

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 26 February 2024

### (i) Scripture.

Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said ...

'Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

'For David says concerning Him: "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore, my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover, my flesh also will rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in your presence"'.  
Acts 2. 14, 22-28 (*The New King James Version*)

### (ii) Food for thought.

**'You will not ... let your Holy One see corruption' (Psa. 16. 10).**

'Because God sent Jesus as the fulfilment of centuries of history-making promises, and because God sent Him to reveal the divine heart and to save the world, it should not be surprising that Jesus, according to Luke's account, was born through the power of the *Holy Spirit*.

'The angelic messenger said to Mary, "The child to be born will be *holy*; He will be called the Son of God". And when He began his ministry, even demonic powers witnessed to this, saying, "Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? ... I know who you are, *the Holy One* of God". Simon Peter spoke for the rest of the disciples when he confessed, "We have come to believe and know that you are *the Holy One* of God"'.  
(D. W. McCullough 'The Trivialization of God: The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity', page 78.)

**Our Lord's ability 'in the days of His flesh'.**

(i) **Affirmed** by a leper in one of the towns of Galilee: 'If you will, *you can* make me clean' (Matt. 8. 2).

(ii) **Questioned** by a man at the foot of the Mount of the Transfiguration: '*If you can* do anything, have compassion on us and help us' (Mark 9. 22).

(iii) **Denied** by the Jewish rulers at Golgotha: 'The chief priests with the scribes mocked Him to one another, saying, "He saved others; *He cannot* save Himself" (Mark 15. 31).

**'More than they knew'.**

'In Mark 15, *people speak better than they know* ...

'The soldiers twist together a crown of thorns ... they fall on their knees in mock homage, crying, "Hail, *king of the Jews!*" (Mark 15. 18). In fact, He is more than the King of the Jews (though certainly not less). One day, each of those soldiers, and everyone else, will bow down before the resurrected man they mocked and crucified, and confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2. 9-11).

'Those who passed by could not resist hurling insults: "So! *You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days*, come down from the cross and save yourself!" (Mark 15. 29-30). The dismissive mockery hid the truth they could not see: earlier Jesus had indeed taught that He Himself was the real temple (John 2. 19-22) ... Indeed, Jesus not only insisted that He is Himself the temple, but that this is so by virtue of the fact that this temple must be destroyed and brought back to life in three days. If He had "come down from the cross" and saved Himself, as his mockers put it, He could not have become the destroyed and rebuilt "temple" that reconciles men and women to God.

"*He saved others but He can't save Himself*" (Mark 15. 31). Wrong again—and right again. This is the man who voluntarily goes to the cross (Mark 14. 36; cf. John 10. 18). To say "He can't save Himself" is ridiculously limiting. Yet He couldn't save Himself and save others. He saves others by not saving Himself.

"Let this Christ, this King of Israel, *come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe*" (Mark 15. 32). But what kind of Christ would they then have believed in? A powerful king, doubtless—but not the Redeemer, not the Sacrifice, not the Suffering Servant. They could not long have believed in Him, for the basis of this transformation in them was the very cross-work they were taunting Him to abandon.

"*Surely this man was the Son of God*" (Mark 15. 39). **Yes; more than they knew.**

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', meditation for 12 February.)

**'Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures for ever' (2 Chron. 20. 21).**

'The lack of mercy sends us to prayer: the enjoyment of mercy sends us to praises'.

(Samuel Bolton, *'The Wonderful Workings of God for His Church and People'*, page 13.)

**'My strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor. 12. 9).**

'One is given strength to bear what happens to one, but not the one hundred and one different things that might happen'.

(C. S. Lewis, *'The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis'*, Volume 3, a letter addressed to Mary Willis Shelburne on 3 August 1956.)

**Peter asleep.**

(i) On a mountain: 'Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him'. Luke 9. 32.

(ii) In a garden: 'He came and found them sleeping and He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour?"' (Mark 14. 37).

(iii) In a prison: 'That very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains' (Acts 12. 6).

**'In Him ... all fulness' (Col. 1. 19).**

(i) 'Keep this truth constantly in view—a full Christ for an empty sinner ... Come though you have been a thousand times before; yours shall be all the blessing—His all the praise'.

(Octavius Winslow, *'Patriarchal Shadows of Christ and His Church'*, page 64.)

(ii)

'A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,  
And ever abides to answer our need;

The Father's good pleasure has laid up in store  
A plentiful treasure to give to the poor.

'Whate'er be our wants, we need not to fear;  
Our numerous complaints His mercy will hear;  
His fulness shall yield us abundant supplies;  
His power shall shield us when dangers arise.

