

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 18 April 2022.

(i) Scripture

Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Cor. 15. 20-26 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

A Bible teacher's model prayer.

'Help me to make *what is unfamiliar understandable* and *what is familiar strangely fresh* ... I want people who know the Scriptures well to be stirred up to worship by the inexhaustible beauty we continue to discover in these pages'.

(Trevin Wax, *'Even to Death on a Cross'*, introductory section.)

'Is it not a little one?' (Gen. 19. 20).

(i) 'The Bible's pages are marked by small sins that cost people greatly. Eating a forbidden fruit (Gen. 3. 6). Looking back at a city (Gen. 19. 26). Hitting a rock (Num. 20. 11). Touching the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6. 7). Lying about real-estate withholdings (Acts 5. 1–11).

'Scenes like these teach an important lesson: *there are no small sins against a holy God*'.

(Garrett Kell, *'Why Did God Kill Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10?' – accessed at [https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/two-priests-strange-fire-holy-god/.](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/two-priests-strange-fire-holy-god/)*)

(ii) 'A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins—nay, than all the sins in the world—are to us'.

(J. N. Darby, *'Why do I groan?' Collected Writings, Volume 12, page 188.*)

Moses: drawn out of the river and passing through the Red Sea.

'The events at the Red Sea were anticipated by the deliverance of the infant Moses.

Many decades earlier, the infant Levite had been placed by his mother in an "ark" (same word used in the account of Noah) among the reeds at the river bank (Exod. 2. 3). There is an important linguistic connection here. The Hebrew word for "reeds" [רִיבּוֹן] is the same word later used in the phrase "Red Sea", which is why some scholars refer to it as the "Sea of Reeds".

'The infant Moses was left in the reeds beside the river and was named for being drawn out of the water (Exod. 2. 10) in events witnessed by his sister Miriam (Exod. 2. 4). What happened to the leader of the people later happens to the whole people at the Red Sea, as Israel enters into Moses's experience of deliverance from the waters—all witnessed, once again, by Miriam (Exod. 15. 20–21)'.

(Alistair Roberts, *'Rightly Dividing the Red Sea'*, Bible and Theology on 3 March 2020.)

The Sabbath and Israel.

'The Sabbath is the first commandment given to Israel, being issued before she gets to Mount Sinai (Exod. 16. 22-30); and it is the last commandment given for the people before Moses returns to them from atop the mountain (Exod. 31. 12-17). Like bookends, the command to keep the Sabbath secures the content of God's relationship with Israel'.

(Scott Hafemann, *'The God of Promise and the Life of Faith'*. page 47.)

The Sabbath and the Christian.

'The Scriptures are silent concerning the observance of the Sabbath during the Church Age. Nine of the Ten Commandments are reiterated in some fashion in the New Testament, but the commandment concerning the Sabbath day is not.

'The book of Acts records that Paul and his companions were seen on numerous occasions going into the synagogue on the seventh day of the week; however, this was not out of obligation but, rather, out of practicality. Paul was seeking opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those to whom the messianic promises had been made'.

(Bruce Scott, *'The Feasts of Israel: Seasons of the Messiah'*, page 32.)

'The same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man ...' (Heb. 10. 11-12).

'Are you bored by the repetitious descriptions in Leviticus 1-9 of how each animal is sacrificed or the descriptions in Numbers 7 of the offerings of the tribes?

'There is more food for thought in these passages than we suspect, but, in a sense, we are meant to be bored. It goes on and on. The process never suffices. Animals could never be an adequate substitute for human beings made in the image of God. The very inadequacy of these sacrifices confirms the inadequacy associated with the tabernacle structure. They are only copies of the heavenly realities.

'Their inadequacies have only one remedy ... *The Old Testament reaches out in longing for Christ who brings an end to its frustrations and brings to accomplishment its promises.* Christ is the final offering to which all the animal sacrifices look forward'.

(Vern S. Poythress, *'The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses'*, page 44.)

'There came a leper to Him, beseeching Him' (Mark 1. 40).

'In the face of such an intrusion, one would expect an observant Jew to recoil in protection and defence. But with Jesus compassion replaces contempt. Rather than turning from the leper, Jesus turns to him; indeed, he touches him, bringing himself into full contact with physical and ritual untouchability. The outstretched arm of Jesus is a long reach for his day ... for any day.

'Unlike an ordinary rabbi, Jesus is not polluted by the leper's disease; rather, the leper is cleansed and healed by *Jesus' contagious holiness*'.

(James R. Edwards, *'The Gospel according to Mark (The Pillar New Testament Commentary)'*, on Mark 1. 41-42.)

'Faithful amidst unfaithfulness, 'midst darkness only light' (J. G. Deck).

'What do I expect of my friends if I am on trial? At least that they will not forsake me. They all forsook Him, and fled!

'In a judge? I expect him to protect innocence. Pilate washes his hands of His blood, and gives Him over to the people!

'In a priest, what do I expect? That he will intercede for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way. They urge the people, who cry, "Away with him, away with him!" ...

