

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 15 December 2025.

Greetings,

I set out below this week's 'Musings'.

It is not accidental that, towards the close, I have included a 'Musing' on 'the word of the Lord' which came to the prophet Ezekiel, 'I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you'. I say, 'not accidental', because today is the anniversary of a very special date in the diary of John Newton, whose well-known life journey took him from the decks of slave ships to the church pulpit in Olney, Buckinghamshire, England.

Here is a brief account:

'By his own admission, John Newton's admiration of his wife [Mary, known affectionately as 'Polly'] approached levels of idolatry. He was passionately in love with her, an emotion that did not dim with the passing of the years. Consequently, as it became apparent that his wife's days were coming to a close, Newton's friends were concerned over what effect her death would have on him ...

'Mr Newton related his last communication with his wife on Sunday, December 12, 1790: "When I was preparing for church in the morning, she sent for me, and we took a final farewell as to this world. She ... gave me her hand, which I held, while I prayed by her bedside. We exchanged a few tears; but I was almost as unable to speak as she was".

'That same evening Mrs Newton lost her faculties of speech, sight, and hearing. One of Newton's chief concerns as his wife's health failed was his own ability to model the truths he had spent so many years preaching. He had long emphasised the gospel's message of comfort to those who are afflicted ...

'It was only three days from the time that his wife lost her ability to communicate that she drew her last breath. Mr Newton sat faithfully by her side, holding a candle by which he watched his beloved's life expire on 15 December 1790. He immediately knelt and thanked the Lord for her peaceful deliverance ...

'Five years later, on the anniversary of her death, Newton reflected on his marriage and the passing of his wife in a poem:

*I hope to join her soon again
On yonder happy shore,
Where neither sorrow, sin, nor pain,
Shall ever reach us more'.*

(Source: E. M. Rusten and S. O. Rusten, 'The One Year Christian History', pages 700-701).

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you".

And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.

"And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.

"Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word.

"Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days".

1 Kings 3. 5-13 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'To us a child is born, to us a son is given ... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9. 6).

Ponder:

1. 'That the same person should be "mighty God" and a "child born" is neither conceivable nor possible, nor can that be true, but by the union of the divine and human natures in the same person ...

'He said of Himself, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8. 58). That He, the same person who then spoke unto the Jews, and as a man was little more than thirty years of age (Luke 3. 23), should also be before Abraham, undeniably confirms the union of another nature in the same person with that wherein He spoke those words'.

(John Owen, *'The Person of Christ'*, page 226.)

2. 'Jesus is the only one born with no earthly Father but an earthly mother. He had no heavenly mother but a heavenly Father. He was older than His mother and as old as His Father'.

(Attributed to R. G. Lee (1886-1978) of Memphis; for example, by D. Akin, *'Joy to the World'*, 2006, page 5.)

The grace of God.

'When (God) speaks of all the thought and purposes of God, He speaks of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1. 6); when He speaks of my sins, it is the riches of His grace (Eph. 1. 7; cf. Eph. 2. 7)'.

(J. N. Darby, *'The Superiority of Christ over Circumstances'*, Collected Writings, Volume 27, page 247.)

'It is better to trust in the Lord' (Psa. 118. 8).

'Can you trust Him for your soul's redemption, and yet not rely upon Him for a few lesser mercies? Is God not enough for your need, or is His all-sufficiency too narrow for your wants? ...

'Is His heart faint? Is His arm weary? If so, seek another God; but if He is infinite, omnipotent, faithful, true, and all-wise, why do you run around seeking another confidence? ...

'Christian, do not tarnish the gold of faith with the dross of human confidence. Wait only upon God, and let your expectation be from Him. Do not covet Jonah's gourd but rest in Jonah's God. Let the

sandy, shaky foundations be the choice of fools; but you, like one who sees the approaching storm, build for yourself an abiding place upon the Rock of Ages'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, 'Morning and Evening', meditation for the Evening of 7 March.)

The heart of man (Eccles. 9. 3; Jer. 17. 9; Mark 7. 21-22).

'We can scarce open our eyes but we are in danger: (i) of envying those above us, or despising those below us—(ii) of coveting the honours and riches of some, or beholding the rags and beggary of others with pride and unmercifulness.

'If we see beauty, it is a bait to lust; if deformity, to loathing and disdain. How soon do slanderous reports, vain jests, wanton speeches, creep into the heart!'

(Richard Baxter, 'The Saints' Everlasting Rest', page 60.)

'There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8. 1).

'We can rest in the liberating and game-changing truth of Romans 8. 1, which reminds us that as followers of Christ, we are not defined by our past mistakes, our shortcomings, or the labels the world may place upon us.

'Instead, God sees us through the lens of Jesus' sacrifice—forgiven, redeemed, and deeply loved. We are invited to view our identity through a different perspective—one that is rooted in the unconditional love and acceptance of Jesus Christ'.

(D. Tebow, 'Knowing Who You Are Because of Who God Is', Week 6.)

'Condemnation' in Romans 8. 1-3.

'The apostle's statement that "there is now no condemnation (*κατάκριμα*) for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8. 1) takes us back to Rom. 5. 12–21, where Paul showed how those who belong to Christ escape the "condemnation" (*κατάκριμα*) that came to all people through Adam's sin. (The word *κατάκριμα* occurs only in Rom. 5. 16, 18 and Rom. 8. 1 in the whole New Testament).

'Paul continues to use the forensic imagery that is so important to his conception of the gospel. Because we are justified by faith in conjunction with our union with Christ, we escape the sentence of spiritual death that our sins have justly earned. Transferred into the new regime of life, we no longer fear that our sins will ever condemn us ...

