

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 14 August 2023

(i) Scripture.

We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life ...

We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin ...

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

So, you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

Romans 6. 4-12 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

The significance of baptism.

'In that act of obedience there is, on the part of the disciple of the Lord Jesus, (i) the public severance of every moral tie that bound them to the world life, the sin life, and the self-life, and (ii) a solemn surrender of themselves to the absolute authority of their sovereign Lord and Master, henceforth to live for His pleasure and if needs be, to die for His cause'.

(William Trew, quoted in '*The Seriousness of Baptism*' by Michael Penfold; accessed at <https://www.webtruth.org/notable-quotes/the-seriousness-of-baptism-william-trew/>.)

'Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 6. 11).

'What defines us is not who we once were apart from Jesus, but who we are while being conformed to the image of the Son (Rom. 8. 29), and who we shall be revealed to be as the glorious children of God (Rom. 8. 19). We are no longer who we once were, nor will we ever be that person again.

'That old self is dead, crucified, buried, and raised into a new person. True, sin might nip at my heels, trying to draw me back to a life I left behind; but sin is no longer our true master, and sin is no longer the source of our true identity'.

(Michael Bird, '*Holiness: A Short Guide to a Complicated Doctrine*', Logos 'Word-by-Word'.)

'A Bible, some bread, a bottle and a bath'.

'The only two things that God has given us of a material character are the two ordinances of this age: baptism and the breaking of bread. Baptism speaks of our death in Christ and the breaking of bread speaks of Christ's death for us. The breaking of bread is the Lord's last command before He died and baptism is the Lord's last command before He ascended. These are the only two things of a material character which God has given to us.

'Someone has said, and that truly, that it is so easy to practise Christianity. All that you need is (i) a Bible, (ii) some bread, (iii) a bottle and (iv) a bath. That is: (i) a Bible, God's precious word; (ii) some bread to remember the Lord; (iii) a bottle of wine, which we pour into the cup on the Lord's Day, and (iv) a bath big enough to baptise people in. Of course, when I say a bath, it has to be a rather big bath, for both the baptiser and the baptised go down into the water (Acts 8. 38)'.

(Harry Bell, '*An Outline of Dispensational Truth*', a transcript of a message given at Llanfairfechan, Wales, in 1961.)

'Christ died for our sins' (1 Cor. 15. 3).

'On His path of life death lay. He could not take His part with the excellent of the earth, and bring them into the purposed, or indeed, any real and permanent blessing, without going through death, and death as the wages of sin, for they were sinners. If the corn of wheat did not fall into the ground and die, it abode alone (John 12. 24) ...

'For Him death was death. Man's utter weakness, Satan's extreme power, and God's just vengeance, and alone, without one sympathy, forsaken of those whom He had cherished, the rest His enemies, Messiah delivered to Gentiles and cast down, the judge washing his hands of condemning innocence, the priests interceding against the guiltless instead of for the guilty—all dark, without one ray of light even from God. Here perfect obedience was needed, and (blessed be God!) was found'.

(J. N. Darby, '*The Sufferings of Christ*', Collected Writings, Volume 7, page 169.)

'Be content with such things as you have' (Heb. 13. 5).

'Let your riches consist, not in the largeness of your possessions, but in the fewness of your wants'.

(D. L. Moody, 'Notes from my Bible', page 172.)

'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God' (Rev. 3. 12).

'Christ Himself is the builder of His spiritual temple ... As in the building of Solomon's temple, "there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house", because all was brought perfectly ready for the exact spot it was to occupy, so is it with the temple which Jesus builds; the making ready is all done on earth.

'When we reach heaven, there will be no sanctifying us there, no squaring us with affliction, no planing us with suffering. No ... Christ will do that beforehand; and when He has done it, we shall be ferried by a loving hand across the stream of death, and brought to the heavenly Jerusalem, to abide as eternal pillars in the temple of our Lord'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, 'Morning and Evening Daily Readings – Morning, June 22', page 348.)

The seven temples of scripture.

'In the history of revelation there are to be recognised seven consecutive forms of the temple idea.

1. The Tabernacle ...

2. The Temple of Solomon ...

3. The Temple of Zerubbabel ...

4. The Temple of the Body of Jesus ...

5. The Church, the Spiritual Temple. The Lord unfolds this truth in three circles. Through His Spirit, He dwells in the personality of the individual believer, whose body is now a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6. 19). Through the Spirit, He dwells in the local church of believers, which is thereby a place of His presence and "temple of God" (1 Cor. 3. 16). And, through the same Holy Spirit, He dwells in the universal church, so that the whole body of Christ is "holy temple in the Lord", in which all individual members are built together to become "a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 21-22, 1 Pet. 2. 4-5) ...

6. The Temple of Ezekiel 40-44 ...

7. The Heavenly Jerusalem as a Temple'.

(Erich Sauer, 'From Eternity to Eternity', pages 35-39.)

'Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord' (Exod. 15. 1).

'They expressed their joy in God, and thankfulness to him, by singing; it is almost natural to us thus to give vent to our joy and the exultations of our spirit.

