'When I am afraid, I put my trust in you' (Psa. 56. 3).

(ii) 'In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid' (Psa. 56. 11).

[An up-to-date anecdote:

'This week, Christianity Today's Jack Panyard published a piece based on interviews with Peter and Rebekah Stafford, who are medical missionaries based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Peter contracted Ebola this spring amid a devastating Ebola outbreak. Thankfully, he's recovered, and he's reunited with his family after time in quarantine. Both of the Staffords work as doctors at Nyankunde Hospital, an evangelical hospital with a staff of about 100 people. Health officials have tracked at least 1,048 cases of Ebola and 267 deaths from the disease in the DRC since early May. Jack notes this is the second-largest Ebola outbreak on record.

'Despite his Christian faith, Peter was afraid after he contracted the deadly illness: "I was scared, and I didn't handle it necessarily as well as I would have hoped", Peter said. "I had hoped that there was still some chance that it was something else, that it was the flu or maybe malaria. We had just learned with our kids these small little verses", he continued. "One was, 'When I am afraid, I put my trust in you' (Psa. 56. 3), and that was just continuously replaying in my mind'".

(Source: 'Christianity Today: Weekend Read: 26 June 2026; accessed at ...

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/newsletter/archive/the-weekend-06-27-26/>.)]

'Your will be done' (Matt. 26. 42).

'If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God'.

(E. Stanley Jones, 'A Song of Ascents', page 383.)

'Contrasts between the former creation and the future creation'.

Genesis

- (i) Heavens and earth created (Gen. 1. 1)
 - (ii) Sun created (Gen. 1. 16)
 - (iii) The night established (Gen. 1. 5)
 - (iv) The seas created (Gen. 1. 10)
 - (v) The curse announced (Gen. 3. 14-17)
 - (vi) Death enters history (Gen. 3. 19)
 - (vii) Man driven from the tree (Gen. 3. 24)
 - (viii) Sorrow and pain begin (Gen. 3. 17)
- 4).

Revelation

- New heavens and earth (Rev. 21. 1)
- No need of the sun (Rev. 21. 23)
- No night there (Rev. 21. 25; 22. 5)
- No more seas (Rev. 21. 1)
- No more curse (Rev. 22. 3)
- No more death (Rev. 21. 4)
- Man restored to paradise (Rev. 22. 14)
- No more mourning, crying or pain (Rev. 21. 4).

(Thomas Constable, 'Expository Notes on the Bible', comment on Rev. 21. 1 to 22. 5.)

'I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12. 3).

'This verse 'provides an infallible guide as to whether a person has the Spirit or not. That is, it furnishes a very simple rule to apply by which the saints can test who possesses the Spirit and who does not. The evidence of having the Holy Spirit did not lie in the possession and exercise of certain spiritual gifts, whether tongues, miracle-working or whatever. The evidence lay in the acknowledgement of Jesus' lordship. That is, the sure-fire test of having the Spirit is not whether people can speak in languages which they haven't learnt but what they say about Jesus in the language they have learned.

'Before his conversion, Paul had himself been a blasphemer (1 Tim. 1. 13), and may well have expressed himself in such strong language as, 'Jesus is accursed' (literally, 'anathema Jesus'), meaning, in all probability, 'Jesus is devoted to God for destruction as under His curse', as was, indeed, everyone hanged on a tree (Deut. 21. 23). Before his conversion, Paul had also done all in his power to force the early disciples to blaspheme (Acts 26. 11). But that was all in the past. Now, to Paul, Jesus was Lord. And, as he made clear in his letter to the Romans, the only yardstick that one becomes a Christian (and therefore possesses the Spirit) is the confession of Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10. 9).

