

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 4 March 2024

(i) Scripture.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians 2. 19-22 (*The King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, '... command that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me' (1 Kings 5. 2, 6).

'One thing is sure: Solomon knew his trees! "He spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall" (1 Kings 4. 33). His request was for the favourite of woodcarvers in the ancient world, the Lebanese cedar. He also wanted cypress for the temple's floorboards. "Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs according to all his desire" (1 Kings 5. 10).

'The king gave instruction "to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple. So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the ['stone-squarers'] quarried them; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple" (1 Kings 5. 17-18). Imagine! Jewish stones and Gentile timbers built together ..." (Isa. 56. 7).

'Was this a model for something even more glorious? Yes; Ephesians 2. 19-22 describes it'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, '*Preparing for the Temple*', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 28 February 2024.)

God's presence recognised.

(i) 'Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it" (Gen. 28. 16).

(ii) 'They will plead with you, saying: 'Surely God is in you, and there is no other god besides Him" (Isa. 45. 14).

(iii) 'Falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you' (1 Cor. 14. 25).

'A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord' (Psa. 102: the title).

1. The title of this psalm is unique, referring to the devotional and practical use of the psalm and not to the circumstances or the occasion of its composition.

2. 'One of the more important features of Psalm 102 is the superscription.

'It is the only superscription in the Psalter that describes a psalm as intended for a particular instance in a person's life. In this case, the composition is a prayer for an afflicted person, when faint and pouring out one's plea before the Lord.

'To note further how unique the superscription is, one should also note that the superscription mentions neither a person or guild with whom the psalm is to be associated (such as David, Korah, Asaph, Solomon, or Moses) nor any liturgical or musical directions (such as to the leader, according to the gittith, a maskil, for the dedication of the temple, and so on) ...

'It is a prayer specifically designed for times when God's help seems far away'.

(R. A. Jacobson, '*The Book of Psalms: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*', comments on Psalm 102.)

'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie has promised' (Tit. 1. 1).

"Eternal life", there is the sweetness of the promise: "God that cannot lie", there is the certainty of it ... If, as often as we break our vows with God, He should break promise with us, it would be very sad'.

(Thomas Watson, '*A Body of Divinity*', pages 99-100.)

For 'the feet'.

(i) A lamp (Psa. 119. 105).

(ii) A path (Prov. 4. 26; Heb. 12. 13).

(iii) A rock (Psa. 40. 2).

(iv) Shoes (Luke 15. 22).

(v) Tears and kisses (Luke 7. 38).

(vi) Water and a towel (John 13. 5).

(vii) Nails (Psa. 22. 16; Luke 24. 40).

The superiority of the New Covenant over the Old.

'The new covenant is infinitely greater than the old. ...

'2 Corinthians 3 ... throws into relief a sevenfold glory of the new covenant: (1) stone—flesh (vv. 3, 7); (2) letter—spirit (ver. 6); (3) death—life (vv. 6, 7); (4) lesser—greater (vv. 8-10); (5) condemnation—righteousness (ver. 9); (6) passing—remaining (ver. 11); (7) veiling—unveiling (vv. 12-18)'.
(Eric Sauer, *The Triumph of the Crucified*, page 91.)

'We use great plainness of speech' (2 Cor. 3. 12).

'John [Chrysostom—the "Golden-Mouthed" fourth/fifth-century overseer, theologian and preacher of Constantinople] did not dabble in generalities or broker in indirect speech. He spoke directly to his hearers in a conversational tone, always willing to improvise as he persuaded them to honour God.

'Even in written form, one easily imagines the striking effect of his exhortations. In one moment of pointed application, for example, John contends against sexual impurity with bold specificity:

"If you see a shameless woman in the theatre. . . flaunting her soft sensuality, singing immoral songs, throwing her limbs about in the dance, and making shameless speeches . . . do you still dare to say that nothing human happens to you then? Long after the theatre is closed . . . those images still float before your soul, their words, their conduct, their glances, their walk, their positions, their excitation, their unchaste limbs — and as for you, you go home . . . but not alone — the whore goes with you . . . in your heart, and in your conscience, and there within you she kindles the Babylonian furnace . . . in which the peace of your home, the purity of your heart, the happiness of your marriage will be burnt up".

'No theatre-going man left church that day wondering what the sermon had to do with him!'

