

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 3 April 2023.

(i) Scripture.

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.

Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

And they said among themselves, 'Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?' But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you'.

Mark 16. 1-7 (*The New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'They led Jesus ... to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning' (John 18. 28 ESV).

'When he arose early Friday morning on April 3, 33 A.D., Pontius Pilate could hear no drum roll of destiny as he prepared to adjudicate the cases waiting at his tribunal. But his appointment with history was waiting for him in the person of a manacled prisoner being brought into the paved esplanade in front of Herod's palace by a huge throng'.

(Paul Maier, 'First Easter', page 64.)

The cross and the seriousness of sin.

'When you reflect upon Jesus Christ hanging on the cross of shame, you understand the depth and weight of human sin.

'How do we measure the size of a fire? By the number of firefighters and fire engines sent to fight against it.

'How do we measure the seriousness of a medical condition? By the amount of risk the doctors take in prescribing dangerous antibiotics or surgical procedures.

'How do we measure the gravity of sin and the incomparable vastness of God's love for us? By looking at the magnitude of what God has done for us in Jesus'.

(Fleming Rutledge, *The Undoing of Death*, pages 118-120.)

Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

The death of Christ demonstrates God's love (Rom. 5. 8) and the resurrection of Christ demonstrates God's power (Eph. 1. 19-20).

'Then were the disciples glad' (John 20. 20).

To the apostles, 'earth's saddest day and gladdest day were just three days apart'. (A quotation attributed to Sarah Chauncey Woolsey.)

'Disciples' and 'brethren'.

Following our Lord's resurrection, *an angel* spoke to the women, who came to His empty tomb, of 'His disciples' (Matt. 28. 7). But *the Lord Jesus Himself* spoke to the women, not of 'my disciples' but of 'my brethren' (Matt. 28. 10).

'Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst' (Exod. 25. 8).

'The Book of Exodus (makes it) clear that the God of Exod. 3. 5 and Exod. 19. 21 is also the God of Exod. 25. 8—that is, the God of the bush who will rescue His people from slavery and the God of the hill who declares to His people His Law is also the God of the tent who dwells in the midst of His people, with His tent among their tents.

'Indeed, the climax of the Book of Exodus is not at the sea (Exod. 14) nor on the mountain (Exod. 19) but in the tent (Exod. 25-40). The pinnacle of Exodus is Exod. 25. 8'.

(Dale Ralph Davis, *In the Presence of My Enemies: Psalms 25–37*, page 43.)

Christ: the First-born.

'If we think of creation, then He is the Firstborn of all Creation (Col. 1. 16). If we think of the dead, He is the First-born from among the dead (Col. 1. 18). If we think of salvation, we read, 'That He might be

the Firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8. 29). If we think of earth's kings, then we hear God say, "I will make Him, my First-born, higher than earth's kings" (Psa. 89. 27). As First-born, He is supreme'. (J. Charleton Steen, 'Christ Supreme', page 14.)

The Lord Jesus: hungry and thirsty.

In his gospel, Matthew records two instances when Jesus was hungry (Matt. 4. 2 and Matt. 21. 18). In his gospel, John records two instances when Jesus was thirsty (John 4. 6-7 and John 19. 28).

'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. 6. 23).

The 'wages' of sin is death. The word used is *opsōnia*, which literally means 'money to buy cooked meat' and which is the regular word for 'a soldier's pay'. That is to say, if we had got the pay we earned it would have been death.

The 'gift' of God is eternal life. The word is *charisma*. Now charisma also is a military word. When an emperor came to the throne, or when he was celebrating his birthday, he gave his troops a *donativum* or *charisma*, which was a free grant of money, a free gift. They had not earned it as they had their *opsōnia*; they got it unearned out of the goodness of the emperor's heart.

'So then, what we have earned, our *opsōnia*, would be death. All that we have is *charisma*, God's free gift'.

(William Barclay, 'New Testament Words', pages 63-64.)

'Be careful for nothing' (Phil. 4. 6).

'What has a man to be careful for, if Christ is caring for him?'

(J. N. Darby, 'Christian Experience', Collected Writings, Volume 16, page 301.)

'Others which have no hope' (1 Thess. 4. 13).

'The contrast between the gloomy despair of the heathen and the triumphant hope of the Christian mourner is nowhere more forcibly brought out than by their monumental inscriptions ...

'On the one hand there is the dreary wail of despair, the effect of which is only heightened by the pomp of outward splendour from which it issues.

'On the other the exulting psalm of hope, shining the more brightly in all ill-written, ill-spelt records amidst the darkness of subterranean caverns.

'This is a more striking illustration than any quotations from literature which could be produced'.

(J. B. Lightfoot, 'Notes on Epistles of St. Paul', page 63.)

The Judgment of the Believer.

'This is threefold:

'(a) As a Sinner—in the Past (Rom. 5. 8; 1 Pet. 2. 24; Gal. 2. 20; John 5. 24).