'To those who looked for some special spiritual manifestation (e.g., speaking in tongues) as a guarantee of the Spirit's indwelling, Paul says, 'You are on the wrong track altogether'. If some in the Corinthian church believed that the gift of tongues was the tell-tale sign of possessing the Spirit (and it appears that some did) they were very wrong. The unmistakable evidence of having the Spirit consisted, not in tongue-speaking, but in (a) refusing to adopt the cry of 'Anathema Jesus'—which may well have resounded from the synagogue next door (next door, that is to the house of Titius Justus, where, quite possibly, the church still met, Acts 18. 7), and in (b) acknowledging publicly and with sincerity that Jesus was Lord.'

(Reproduced from page 150 of 'Studies in First Corinthians', Precious Seed Publications, 2016—reproduced with kind permission.)

'They do not cry to me from the heart' (Hosea 7. 14).

'When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without a heart'.

(John Bunyan, 'Of Prayer', in 'Mr John Bunyan's Dying Sayings', edited by George Ofor, accessed at ...
<https://www.biblebb.com/files/bunyan/sayings.htm>.)

'This is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men' (1 Pet. 2. 15).

'He loved the world that hated him: the tear
that dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere;
assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
his only answer was a blameless life'.

(William Cowper, 'Hope', accessed at <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8466379-Hope-by-William-Cowper>.)

Jesus' teaching about money.

'Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables of Jesus deal with money. One out of ten verses in the New Testament deals with that subject. Scripture offers about five hundred verses on prayer, fewer than five hundred on faith, and over two thousand on money.

'The believer's attitude toward money and possessions is determinative'.

Using means but not trusting in them.

'Asa was sick in his feet, far from the heart; yet, because he sought to the physicians, not to God, he escaped not (2 Chron. 16. 12).

'Hezekiah was sick to die; yet, because he trusted to God, not to physicians, he was restored (2 Kings 20. 1-7).

'Means, without God, cannot help: God, without means, can, and often does. I will use good means, but not rest in them'.

(Joseph Hall, 'Breathings of a Devout Soul', page 63.)

Seven references to the Lord's joy.

(i) 'The Lord will again rejoice over you for good' (Deut. 30. 9).

(ii) 'As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you' (Isa. 62. 5).

(iii) 'I will rejoice over Jerusalem and be glad in my people' (Isa. 65. 19).

(iv) 'I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul' (Jer. 32. 41).

(v) 'The Lord your God is in your midst ... He will rejoice over you with gladness ... He will exult over you with loud singing' (Zeph. 3. 17).

(vi) 'When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost"' (Luke 15. 6).

(vii) 'When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost"' (Luke 15. 9).

'Salvation' in Paul's letter to Titus.

'Whereas 1 Timothy focuses on God's desire to save all people, and 2 Timothy on God's power to save, in Titus the focus is on God's character, which guarantees His salvation.

'He is the God who never lies (Titus 1. 2). He promised His eternal salvation plan before time began (Titus 1. 2), His word is trustworthy and true, and He is true to His word (Titus 1. 1, 9, 14). Salvation rests on divine generosity, self-giving, and condescension in gifts of God's grace, peace, mercy, goodness, love, hope, and justification, and His generous giving of His Spirit (Titus 1. 2, 4, 11; 3. 4-7). The divine attributes of God's "grace" and "goodness and loving kindness" are personified in veiled references to the Christ-event (Titus 2. 11; 3. 4). Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior and will appear in glory, is the same one who self-sacrificially "gave Himself for us" to redeem and purify us (Titus 2. 13-14).

'God's saving interventions define the nature of the times. He promised salvation before time began (Titus 1. 2) and, at His chosen time, revealed His word through the proclamation that He entrusted to Paul (Titus 1. 3). God's grace and goodness and loving kindness "appeared" in history in the Christ-event, inaugurating "the present age" in which salvation is attained (Titus 2. 11; 3. 4-5)'.
(C. Smith, 'What Is Distinct About the Theology of Titus?'—accessed at <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-is-distinct-about-the-theology-of-titus/>.)

'Gardening' and 'shepherding'.

