

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 9 June 2025

### (i) Scripture.

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 1. 7 - 2. 2 (*English Standard Version*)

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### **'To depart and be with Christ' (Phil. 1. 23).**

'When John Preston, the Puritan, lay dying, they asked him if he feared death, now it was so close.

"No", whispered Preston; "I shall change my place, but I shall not change my company". As if to say: I shall leave my friends, but not my Friend, for He will never leave me'.

(J. I. Packer, 'The Apostle's Creed', page 53.)

#### **'We wait eagerly for ... the redemption of our bodies' (Rom. 8. 23).**

At His coming, our Lord shall redeem by power (Eph. 4. 30; cf. Rom. 8. 23) what He has acquired by blood (Acts 20. 28; Rev. 5. 9).

#### **'My little children, these things write I to you, that you may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 2. 1-2).**

'While insisting, against the false teachers, that it is wrong to say either that 'we have no sin' (1 John 1. 8) or that 'we have not sinned' (1 John 1. 10), John does not wish to give his readers the idea that sin may be regarded as a normal phenomenon in the Christian life. Far from it: the main purpose of his touching the subject at all is to put them on their guard against committing sin ...

'Instead of making false claims about sinlessness, a Christian should be grateful to know that, if he does commit sin, his case is not hopeless. In the presence of God, he has an Advocate, a powerful counsel for the defence. This Advocate does not need to resort to questionable devices to secure acquittal for His clients; He is a *righteous* Advocate ...

'This intercessory ministry is not a new activity on His part; we recall His promise to pray for Peter, that his faith might not fail (Luke 22. 32) and, in the upper room, His (so-called) high-priestly prayer ... embraces in its intercession both His immediate disciples (John 17. 9-19) and their converts (John 17. 20-26).

'But now this ministry is reinforced by His perfect sacrifice ... for He is there as the "propitiation" for His people's sins'.

(F. F. Bruce, 'The Epistles of John', pages 48-50.)

#### **'Jesus ... healed the child, and delivered him again to his father' (Luke 9. 42).**

'Of the son of the widow of Nain we are expressly told that the Lord, having recalled him to life, "delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7. 15; cf. 1 Kings 17. 23).

'The same Evangelist, and he only, records of this child whom Christ had healed, that He "delivered him again to his father", crowning so the work of grace'.

(R. C. Trench, 'Notes on the Miracles', page 397.)

#### **'I lay down my life, that I might take it again' (John 10. 17).**

The Lord Jesus 'always viewed His death in connexion with His resurrection and glorification. This is shown by His words as to (i) the destruction of the temple (John 2. 18-20), (ii) the sign of Jonah (Matt. 12. 39-40), (iii) the corner stone (Matt. 21. 42) and (iv) the corn of wheat (John 12. 23-24)'.

(Eric Sauer, 'The Triumph of the Crucified', page 26.)

**'Up on' and 'up into'.**

He who by men was lifted up on a cross (John 3. 14; 8. 28), by God was carried up into heaven (Luke 24. 51; 1 Tim. 3. 16).

**'This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven' (Acts 1. 11).**

'It matters how Jesus ascended. He ascended locally (a real geographic place), visibly (in front of many witnesses), and bodily (not some ethereal disappearance).

'The manner in which Jesus ascended will be the manner in which He descends'.

(K. DeYoung, *'Daily Doctrine: A One-Year Guide to Systematic Theology'*, Day 142: Ascension.)

**'The Word was made flesh' (John 1. 14).**

'He became flesh, possessing full and perfect manhood, body, soul and spirit. These three constitute the totality of all that is essential to manhood, and this is here the meaning of the word "flesh".

'Christ Himself speaks of His body and of His soul, and of His spirit. Of the emblematic significance of the loaf in the Lord's Supper He said, "This is my body". In the dark hour of Gethsemane He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful". And on the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit".

'He did not come into flesh, He became flesh, and what He became He is now and ever will be'.

(W. E. Vine, *'The First and the Last'*, page 19.)

**'Equal honours to the Son'.**

**(i) Scripture:**

(a) 'That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent Him. (John 5. 23).

(b) 'To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever', Rev. 5. 13.

