

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 16 March 2026

### (i) Scripture.

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must needs put on incorruptibility, and this mortal put on immortality.

But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word written: Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is thy sting? where, O death, thy victory?

Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin the law; but thanks to God, who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15. 51-57 (J. N. Darby's 'New Translation')

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### ***'They ... crucified the Lord of glory' (1 Cor. 2. 8).***

'Being crucified at that time was considered a shameful and humiliating death. Thus, the use of the term "the Lord of glory" (cf. James 2. 1) to describe a person who had just undergone so shameful a death is jarring at the very least'.

(V. Lossky, 'The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church', quoted by A. C. Nicolaidis and K. Willimus in 'The Crucifixion of Christ in its milieu and its spiritual significance today', page 7.)

#### ***Our Lord's seven sayings from the cross.***

The first, middle and last of our Lord's seven sayings from the cross are prayers. The first and last sayings are addressed to the Father (Luke 23. 34, 46) and the middle saying is addressed to God (Matt. 27. 46; Mark 15. 34).

Of the seven sayings, no less than three focus on the needs of others; (i) of those immediately responsible for His crucifixion (Luke 23. 34), (ii) of His mother (John 19. 26-27) and (iii) of the repentant malefactor (Luke 23. 43).

#### ***'Save Thyself'***

'During His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus was exposed to a barrage of oral abuse and scorn. The voices all around rang with blasphemy and spite. The people who passed by, the chief priests, elders and scribes, the soldiers and one of the malefactors united in hurling their insults at Him.

(i) 'The passers-by 'reviled (lit. "blasphemed") Him' (Matt. 27. 39). With a gesture of derision and contempt, they ridiculed His misreported claim to rebuild the temple in three days and issued Him with the challenge, 'Save thyself' (Matt. 27. 40). In their taunt, 'If thou be the Son of God ...', Jesus doubtless heard an echo of the words of Satan spoken during His wilderness temptations (Matt. 4. 3, 6).

(ii) 'The rulers added their sneers; they 'derided (lit. "scoffed at") Him' (Luke 23. 35). Unwilling to address Him directly, they said of Him, with malicious sarcasm, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself'. They poured scorn on any suggestion that this inglorious sufferer could be Israel's Messiah and God's elect (cf. Isa. 42. 1).

(iii) 'The soldiers 'mocked Him' (Luke 23. 36). They tantalized Him by holding up sour wine towards His burning lips and then withdrawing it again. Above His head was fixed the title, 'This is the king of the Jews', and, in their eyes, a King whose only throne was a cross and whose only crown was thorns provided a fit object for their sport and jest. Possibly pointing to the title itself, they added their voices to those of the people and the rulers, 'If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself'.

(iv) 'Finally, the malefactor 'railed on Him', (Luke 23. 39). Recognising no messiahship but that of the sword, he called to Jesus, 'If thou be Christ, save thyself and us'.

'From every quarter and direction, therefore, came this common and united challenge: 'save thyself'.

'But this He would not do! It was indeed true: He had saved others (Matt. 8. 25; 14. 30), but He would not save Himself. In contrast, as the apostle Paul often expressed it, He 'gave Himself' (e.g. Gal. 2.20; Eph. 5. 2, 25).

'Many defied Him to 'come down from the cross' (Matt. 27. 40, 42). Make no mistake, it took a far greater power (namely, that of His love; see Gal. 2. 20 etc.) to keep Him on the cross than it would ever have taken to bring Him down from off it'.

(‘Day by Day: Moments with the Master’, Precious Seed Publications, page 362—reproduced with kind permission.)

**‘Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?’ (Luke 24. 26).**

The cross—the evidence of His seeming defeat—was actually the centrepiece of the whole story. It wasn’t the end; it was the hinge. It was the necessary path to glory.

***The conqueror of death.***

‘The Crucifixion is itself a victory, but on Great Friday the victory is hidden, whereas on Easter morning it is made manifest ...

‘Because Christ is risen, we need no longer be afraid of any dark or evil force in the universe ...

‘Just as it is not adequate to treat Christ merely as a prophet or a teacher of righteousness and not as God Incarnate, so it is not sufficient to explain away the resurrection by saying that Christ’s “spirit” somehow lived on among His disciples. One who ... has not conquered death by dying and rising from the dead, cannot be our salvation and our hope.’

(K. Ware, ‘The Orthodox Way’, page 111.)

***‘When this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility ... then shall come to pass the word written: Death has been swallowed up in victory [“Death has lost the battle”—Contemporary English Version] (1 Cor. 15. 54).***

‘He has changed sunset into sunrise ... and, having snatched man out of the jaws of destruction, He has raised him to the skies, transplanting corruption to the soil of incorruption, and transforming earth into heaven.’

(Clement of Alexandria (AD 150 to circa AD 215), ‘The Exhortation to the Greeks’, Chapter XI.)

***Union with Christ.***

‘The believer is united to Christ in resurrection. There could be no union with Christ on this side of death: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone”. This is a great cardinal truth of all importance at the present day.

“We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones”; this can only apply to a dead and risen Christ. In the purpose of God, the Church was united to Christ before the foundation of the world; but this union is only actualised in the case of an individual when he is quickened and united to Christ by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost’.

(C. H. Mackintosh, ‘Union with Christ’, in ‘Answers to Correspondents’, number 4, accessed at ... <https://www.stempublishing.com/authors/mackintosh/Ans/ANSWERS2.html>.)

***‘He said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ... and his mother treasured up all these things in her heart’ (Luke 2. 49, 51).***

‘Some families today keep notebooks of the striking things their children come out with. Mary kept her notebook in her heart, and this remark in particular will have gone straight there with a stab’.