'Gardening is the first profession mentioned in scripture: 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it (that is, to tend and cultivate it) and to keep it (that is, to preserve it from running wild and anything harmful)' (Gen. 2. 15).

'Shepherding is the second profession mentioned in scripture: 'Abel was a keeper of sheep' (Gen. 4. 2).

Interestingly, when raised from the dead, the Lord Jesus was mistaken for a 'gardener' (John 20. 15) and took on the role of a shepherd ('after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee', Matt. 26. 32; compare His earlier words, 'the shepherd of the sheep ... calls his own sheep by name and ... he goes before them, and the sheep follow him', John 10. 2-4).

The testimony of the Bethlehem shepherds.

'Shepherds, who were not allowed to give evidence in court, were one of the first to receive the history-altering news that, "Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2. 11).

'A few verses later, Luke tells us that the shepherds took this information and, "they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (Luke 2. 17-18).

'Those who could not be trusted to give accurate testimony in court were now providing testimony that amazed listeners'.

'There will be no poor among you ... there will never cease to be poor in the land' (Deut. 15. 4, 11).

'One of the striking features of the many passages in Deuteronomy that describe what life should be like once the people enter the Promised Land is a tension between what is held out as the ideal and what will in fact prove the reality.

'The passage, that "There will be no poor among you", is grounded in two things: the sheer abundance of the land (a sign of covenantal blessing), and the civil laws God wants imposed so as to avoid any form of the wretched "poverty trap". The latter include the cancelling of debts every seven years — a shocking proposal to our ears (Deut. 15. 1-11). There is even a warning about harbouring the "wicked thought", once the seventh year was impending, of planning stinginess (Deut. 15. 8-10).

'The extent to which these idealistic statutes were ever enacted is disputed. There is very little evidence that they became widely observed public law in the Promised Land. Thus, the second passage, that "there will never cease to be poor in the land", is inevitable. It reflects the grim reality that no economic system can guarantee the abolition of poverty, because human beings operate it—human beings are greedy—human beings will keep tweaking and eventually perverting the system for personal advantage.

'This is not to suggest that all economic systems are equally good or equally bad: transparently, that is not so. Nor is it to suggest that legislators should not constantly work to correct a system and fill loopholes that encourage corruption. But it is to suggest that the Bible is painfully realistic about the impossibility of any utopia, economic or otherwise, in this fallen world ...

'The insistence that there will always be poor people (a point Jesus reiterates, Matt. 26. 11) is not a surreptitious fatalism, but an appeal for openhanded generosity'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 1, comment for 10 June.)

'They shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them' (Exod. 25. 8).

'There is no dwelling of God with man, except upon the ground of redemption: He only visited Adam; but He dwelt with Israel'.

(J. N. Darby, 'Food for the Flock', Volume 1, 1874, page 71.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Solomon's judgement in reverse gear!

Edward and Robert are on a train from the south coast of England to Edinburgh, each on his way to meet a prospective bride north of the border. Halfway there, Robert turns to Edward and says, 'I'm going to forget about this marriage thing. I no longer like the idea'. So, he gets off at the next station and makes his way back home.

Edward continues on and is met at the final destination by the mothers of the two prospective brides.

When the mothers realise what has happened, they instantly begin to fight over whose daughter should wed the desirable young man. 'He's mine', cries the one. 'Not on your life', shouts the other, 'He is going to marry my daughter!'

After bickering for a while, Edward and the two mothers decide to go the local church Minister and ask him to resolve the dispute. With his knowledge of the Bible, the wise Minister replies, 'There is only one solution to this problem. We'll have to divide the young man in two; then you can each take half home with you'.

The first mother is horror-struck at the very idea but the second mother beams and cries out vehemently, 'Aye! Cut him in half, I say'.

The Minister points to the second mother and declares, 'Edward is to marry her daughter ...

'Only someone with the heart of a true mother-in-law would ever speak like that'.