**(ii) Hymn:**

Hark! ten thousand voices crying  
"Lamb of God!" with one accord;  
Thousand thousand saints replying,  
Wake at once the echoing chord.  
All the Father's counsels claiming  
Equal honours to the Son;  
All the Son's effulgence beaming,  
Makes the Father's glory known.

(J. N. Darby, *The Endless Song*, 1835.)

**(iii) Anecdote:**

In the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, Amphilochius (the Bishop of Iconium) entered the palace of the Roman Emperor, Theodosius I, and bowed to the Emperor but not to Arcadius, his young son.

Theodosius was indignant, and said the dishonour shown to his son was equally an insult to himself.

To this Amphilochius replied, 'How much more will the Lord abhor those who neglect His Son!'

(Main sources: <https://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints?contentid=303> and W. H. Van Doren, 'A Suggestive Commentary on St. John', 1872, page 458.)

**'Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again' (Luke 6. 35).**

'Never in one single instance did He claim either the person or the service of those whom He restored and delivered. He never made the deliverance He wrought a title to service.

'Jesus loved, and healed, and saved, looking for nothing again. He would not let Legion, the Gadarene, be with Him. The child at the foot of the mount, He delivered back to his father. The daughter of Jairus He left in the bosom of her family. The widow's son at Nain He restores to his mother. He claims none of them ...

'Does He not (perfect Master!) illustrate His own principle—"Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again"?

(J. G. Bellett, *'The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ'*, pages 34-35.)

**'Our light affliction ... for a moment' (2 Cor. 4. 17); 'after you have suffered a little while' (1 Pet. 5. 10).**

Faith assures us that every sentence which speaks of the affliction and suffering of the Christian ends with an ellipsis and **not** with a full stop.

### **Two ways of reading God's word.**

'There are two ways of reading and studying Scripture.

'One is like clipping down a motorway, traversing big chunks, getting the sweep of the story. The other is like milking a cow—you just sit there with one text and keep pulling and squeezing'.

(Dale Ralph Davis, his 'review' of D. Gibson's, *The Lord of Psalm 23*.)

### **'Eight Touches by Christ'.**

1. 'Touch of Cleansing—Matt. 8. 3.
2. 'Touch of Cooling—Matt. 8. 15.
3. 'Touch of Opening—Matt. 9. 29-30.
4. 'Touch of Assuring—Matt. 17. 7.
5. 'Touch of Loosing—Mark 7. 33.
6. 'Touch of Blessing—Mark 10. 13.
7. 'Touch of Quickening—Luke 7. 14.
8. 'Touch of Healing—Luke 22. 51'.

(F. E. Marsh, *One Thousand New Bible Readings*, page 140, number 301.)

### **Comments on 'forgiveness'—distinguishing things which differ.**

#### **1. 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins' (1 John 1. 9).**

Much more is involved in the word 'confess' than an acknowledgment of one's sinfulness in a vague and general kind of way.

It is not enough for me simply to say, 'I have sinned'—perhaps as:

- (i) Pharaoh (Exod. 9. 27; 10. 16) and Balaam (Num. 22. 34), from fear of the consequences,
- (ii) King Saul, with no real conviction or resolve to change (1 Sam. 15. 24; 26. 21) or
- (iii) Judas, out of despair (Matt 27. 4).

But, rather, following in the spiritual footsteps of those who were baptized by John the Baptist (Matt. 3. 5-6), I must drag my own personal and specific sins *by name* into the light of God's presence and confront them there.

Knowing the God we do, most certainly we would not have expected John to have said that God would 'forgive us our sins' because He is *indulgent and easy-going*. But I suspect we may have half-expected John to have said something along the lines, 'If we confess our sins, He is *merciful and gracious* to forgive us our sins'.

Instead of which, the apostle traces our forgiveness to God's *faithfulness* and *righteousness*. He credits our forgiveness, in part, to God's *faithfulness*, because, in forgiving the penitent believer, God is faithful to His promises and true to His word.

For has not God on many occasions promised forgiveness to His people? And we have gladly appropriated to ourselves such precious declarations of the prophets as:

- (i) 'you have cast all my sins behind your back' (Isa. 38. 17),
- (ii) 'You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7. 19) and
- (iii) 'I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more' (Jer. 31. 34).