(Dan Miller, *The Sermons of the Golden Mouth*, accessed at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-sermons-of-the-golden-mouth>.)

'Lead me'.

(i) 'Lead me in your truth, and teach me' (Psa. 25. 5).

(ii) 'Lead me in a plain path' (Psa. 27. 11).

(iii) 'Lead me to the rock that is higher than I' (Psa. 61. 2).

(iv) 'Lead me in the way everlasting' (Psa. 139. 24).

(v) 'Lead me into the land of uprightness'. (Psa. 143. 10).

'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life' (John 5. 40).

'God never requires a man to do a thing of which he is morally incapable. If he is required to believe, his unbelief would not be culpable if it could be shown that he is incapable of exercising faith.

'The Lord's words, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John 5. 40) demonstrate the wilfulness of the Jews, although it afforded the occasion for the fulfilment of God's wider purposes of grace.

'While all that the Father had given to Christ will, surely, come to Him (John 6. 37), it is the responsibility of all such, no matter how deeply into sin they may have fallen, to come, and the promise is certain that all who so come unto Him He "will not cast out"'.
(E. W. Rogers, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, Chapter XVI in *The Faith: A Symposium of Bible Doctrine* edited by F. A. Tatford, page 185.)

'See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone' (1 Thess. 5. 15).

1. 'How do you deal with rude people? When someone is rude to you, maybe your first reaction is to be rude right back. ... There are better ways to deal with a person's lack of courtesy and kindness.

'Recognize that someone's imperfections are just that. If a person makes a disagreeable comment, cuts in front of you in the grocery line, or, ignoring you, keeps talking on their mobile phone, don't take it personally. Their behaviour is about them, not you. So rather than allowing something to upset you and steal your contentment, practice grace'.

(J. Fischer, *Love the Life You Have*, page 68.)

2. 'Grace is nothing more nor less than the face that love wears when it meets imperfection, weakness, failure, sin. Grace is what love is and does when it meets the sinful and the undeserving. It's what enables us to see beyond one another's faults so that we can love one another without reference to whether that love has been earned or deserved'.

(J. R. Cooke, *Free for the Taking: The Life-changing Power of Grace*, page 7.)

'My servant is dead' (Josh. 1. 2).

'Have you ever noticed how new beginnings are punctuated by the earthly end of God's servants?

- (i) Exodus begins with the death of Joseph.
- (ii) Joshua begins with the death of Moses.
- (iii) Judges begins with the death of Joshua.
- (iv) 1 Kings begins with the death of David.

'The kingdom of God continues though the servants of God die. ... The point should not be lost on contemporary Christians. Your help is in the name of the Lord, not in the name of your favourite Christian hero'.

(D. R. Davis, *Judges: Such a Great Salvation*, pages 19-20.)

'He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren' (Heb. 2. 11-12).

1. 'I would notice the defectiveness of some of our hymns, which call Christ our brother. We never find in scripture that Christ is called our brother. In the fulness of His grace, He is not ashamed to call us brethren'.

(J. N. Darby, *Divine Perfectness of Love*, Collected Writings, Volume 17, page 294.)

2. 'Although through grace the Saviour deigns to call us brethren, we must on no account dare to call Him brother. We have no scriptural example or mandate for this. If He so calls us, then we are humbly grateful, but it would be outside the bounds of scripture language for us to so address Him'.

(J. M. Flanigan, *Hebrews: What the Bible Teaches*, page 57.)

'All things come from you, and of your own have we given you' (1 Chron. 29. 14).

'If Thou shouldst call me to resign
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine;
I only yield Thee what was Thine;
"Thy will be done!"

(Charlotte Elliott; the hymn, *My God, My Father, While I Stray*.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

St David is the patron saint of Wales. This past Friday (1st of March) was St David's Day, when many people celebrated everything to do with Wales including food, culture and the Welsh language. Hence, this week's 'smile':

A Welsh politician visited a remote village and asked the inhabitants what the government could do for them.

'We have two big problems', said the village spokesman. 'First, we have a hospital clinic but we have no doctor'.

The politician whipped out his mobile phone, walked a short distance away, spoke on the phone for a while and then returned and declared, 'There you are. I have sorted it out and a doctor will arrive here soon. Now, what is your other problem?'

Without batting an eye, the village spokesman replied, *'We have no mobile phone reception in our village'*.