'Every man was the opposite of what was right, and that one Man was not only right, but in divine love He was going through it all!'

(J. N. Darby, *'A Servant For Ever'*, Collected Writings, Volume 34, page 314.)

Sitting.

During our Lord's passion:

(i) The disciples 'sat' in Gethsemane (Matt. 26. 36).

Jesus wasn't sitting then; He was **lying** on the ground (Mark 14. 35).

(ii) The governor 'sat' at Gabbatha (John 19. 13).

Jesus wasn't sitting then; He was **standing** on trial (Matt. 27. 11).

(iii) The soldiers 'sat' at Golgotha (Matt. 27. 36).

Jesus wasn't sitting then; He was **hanging** on the tree (Acts 5. 30).

But, with His passion for ever behind Him, Jesus 'sat', not only with two disciples in their home at Emmaus, Luke 24. 30, but 'at the right hand of God in heaven' (Mark 16. 19; Col. 3. 1; Heb. 1. 3; 8. 1; 10. 12).

God's wrath and God's love.

'God's wrath is not an implacable, blind rage. However emotional it may be, it is an entirely reasonable and willed response to offenses against His holiness. But His love ... wells up amidst His perfections and is not generated by the loveliness of the loved. Thus, *there is nothing intrinsically impossible about wrath and love being directed toward the same individual or people at the same time.*

'God in His perfections must be wrathful against His rebel image-breakers, for they have offended Him; God in His perfections must be loving toward His rebel image-bearers, for He is that kind of God'.

(D. A. Carson, *'The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God'*, page 69.)

'The rest who have no hope' (1 Thess. 4. 13) and 'begotten us again to a living hope' (1 Pet. 1. 3).

'I think of the change Jesus brought to the world around hope when I think about two tombstones.

(i) 'One of them marks the resting place of Mel Blanc, the famous voice of countless characters in Looney Tunes cartoons. In accordance with his instructions, his family inscribed as his final epitaph the words that he had said to end a thousand cartoons: "That's all, folks".

(ii) 'The other tombstone is described by Philip Yancey. It marks the grave of a friend's grandmother who lies buried under ancient oak trees in the cemetery of an Episcopal church in rural Louisiana. In accordance with the grandmother's instructions, only one word is inscribed on the tombstone: "Waiting".

(John Ortberg, '*Who Is This Man?*', the closing section of Chapter 15.)

'Then comes the end ... He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet' (1 Cor. 15. 24-25).

'No matter how bad the score looks *mid-game*, Christ wins in *the end*'.

(Margaret Feinberg, '*Revelation Study Guide: Extravagant Hope*', Session 3.)

Sevenfold Grace.

(i) Grace *justifies* (Rom. 3. 24).

(ii) Grace *enriches* (2 Cor. 8. 9).

(iii) Grace *suffices* (2 Cor. 12. 9).

(iv) Grace *saves* (Eph. 2. 5, 8).

(v) Grace *teaches* (Tit. 2. 11-12).

(vi) Grace *helps* (Heb. 4. 16).

(vii) Grace *strengthens* (Heb. 13. 9).

'Where is boasting then? It is excluded' (Rom. 3. 27).

'The fact that conversion and salvation are of God is a humbling truth ... *Grace puts its hand on the boasting mouth, and shuts it once for all*'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, '*High Doctrine*', a sermon preached on 3 June 1860 at Exeter Hall, Strand, London.)

Grace and favour.

'Grace is the very opposite of merit ... Grace is not only undeserved favour, but it is *favour shown to the one who has deserved the very opposite*'.

(Harry Ironside, '*Sailing with Paul*', page 7.)

'He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you"' (2 Cor. 12. 9).

'I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realise this; for He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me; for *in the easiest positions He must give me His grace, and in the most difficult His grace is sufficient*'.

(James Hudson Taylor, an extract from his letter dated 17 October 1869 to his sister, cited by Dr and Mrs Howard Taylor, '*Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission*', page 176.)

'Grace to help in time of need' (Heb. 4. 16).

(i) 'Your worst days are *never so bad* that you are beyond *the reach* of God's grace. And your best days are *never so good* that you are beyond *the need* of God's grace ... We are not only saved by grace, but we also live by grace every day'.

(Jerry Bridges, '*The Discipline of Grace*', page 10.)

(ii) 'A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it'.

(D. L. Moody, cited in '*Our Daily Bread*', 30 December 1985.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

1. Driving back from having his car repaired, Mick said to his friend Patrick, 'I'm going to turn left now. Stick your head out of the window to see if the indicator's working'.

'Sure now', Patrick replied as he peered out. 'Yes, it is. No, it isn't. Yes, it is. No, it isn't. Yes, it is ...'.

2. Nervously, Gwyneth stepped onto the weighing scales at the doctor's surgery.

She was rather disappointed to see that she weighed 144 pounds.

'At least take off that last four', she joked to the nurse as the nurse noted down the weight on Gwyneth's chart.

A few moments later, the doctor came in and flipped through the chart.

'I see you've lost some weight', he said. '*You're down to 14 pounds*'.