(N. T. Wright, ‘Luke for Everyone’, page 29.)

***‘Jesus wept’ (John 11. 35).***

‘Some commentators have found it difficult to suppose that He who is presented in this Gospel as the incarnate Word, knowing what He was going to do, should be genuinely moved by sorrow and sympathy (as others might at the graveside) ...

‘But the friends and neighbours who were there had no doubt about the cause of His tears: He was weeping for a dearly loved friend. “Look, how He loved him!” they said (John 11. 36) ...

‘In truth, the reader may feel some surprise that Jesus, who was so completely in command of the situation, and knew that the glory of God was about to be manifested in a signal manner (John 11. 40), should nevertheless shed tears of grief for a departed friend and his mourning relatives, as anyone else might do.

‘But the eternal Word became truly incarnate (John 1. 14) and shared the common lot of mankind.

‘The Evangelist would have agreed completely with the writer to the Hebrews that Jesus is well able to sympathize with His people’s weaknesses, having been tested Himself in the school of suffering (Heb. 4. 15). It was in sympathy with those who wept that He also wept. Here is no automaton, but a real human being’.

(F. F. Bruce, ‘The Gospel of John’, pages 246-247.)

***‘She has done what she could’ (Mark 14. 8).***

‘A cow is not ashamed because it cannot fly. Let no man blush because he cannot do what he was never made for.

'The coachman on the Bath coach could not tell the names of the gentry who owned the mansions along the road, but he gave a fine answer to the angry passenger who asked, "What do you know?" when he replied, "I know how to drive this coach to Bath".

(C. H. Spurgeon, 'The Salt Cellars', Volume 1, page 12.)

**'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither' (Psa. 1. 2-3).**

'According to the psalmist, those who bear fruit possess two main characteristics: (i) they delight in the law of the Lord and (ii) they meditate on it day and night.

(i) 'Those who delight in the law do not see it as a form of drudgery by which to live. They know that God's instruction is good for them, so they joyfully submit to it.

(ii) 'Because they delight in the law, they meditate on it continuously. The blessed person is not a drive-through consumer of Scripture. Instead, he memorizes it; he chews on it. And the result is spiritual vibrancy and fruitfulness'.

(U. Anizor, 'The Goodness of God in the Gift of Scripture', page 63.)

**'I laid down and slept' (Psalm 3. 5).**

'Verses 1 and 2 describe David's focus on his human adversaries, and what seems to be a hopeless situation. This is followed by a Selah, suggesting something is about to change.

'Verses 3 and 4; it's not his circumstances, but a changed vision, now of his heavenly assistance. "But you, O Lord" make all the difference! He is my "shield" or *protection*, my "glory", comforting me with His *presence*, and "the One who lifts up my head," giving me a new *perspective*. Then there's another Selah.

'David now tells how he coped when all Israel turned against him. The biographical explanation is in the heading: "when he fled from Absalom his son".

'David was on the run, heading across the Jordan and up into the eastern plateau to Mahanaim (2 Sam. 17. 22-24). Yet he could *lie down* in undisturbed sleep (Psa. 3. 5), because the Lord would *rise up* to save him (verses 7 and 8). Selah. Pause and reflect.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr., 'When Things are Looking Down', Uplook Ministries: Taste and See, 4 February 2026.)

**'I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord", and you forgave the iniquity of my sin' (Psalm 32. 5).**

'David uses three words to characterize this dark condition: *sin*, which is falling short of God's holy standard; *transgression*, which is the rebellion that causes us to step over God's boundaries; and *iniquity*, which is moral uncleanness.

'God's forgiveness covers each aspect of what sin is and what sin does ... Our only hope in the face of this terminal disease is divine forgiveness'.

(P. D. Tripp, 'Everyday Gospel Easter Devotional', Day 12: Psa. 32. 1-11.)

**'When I am afraid, I will trust in you' (Psa. 56. 3).**

'When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away your ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer'.

(Corrie Ten Boom, 'Don't Wrestle, Just Nestle', 1978, page 58.)

**Spiritual pitfalls.**

'Even in good works and sincere service, there are subtle pitfalls that can creep in unnoticed:

(i) When activity replaces intimacy with God.

(ii) When success tempts us to rely on ourselves rather than on Him.

(iii) When generosity becomes routine instead of worship.

(iv) When doing good overshadows being close to God.

(v) When our first love quietly fades amid responsibilities'.

(M. M. Philip (CEO of Christian Missions Charitable Trust, Chennai, India); an extract from a personal email dated 4 March 2026.)

**'Let everyone be ... slow to anger' (James 1. 19).**

God is said to be 'slow to anger' nine times in the Old Testament—spanning from Exod. 34. 6 to Nahum 1. 3.

Four times in the Book of Proverbs, the godly (the 'God-like') person is also described as 'slow to anger':

(i) 'Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly' (Prov. 14. 29)

(ii) A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention' (Prov. 15. 18)

(iii) Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city' (Prov. 16. 32)

(iv) 'Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offence' (Prov. 19. 11).

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

Each of the following quotations is alleged to be a genuine church announcement or bulletin typo:

(i) The Church Choir will begin practice for the Easter Programme next Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. We have a *special need for men's voices, but all parts are welcome.*

(ii) The third verse of the opening hymn will be sung *without any musical accomplishment.*

(iii) *Ushers will eat* the latecomers.

(iv) The visiting preacher spoke briefly, *much to the delight of the congregation.*

(v) The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people in the community *who are not afflicted with any church.*

(vi) Don't let the pressures of life kill you ... *the church elders will gladly help.*

(vii) Thankfully, sister Muriel is much better. She went to the hospital, where *she was examined, X-rated and sent back home.*