Yet our forgiveness is reckoned not only to God's faithfulness but also to His '*righteousness*'. Nor, on reflection, is this difficult to understand. Indeed, in a context which attributes our cleansing to 'the blood of Jesus His Son' (1 John 1. 7) and which speaks of the same Lord Jesus as 'the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 2. 2), it is well-nigh impossible to miss the point that (and I say it reverently), because the Saviour has paid the penalty for all our sins in full, God cannot but forgive us. His very righteousness demands it.

The hymn writer asserted, correctly:

*If thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my room endured  
The whole of wrath divine,  
Payment God cannot twice demand—  
First, at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then, again at mine.*

(Augustus Toplady, the hymn, '*From whence this fear and unbelief*'— as originally written.)

For our Lord Jesus has fully met all God's demands on us! It would therefore be gross injustice for God to refuse to forgive the penitent believer—whether that believer is Abraham (who lived two thousand years before the Cross) or is one of us (who live two thousand years after the Cross).

The apostle Paul spelt it out plainly, assuring us that we are 'justified freely by His (God's) grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation in His blood, to be received by faith, to show His righteousness in respect of His forbearance, when God passed over the sins that had been committed previously (such as those by Abraham)—to show His righteousness at the present time, that He should be just ('righteous') and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus' (Rom. 3. 24-26).

Upon the ground of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus, the 'righteousness' of God is the guarantee to the believer of his or her forgiveness and cleansing.

Thank God that, although we are not righteous (Rom. 3. 10), **He is!**

And so, because of that which was accomplished at Golgotha, the righteous One cleanses the unrighteous ones from all their unrighteousness.

And we each need continual, on-going forgiveness if we are to live in the conscious enjoyment of fellowship 'with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ' (1 John 1. 3).

Viewing God as Judge, you and I were forgiven all our sins at the moment of our conversion (whether those sins were then past, present or future) and we need never fear that any of those sins will ever be remembered against us.

Well may we sing the words of Samuel Gandy:

*I hear the accuser roar  
Of ills that I have done;  
I know them well, and thousands more;  
Jehovah findeth none.*

But here John has in view, *not God as 'Judge' but as 'Father'*, and what we might call our family and continual forgiveness, necessary to maintain our enjoyment of unbroken fellowship with Him.

And the full and frank confession of our sins, John insists, secures for us purification ('cleansing') as well as pardon—a stain removed as well as a debt remitted (the word translated 'forgive' being used elsewhere for the remission and cancellation of debts, Matt. 6. 12; 18. 27, 32).

(Source: personal notes on 1 John 1. 8-10.)

(The full notes—in message form—can be accessed at <https://voicesforchrist.org/notes/179>.

The audio recording is at <https://voicesforchrist.org/notes/audio/370/note/179>.)

## **2. 'If he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him' (James 5. 15).**

'All forgiveness is founded on the blessed work of the Lord Jesus. But it is important to distinguish between (i) the pardon which clears us once and forever from all our sins before God ... and (ii) the pardon which we may receive on the way as under God's government ...

'Mortal sin is a sin that brings the death of the body as a chastisement, and is such that Christians cannot pray that the life of their brother may be spared. whereas in other cases they could, and their prayers were heard, and the man's life was spared who had sinned: he was pardoned in this sense (1 John 5. 16). So, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5. 15). The man recovered from his sickness, being pardoned as a present thing, as to God's government in dealing with him in this world.

'We must not confound (a) this pardon which refers to God's dealing with us here and the chastisements His love may inflict upon us or deliver us from if we humble ourselves, and (b) the eternal pardon of our souls which belongs to us through the redemption that the blood of Christ has wrought for us, the value of which nothing can alter or take away'.

(J. N. Darby, '*Present and Eternal and Governmental Forgiveness of Sins*', Collected Writings, Volume 31, pages 357, 363-364.)

### **(iii) Go on, smile.**

**1.** As Joey hands his father his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday card, his father looks at him with tears in his eyes and says,

'Thank you, son, I really appreciate the thought, but, honestly, *one would have been enough*'.

**2.** At the local Primary School, the Headmaster brought in a community fireman to talk to the young pupils about safety.

The fireman brought some visual aids with him, including a smoke detector.

He pressed the button to demonstrate how the detector worked and asked the children if anyone knew what it meant when the alarm sounded from the smoke detector.

Little Oliver Wilkins immediately raised his hand and said, '*It means my father's cooking dinner*'.