'Whatever distress awaits us below,  
Such plentiful grace will Jesus bestow  
As still shall support us and silence our fear,  
For nothing can hurt us while Jesus is near.

'When troubles attend, or danger, or strife,  
His love will defend and guard us through life;  
And when we are fainting and ready to die  
Whatever is wanting, His grace will supply'.

(J. Fawcett, *'The Fulness of Christ'*.)

**'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5. 17).**

'How many times have you heard someone say, "All I can do is pray"?'

"All I can do is pray?"! You might as well say to a starving man, "All I can do is offer you food", or to a sick person, "All I can do is give you medicine that will make you well", or to a poor child, "All I can do is buy the toy you most want for your birthday".

'Praying unlocks the doors of heaven and releases the power of God'.

(Billy Graham, *'Hope for Each Day'*, meditation for 1 August.)

**'God, whose I am' (Acts 27. 23).**

'It is not about stature but surrender. Not about strength but submission. Not about control but being Christ-centred. Ultimately, it is not about who you are but whose you are!'

(C. Loney, *'Destination Holiness'*, page 480.)

**'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen' (2 Cor. 4. 17).**

'Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn was arrested by the Communist government for promulgating Jewish religious practices. When he refused to inform on any of his assistants, his interrogator pointed a gun to his head and threatened, "This little toy has made many a man change his mind!"

'Without flinching, the Rabbi replied, "That little toy can scare only men who believe in many gods and one world. I believe in one God and two worlds, so I am not frightened by your little toy"'.  
'

(S. Y. Rigler, *'Alexei Navalny: What Was the Source of His Courage?'*, accessed at <https://aish.com/alexei-navalny-what-was-the-source-of-his-courage/>.)

**Four good things to 'continue in':**

- (i) 'Continue in the fear of the Lord all the day' (Prov. 23. 17).
- (ii) 'Continue in the grace of God' (Act 13. 43).
- (iii) 'Continue in the faith, founded and firm' (Col. 1. 23; cf. Acts 14. 22).
- (iv) 'Continue in what you have learned and have been assured of' (2 Tim. 3. 14).

**'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul' (Heb. 6. 19).**

'A saint's hope will outlive all fears and cares, all trials and troubles, all afflictions and temptations ... Hope can see heaven through the thickest clouds; hope can see light through darkness, life through death, smiles through frowns, and glory through misery. Hope ... holds the soul and the promises together; it holds the soul and heaven together'.

(Thomas Brooks, 'Heaven on Earth: a Treatise on Christian Assurance', page 281.)

**'Jesus died and rose again' (1 Thess. 4. 14).**

1. "It was said of the house of Dagon at Gaza that there were "two middle pillars which supported the temple" (Judg. 16. 29). So too, metaphorically speaking, the gospel stands on two great central pillars; namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus'.

('Studies in First Corinthians', Precious Seed Publications, page 235.)

2. 'The most pervasive of early Christian beliefs was that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead:

- (i) "For we believe that Jesus died and rose again" (1 Thess. 4. 14).
- (ii) "[Jesus] died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5. 15).
- (iii) "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Rom. 4. 25).
- (iv) "Christ died and returned to life" (Rom. 14. 9).
- (v) "These are the words of Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again" (Rev. 2. 8).

'This statement that Jesus died and rose was the fulcrum of the church's confession about who Jesus was and what God did through Him'.

(M. F. Bird, 'To Creed or Not to Creed', accessed at <https://www.logos.com/grow/why-you-need-creeds/>.)

**'I will give you for a light to the Gentiles' (Isa. 49. 6).**

'Paul saw Jesus as the most immediate referent to Isaiah's Servant-person, for he said he was "saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26. 22–23).

'Yet Paul also saw the Old Testament promises reaching further to the mission of all who are in Christ: "We are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13. 46–47).

'A promise related to the Messianic Servant's work has now become a commission for all the servants identified with Him'.

(Jason S. DeRouchie, 'Four Ways Jesus Fulfills Every Old Testament Promise', accessed at ... <https://www.crossway.org/articles/4-ways-jesus-fulfills-every-old-testament-promise/>.)

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

Preachers and what children said.

**1.** After hearing his father preach on 'Justification', 'Sanctification', 'Propitiation' and several other 'ations', the preacher's son was ready when his Sunday School teacher asked if anybody knew what 'procrastination' meant.

'I'm not sure what it means', he said, 'but *I know our church believes in it*'.

**2.** The preacher told two new boys in the church that it would be a good idea for them to kneel beside their beds and pray every night.

The older boy responded, 'If I managed to do that, sir, it would be a miracle. *I sleep on the top bunk*'.