'By this instance, it appears that the singing of psalms, as an act of religious worship, was used ... before the giving of the ceremonial law, and therefore was no part of it, nor abolished with it. Singing is as much the language of holy joy as praying is of holy desire'.

(Matthew Henry, 'Commentary on the Whole Bible: Volume I—Genesis to Deuteronomy', 1706, page 334. The latter part of this quotation is reproduced by John Wesley in his comments on Exod. 15. 1 in his 'Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament', 1765.)

Two fundamentally opposing attitudes.

(i) Do to others as they do to you, expressed in the words of Samson: 'As they did to me, so I have done to them' (Judg. 15. 11).

(ii) Do to others as you would like them to do to you, expressed in the words of the Lord Jesus: 'As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them' (Luke 6. 31).

'If you ... remember that your brother has anything against you' (Matt. 5. 23).

'The connection with verses 21-22 is very powerful. We are more likely to remember when we have something against others than when we have done something to offend others. And if we are truly concerned about our anger and hate, we shall be no less concerned when we engender them in others'.

(D. A. Carson, 'Matthew: Expositor's Bible Commentary', comments on Matt. 5. 23-24.)

'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me' (Phil. 4. 13).

'Are we looking to material things, people, or great circumstances to find peace or joy? Are we content with what God has already provided for us? ...

'As Paul nears the end of his letter to the church at Philippi, he wrote, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content ... In every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need" (Phil. 4. 11-12). He ended that thought with the famous verse proclaiming he "can do all things through" Christ, who strengthens him.

'What is most encouraging about this verse is its context: contentment. The secret to finding contentment regardless of circumstance, having plenty or being hungry, is Jesus Christ'.

(E. R. Massey, 'Cling to Contentment', accessed at <https://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/your-daily-prayer/a-prayer-to-cling-to-contentment.html>.)

An anecdote about the hymn, 'More holiness give me'.

Both the words and music of this hymn were composed by Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876). Mr Bliss died in a train wreck caused by a bridge collapse in Ashtabula, Ohio. He had succeeded in extricating himself from the wreck but went back into the flames in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue his wife.

Ira D. Sankey records that 'Mr Bliss called the hymn "My Prayer", but thousands in every Christian land have made it their prayer as well ... The hymn was a special favourite with Mr Moody, and was often quoted by him ...

'Mr. Bliss was at the time of his death a member of the First Congregational Church of Chicago. The pastor ..., in an address on the death of Mr and Mrs Bliss, referred to the singing of this hymn as follows:

"On one of the last occasions when he was with us, on a flying visit to our city, made during his work as an evangelist, he came in late one evening and sat at the rear of the church. Espying him, I called him forward to sing the hymn, 'My Prayer'.

"He struck the keys on the piano, stooped forward, and reading the words in the latter part of the first verse, 'More joy in His service', said, 'I do not think I can sing that as a prayer anymore; it seems to me that I have as much joy in serving the blessed Master as it is possible for me to bear'".

(Source of quotation: Ira D. Sankey, 'My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns', pages 331-32.)

You and I so well to consider *prayerfully* each line of the hymn:

*More holiness give me,
More strivings within;
More patience in suff'ring,
More sorrow for sin;
More faith in my Saviour,
More sense of His care.
More joy in His service,
More purpose in prayer.*

*More gratitude give me,
More trust in the Lord;
More zeal for His glory,
More hope in His word;
More tears for His sorrows,
More pain at His grief;
More meekness in trial,
More praise for relief.*

*More purity give me,
More strength to o'ercome;
More freedom from earth-stains,
More longings for home;
More fit for the kingdom,
More used would I be;
More blessèd and holy,
More, Saviour, like Thee.*

'Keep yourselves in the love of God' (Jude 21).

'Lay hold of the truth that God loves you, and don't let anybody steal it away from you.

Circumstances may assail you; Satan may accuse you; your Christian friends may even abandon you, but God loves you just as much as He did when He gave Jesus to die for you on the cross.

Your circumstances have changed, and your feelings have changed, but God's love has not changed'.

(Warren W. Wiersbe, 'The Bumps Are What You Climb On', page 37.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

The bank and the airline.

1. Debbie's preparations for a visit from her children included a trip to the local bank. While waiting in line at the cashier's window, Debbie commented to Angus, a middle-aged man standing behind her, 'My children are now in their twenties, and I'm still giving them money. When do you think this will end?'

'Frankly, I'm not sure I'm the one to ask', Angus replied, staring uncomfortably at the floor, '*I've come in here to deposit a cheque from my mother*'.

2. It was Saturday evening when Cedric telephoned the booking desk at British Airways.

When he finally got through, the booking clerk asked politely, 'How can I help you?'

'I was hoping to book economy seats on the flight to Singapore for this coming Tuesday', Cedric answered, 'and I was wondering if you still have any seats available'.

'Well, before I can answer that', the clerk responded, 'I will need to know how many people are going to fly with you'.

Shocked, Cedric retorted, '*How do you expect me to know ... it's your aeroplane, not mine!*'