Sins have been judged at the cross, and the result was death for Christ and justification for the believer (2 Cor. 5. 21). For the believer judgment in the penal sense is past. His judgment as a sinner fell on his spotless Substitute, when He stood in the sinner's place, bearing his sins upon Calvary. ...

'(b) As a Son—in the Present (Heb. 12. 6-9; James 5. 11; 1 Cor. 11. 31, 32).

The believer no longer stands before God as a sinner awaiting judgment; he is now a child in the Father's family (1 John 3. 2). He is within the circle of the rule and discipline of the Father (Heb. 12. 6-9). If he sins, communion is broken with the Father, and he must confess and forsake his sin for it to be restored (1 John 1. 9). If, however, sin remains unconfessed, he is disciplined of God. All chastening has its purpose ... special discipline is the evidence of special love. It is part of a father's training, and one of the marks of sonship (Heb. 12. 5, 6).

'(c) As a Servant—in the Future (2 Cor. 5. 9, 10; Rom. 14. 10).

The Judgment Seat of Christ as to time takes place in the interval between the rapture and the appearing. ... The question of the believer's guilt as a sinner, and his evil state of nature as a child of Adam, have been settled at the cross; the question here is one of the believer's faithfulness and work (1 Cor. 3. 11-15). Rewards given here will differ according to the measure of faithfulness (Luke 19. 16-19). Some will suffer loss (1 Cor. 3. 15); "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Cor. 3. 8)'.
(Bernard Osborne, 'Treasury of Bible Doctrine', Precious Seed Publications, pages 425-426.)

Satan and the minds of men.

(i) 'Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked ('moved', 'incited', 'stirred up') David to number Israel' (1 Chron. 21. 1).

(ii) 'The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him' (John 13. 2; cf. Luke 22. 3).

(iii) 'Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ...?"' (Acts 5. 3).

(iv) 'I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ' (2 Cor. 11. 3).

(v) 'Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity ('place', 'room') to the devil' (Eph. 4. 26-27).

'We ... ought ... not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour' (Rom. 15. 1-2).

'Galatians 1. 10 gives the contrast between pleasing God and pleasing men; here the contrast is between pleasing one's self and pleasing others'.

(F. E. Stallan, '*Things Written Afore Time*', page 232.)

Do not cause the spiritual ruin of one 'for whom Christ died'.

(i) 'Do not destroy the one *for whom* ('on whose behalf', Greek) *Christ died*' (Rom. 14. 15).

(ii) 'By your knowledge the weak person is destroyed, the brother *for whom* ('because of whom', Greek) *Christ died*' (1 Cor. 8. 11).

'Paul strikes the stark contrast between, on the one hand, the selfish indifference of the strong towards the weak brother, and on the other, the ultimate self-sacrifice of Christ for him.

"Christ by His action, in dying for the man", Paul is saying, "sought only his greatest – his highest – good. Yet, in effect, by your action, you seek only his greatest – his utmost – harm! Christ (none less than Christ) died (nothing less than died) for that man".

(*'Studies in First Corinthians*', Precious Seed Publications, pages 24-25.)

'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God' (Eph. 5. 21).

'The words "submit to one another" should not be taken in a mutually reciprocal way, as if exhorting all Christians to submit to one another reciprocally. For:

(a) the verb "to submit" in Greek always refers to submission in some sort of ordered array, never to mutual deference;

(b) the idea is then picked up in the following "household table" of duties: wives submit to husbands, children to parents, and slaves to masters (Eph. 5. 22–6. 4);

(c) the same vision of submission is repeated in the New Testament (Col. 3. 18–19; Titus 2. 4–5; 1 Pet. 3. 1–6).

(D. A. Carson, '*For the Love of God*', Volume 2, meditation for 25 March.)

'Come' and 'coming' in Revelation 22.

'The final picture of the church recorded in Scripture shows her in *a posture of yearning*. Her best hopes and expectations find summary in one word: "Come"! 'The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come" And let the one who hears say, "Come"' (Rev. 22. 17); "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22. 20) ...

'Jesus tells us:

"Behold, I am coming soon". (Rev. 22. 7);

"Behold, I am coming soon". (Rev. 22. 12);

"Surely I am coming soon". (Rev. 22. 20).

'He exclaims that He is not just coming, but coming *quickly*. This little adverb *moves His return from inevitable to imminent, from someday to any day*'.

(Greg Morse, '*He Comes Quickly*'; accessed at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/he-comes-quickly>.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Lawyers.

1. A lawyer and a psychologist were making small talk at a party. 'You and your wife always seem to get along very well', said the lawyer. 'Do you ever have differences of opinion?'

'Oh, most definitely', said the psychologist 'Very often, in fact—but we get over them quickly'.

'How do you manage to do that?' asked the lawyer.

'It's simple', answered the psychologist, '*I never dare tell her about them*'.

2. A newspaper reporter asked a man on his ninety-fifth birthday, 'Tell me, sir, to what do you credit your long life?'

Like a flash, the old timer responded, 'To tell you the truth, I'm not sure yet. *My lawyer's still negotiating with two breakfast cereal companies*'.