

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 22 February 2021

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

No, I have not 'lost the plot'! I stand by what I said last Monday, that the Word document which I attached then is long enough to keep you well occupied this week as well as last week.

But, as happened on one previous occasion, a combination of circumstances has led me (reluctantly) to call a halt on my Monday Musings for the coming few weeks. God willing, 'normal service will be resumed' one month from now – on Monday, 22 March.

And so, as there will be no further Word document popping into your email for several weeks, I thought that you might like to work through the attached document, which comprises the sequel to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus which has occupied us last week and this.

If, at any time during the interval, you should still feel 'starved', I can only suggest that you revisit one or more of the previous 41 issues. Thanks to the kind labours of a friend in the US, all of these are readily available at ... <https://voicesforchrist.org/writings/speaker/370>.

In the 'Musings' for 14 September 2020, I quoted the wise words of Fred Craddock:

'If a sermon isn't worth preaching twice, it probably wasn't worth preaching once'.

My own 'Revised Version' of that quotation runs:

'If a Monday Musing isn't worth reading twice, it probably wasn't worth reading once'.

I hope you each have a good month.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

Hebrews 11. 22-27 (King James Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

'By faith Joseph' (Heb. 11. 22).

'Thus lived and died Joseph, the son of Jacob, a man whose ... inflexible constancy in the hour of temptation and adversity, whose unaffected simplicity, incorruptible integrity, and fervent piety in his season of prosperity and power, have marked him out as one of the greatest examples for admiration and imitation which the Bible contains.

As a son, a brother, a servant, a father, or a ruler, he was equally faithful, generous, and affectionate. To the sagacity of the statesman he added the penetration of the prophet, the firmness of the believer, and the purity of the saint'.

(T. B. Johnstone, 'Analysis of the Book of Genesis', page 159.)

'Joseph went from the lowest place in Egypt to the highest office in the land in *less time than it takes to get the kids ready for school*'.

Steve Farrar, 'God built', page 186.

Moses; contrasts.

'He was the child of a slave, and the son of a queen. He was born in a hut, and lived in a palace. He inherited poverty, and enjoyed unlimited wealth. He was the leader of armies, and the keeper of flocks. He was the mightiest of warriors, and the meekest of men. He was educated in the court, and dwelt in the desert. He had the wisdom of Egypt, and the faith of a child ... He was backward in speech, and talked with God ... He died alone on Mount Moab, and appeared with Christ in Judea'. (I. M. Haldeman, 'Moses', How to study the Bible and Other Expositions (1904). page 533.)

'Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate ... for a memorial before the Lord continually' (Exod. 28. 29).

'This breast-plate, with the engraved precious stones, was inseparably connected with the ephod, which was the priestly garment; so that Aaron could not exercise his office as priest without bearing the names of the children of Israel "before the Lord continually"; thus Aaron could not go into the holy place without God's continually remembering Israel. The Lord Jesus, "our great High Priest", bears the name of every believer "before the Lord continually" ... *God cannot look at Christ without thinking of you and me*, because He bears our names continually before Him'.

(F. K., 'The Present Priesthood of Christ', The Christian's Friend (1877), pages 65-66.)

Lord, in all Thy power and glory,
Still Thy thoughts and eyes are here;
Watching o'er Thy ransomed people,
To Thy gracious heart so dear.

(J. G. Deck, 'Lamb of God, Thou now art seated'.)

The importance of doing that which 'is right'.

(i) *The Law*: 'You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord' (Deut. 6. 18; cf. Deut. 12. 25; 13. 18; 21. 9).

(ii) *The Gospels*: 'Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?' (Luke 12. 57).

(iii) *The Epistles*: 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right' (Eph. 6. 1).

'On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? Conscience asks the question, is it right? There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right'.

(Martin Luther King Jr., 'Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution' (31 March 1968), the Lord's Day sermon he preached just four days before his assassination on 4 April 1968.)

The Samaritan woman's waterpot.

'She left her waterpot, and went her way' (John 4. 28). The abandoned waterpot signified:

(i) her thoughtfulness—kindly, she left it behind for Jesus to quench His thirst and enjoy a drink with His food;

(ii) her intention—she could afford to be relaxed about leaving the pot because she purposed to return; 'Come' not 'go' was her message (John 4. 29);

(iii) her haste—unburdened, she would be able to get to Sychar and return the faster. She may have feared that, as Jews normally passed through Samaria only if they were in a hurry to travel between Judaea and Galilee, Jesus would soon pass on from the well; and

(iv) her priority—she had discovered the secret of a deeper satisfaction than could ever come out of either well or waterpot'.

('Come See a Man', Moments with the Master (Precious Seed), page 55.)

'One thing I know', John 9. 25.

I cannot vouch for the truth of it but I have read that a Sunday School teacher decided to have her class memorize Psalm 23. She gave the children a month to learn the chapter. One little boy was excited about the task, but he just couldn't do it. Although he practised and practised, he could hardly get past the first line.