'The law was weakened "by the flesh"; yet God also "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). He won the victory over sin in the very realm where sin seemed to rule unchallenged—in the "flesh".

'In claiming that Christ came "in the likeness of flesh" to offer Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, Paul carefully balances Jesus' full humanity with His sinlessness. Christ did indeed become fully human by taking on "flesh". But calling that flesh "sinful" might suggest that Christ took on fallen human nature. If so, He would not have been qualified to be our sinless Redeemer. So, Paul clarifies by adding the important word "likeness".

'In other words, Christ did not, like every other person since Adam, succumb to the tyranny of flesh. He did not Himself sin, nor did He inherit the penalty of sin, namely, death. ... By "condemning" sin in Christ as our sacrifice, God can now justly avoid "condemning" us who are in Christ'.

(D. J. Moo, 'Romans: NIV Application Commentary', comments on Rom. 8. 1-3.)

Deliverance from sin's power.

'When Israel went up to fight against Jericho, they realised their own weakness and placed their entire dependence upon God; but when they sought to overthrow Ai, it was not as a dependent people, but as those who thought they could achieve the victory in their own strength (Joshua 6-7) ...

'We need to be again and again reminded that we are as wholly unable to save ourselves from the power of sin as we are from the guilt of sin. A crucified Christ on the tree saves from one's guilt; a living Christ on the throne saves from sin's power (Rom. 5. 10)'.

(Anonymous, 'Ai', The Golden Lamp' magazine, page 115.)

Our Lord's unique life on earth.

(i) The commencement of our Lord's life on earth was unique.

(ii) The course of our Lord's life on earth was unique.

(iii) The consummation of our Lord's life on earth was unique.

An early morning prayer.

'From the discords of yesterday, resurrect my peace.
From the discouragements of yesterday, resurrect my hope.
From the weariness of yesterday, resurrect my strength.
From the doubts of yesterday, resurrect my faith.
From the wounds of yesterday, resurrect my love.

Let me enter this new day, aware of my need,
and awake to your grace, O Lord'.

(D. McKelvey, 'Morning Coffee', Every Moment Holy, Volume 1, page 135.)

'I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you with a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down' (Ezek. 24. 16).

'A tiny hint of how Ezekiel viewed his wife peeps through the expression that God uses: "the delight of your eyes" (Ezek. 24. 16).

'If Ezekiel was thirty years of age in the fifth year of the exile (Ezek. 1. 1–2), then now, in the ninth year (Ezek. 24. 1), he could not have been more than thirty-four or thirty-five, and probably his wife was no older ...

'Here he is told in advance that the blow will come (to know in advance is both a blessing and an agony!), but he is also commissioned not to grieve. His silence on such an occasion, in a society known for its uninhibited expressions of grief, becomes another symbolic prophetic action ...

'Ezekiel conveys to the people the significance of his silence (Ezek. 24. 20–24). The delight of their eyes, their heart's desire, that on which they still pin their hopes, is the city of Jerusalem. From there, they have thought, God will break out and rescue them.

'But Jerusalem will be taken away, just as Ezekiel's wife has been taken away. And when this happens, they are not to weep any more than Ezekiel has mourned the death of his wife ... It may be that the people are here commanded not to grieve for the fall of the city, since the judgment is so richly deserved'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 2, comment for 21 September.)

'Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Eph. 3. 20).

'When first reunited with Joseph, Jacob had earlier exclaimed, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face", Gen. 46. 30; cf. Gen. 45. 28: But God had reserved an even greater blessing for him and now Israel could testify that God had exceeded his highest expectations, "I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed", Gen. 48. 11.

'Let us link this verse with 1 Kings 3. 5–13. Solomon prayed for "an understanding heart" to enable him to govern God's people (1 Kings 3. 9). The Lord was pleased with his unselfish prayer and granted him also that which he had "not asked, both riches and honour" (1 Kings 3. 13).

'Truly, then, our God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask (Solomon) or think (Jacob)", Eph. 3. 20.

('Day by Day Through the Old Testament', Precious Seed Publications, 1982, page 41—emphases added and reproduced with kind permission.)

'I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food' (Job 23. 12).

'We live in the most distracted society that has ever existed. Every hour, we are bombarded with potential distractions. If we treated our Bibles the way most of us treat our phones, we would be saturated with biblical wisdom ... Men of God are men of the word, fruit-bearing trees with roots sunk deep in Scripture (Psa. 1. 3)'.
(E. Thoennes, 'No One Drifts into Godliness', accessed at [https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/no-one-drifts-into-godliness.](https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/no-one-drifts-into-godliness))

'A Threefold End.

(i) The end of the law (Rom. 10. 4).

(ii) The end of the ages (Heb. 9. 26).

(iii) The end of the unbeliever (1 Pet. 4. 17)'.
(J. Forbes, quoted by Henry Pickering, 'One Thousand Subjects for Speakers and Students', page 69).

The Bible in brief.

'In broadest terms, the Bible can be summarized in four words: (i) creation, (ii) fall, (iii) redemption, (iv) restoration'.

(J. M. Hamilton Jr, 'God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology', page 57.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Mrs Wilkins was rather surprised to see her son, Oliver, enter the house in the middle of the afternoon.

'Why are you home from school so early today?' she asked.

'The truth is, Mum', Oliver replied, 'I have been sent home because I was the only one who could answer a question'.

'Indeed', Mrs Wilkins bristled, 'Don't let that upset you, Oliver. Your father and I will go up to the school tomorrow and give them what for. What was the question?'

Looking at the floor, Oliver murmured ...

'Who threw that tomato at the head master?'