The day came for the children to recite Psalm 23 before the congregation. The little boy was nervous. When his turn came, he stepped up to the microphone and proudly said, 'The Lord is my Shepherd ... and that's all I know!'

In one sense, that is all any of us need to know.

'You do not know what I do now, but you shall know hereafter' (John 13. 7).

'While Christianity never claims to be able to offer a full explanation of all God's reasons behind every instance of evil and suffering—it does have a final answer to it. That answer will be given at the end of history and all who hear it and see its fulfilment will find it completely satisfying, infinitely sufficient'.

(Tim. Keller, 'Walking with God through Pain and Suffering', page 229.)

'Our light affliction ... eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor. 4. 17).

'He that rides to be crowned, will not think much of a rainy day'.

(Attributed to John Trapp (1601-1699)).

On the subject of 'a rainy day', I have seen it said, 'You can't always change your circumstances, but you can change your attitude. You can't change the weather, *but you can take an umbrella*'.

See the attached 'The wind and the sails' picture.

'Discipline ... afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness' (Heb. 12. 11 NASB).

'When the winds of adversity have passed, we are seldom unchanged. It is only when one has passed through a crisis event that one can truly comprehend what it means to suffer. And often it is only in retrospect that we realize the purpose and value of our suffering ... *Only deeply ploughed earth can yield bountiful harvests*'.

(Billy Graham, 'Who's In Charge of a World That Suffers?' – quoted on the 'faithgateway' devotional for 24 January 2021.)

All things upheld by the Lord Jesus.

'Hebrews 1. 3 tells us that Christ is "upholding the universe by His word of power" The Greek word translated "upholding" is *pherō*, "carry, bear". This is commonly used in the New Testament for carrying something from one place to another, such as bringing a paralyzed man on a bed to Jesus (Luke 5. 18), bringing wine to the steward of the feast (John 2. 8), or bringing a cloak and books to Paul (2 Tim. 4. 13) ... In Hebrews 1. 3, the use of the present participle indicates that Jesus is "continually carrying along all things" in the universe by His word of power. Similarly, in Colossians 1. 17, Paul says of Christ that "in Him all things hold together" ... the verse affirms that Christ keeps all things existing ...

'Both verses indicate *that if Christ were to cease His ongoing activity of sustaining all things in the universe, then everything except the triune God would instantly cease to exist*'.

(Wayne Grudem, 'Bible Doctrine', Chapter 8, God's Providence: Preservation.)

'You, being dead in your sins ... hath He quickened' (Col. 2. 13).

'Some Christians believe this means that human beings are so dead to God that they are incapable of hearing His voice or believing in Him. First [they say], God, by His Spirit, must quicken, or make alive, a person so they can then believe. This is called "total inability". But is that what the word of God teaches? ...

'If you want to see a biblical example of a spiritually dead person, look at the prodigal. Did he understand his need and "come to himself"? Yes, he did. Did he come home to the father? Yes, he did. And what did the father say? "This my son was dead and is alive again" [Luke 15. 24; cf. v. 32].

'John 5. 24-25 could not be clearer: "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 judgment, but has passed from death into life". Notice the order: hear, believe and live'.

(J. B. Nicolson Jr., 'When The Dead Hear His Voice', Uplink Ministries: Taste and See, 28 January 2021.)

Prayer 'for all'.

(i) 'My house shall be called a house of prayer *for all peoples*' (Isa. 56. 7).

(ii) 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication *for all saints*' (Eph. 6. 18).

(iii) 'Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made *for all men*; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty' (1 Tim. 2. 1-2).

'To edification, and exhortation, and comfort' (1 Cor. 14. 3).

'The meanings of the words "exhortation" and "comfort" can be distinguished much as the words of a football coach who spurs on his team before and during a match can be distinguished from the words of a close friend who draws alongside to whisper soothing words when someone is feeling hurt.

In a general sense, therefore, prophecy could be said (i) to *build up*, (ii) to *stir up*, and (iii) to *cheer up*'. ('Studies in First Corinthians' (Precious Seed Publications 2016), page 201.)

See the attached '[The conversion of Saul of Tarsus - the sequel](#)' document. And also the attached 'Seven ducks in a dirty river' picture; see page 5 of the document.

(iii) Go on, smile.

The three hostages.

A band of kidnapers raided a synagogue in America and took three hostages: the rabbi, the cantor (the lead singer) and the synagogue president.

The ruling authorities dug their heels in; they wouldn't give into the kidnapers' demands ... no million dollars ... no getaway car ... and no guarantee of escape.

The kidnappers informed the three hostages of the situation, and broke it to them that, to teach the authorities a lesson, they were going to shoot all three of them.

Nevertheless, the leader said, to show that they weren't altogether without pity, they would grant the hostages one wish each.

'Please', pleaded the rabbi, 'for the last two months I've been preparing my Passover sermon. It would all be such a waste if I died without the opportunity to preach it. I won't cause you any trouble, if you let me preach my sermon before you shoot me. It'll take no more than an hour and a half, tops'. The kidnappers promised to grant the rabbi his last wish.

'Please', pleaded the cantor, 'after over 40 years of practising, I've finally got the recital of the Hinneni prayer just right – emotion, tone and everything. It would all be such a waste if I died without the opportunity to recite it in full. It's only about 45 minutes long. After that, I won't put up any resistance when you shoot me'.

The terrorists promised to grant the cantor his wish, too. They then turned to the synagogue president.

'Please', pleaded the president with deep feeling, '*Shoot me first!*'

The job-seeker.

David had spent all afternoon applying for a new job.

He began by filling out the forms and his CV. The human-resources manager then questioned him at length about his training and past work experience. David was then given a tour of the factory and was introduced to the people with whom he would be working.

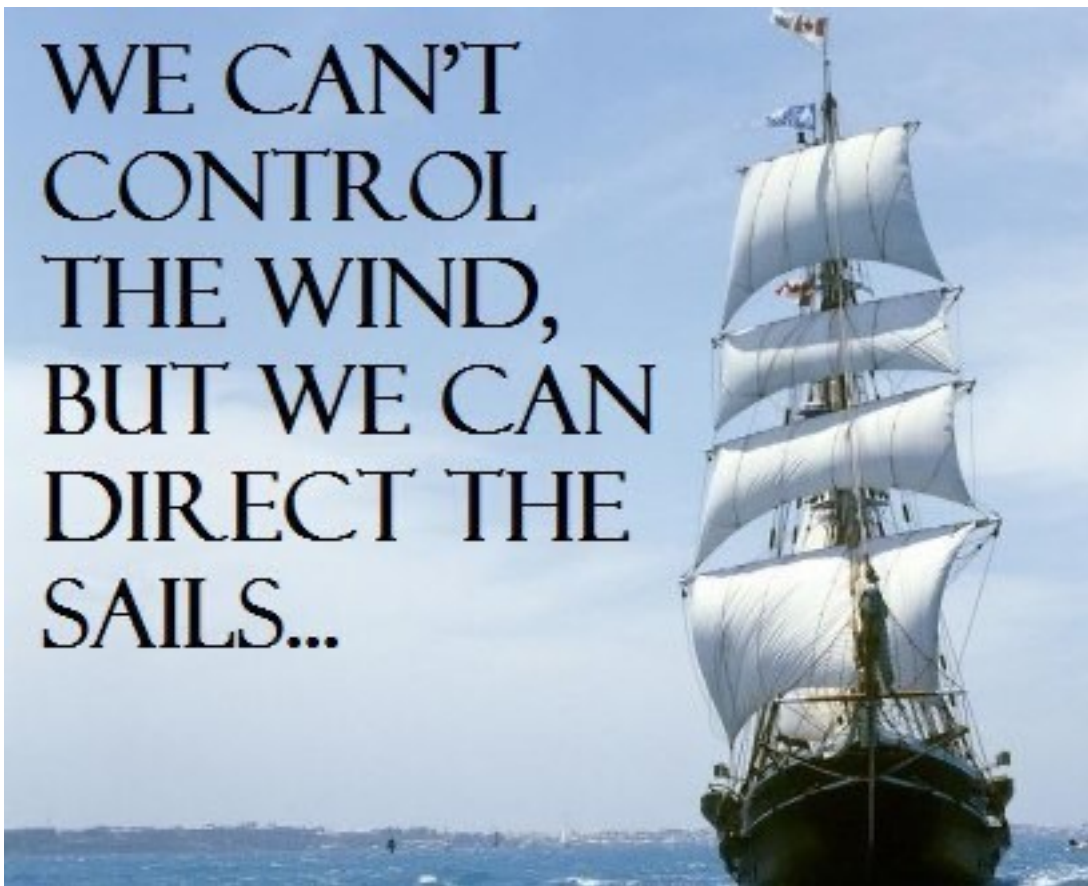
Finally, he was shown into the general manager's office. The manager rose from his chair, shook David's hand, and asked him to sit down.

'You certainly seem to be highly qualified', he said, 'and we would like you to work for us. We can offer you a good insurance plan and many other benefits. We will pay you five hundred pounds a week starting now, and then, in three months, we'll raise it to seven hundred pounds a week. How soon can you start?'

David thought it over for a few seconds, and replied, '*In three months*'.

See the attached 'Unemployed' picture.

WE CAN'T
CONTROL
THE WIND,
BUT WE CAN
DIRECT THE
SAILS...





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“It’s a pity you’re unemployed! You need a couple of weeks off work.”