

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 15 April 2024

(i) Scripture.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but 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. In all that he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 1 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Blessed is the man ... in all that he does, he prospers' (Psa. 1. 1-3).

'The first three verses, describing the righteous person, fall naturally into three steps. In verse 1, the righteous person is described *negatively*, in verse 2, *positively*, and in verse 3, *metaphorically*.

'The negative description in verse 1 establishes what the "blessed" man is *not* like. He does not "*walk* in the counsel of the wicked"; he does not "*stand* in the way of sinners"; he does not "*sit* in the seat of mockers". 'The wicked man, then, is *grinding to a halt* (walk/stand/sit).

'He begins by walking in the counsel of the wicked: he picks up the advice, perspectives, values, and worldview of the ungodly.

'If he does this long enough, he sinks to the next level: he "stands in the way of sinners" ... "To stand in someone's way" in Hebrew means something like "to stand in his moccasins": to do what he does, to adopt his lifestyle, his habits, his patterns of conduct.

'If he pursues this course long enough, he is likely to descend to the abyss and "sit in the seat of mockers". He not only participates in much that is godless, but sneers at those who don't ...

'One might have expected the second verse to respond with contrasting parallelism: "Blessed, rather, is the man who walks in the counsel of the righteous, who stands in the way of the obedient, who sits in the seat of the grateful"—or something of that order.

'Instead, there is one positive criterion, and it is enough: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night".

(D. A. Carson, *'For the Love of God'*, Volume 1, meditation for 1 April.)

'Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the Lord, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep' (1 Kings 8. 63).

'One thing about *Solomon*—he *didn't do anything by halves!* ... "twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep".

'We hasten to add that these did not all go up in smoke. The peace offering was the fellowship offering. After it was offered to the Lord, He gave it back, spreading a feast for His people [see Deut. 12. 17-18]'.
(J. B. Nicholson Jr, *'Blessings Come Down and Offerings Go Up'*, Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 15 March 2024.)

Seven references to the Lord's feet in the Gospel of Luke.

(i) 'Standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment' (Luke 7. 38).

(ii) 'People went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus' (Luke 8. 35).

(iii) 'There came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And, falling at Jesus' feet, he implored Him to come to his house' (Luke 8. 41).

(iv) 'She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching' (Luke 10. 39).

(v) 'He fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks—and he was a Samaritan' (Luke 17. 16).

(vi) 'He said to them ... See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself' (Luke 24. 39).

(vii) 'He showed them His hands and His feet' (Luke 24. 40).

'Even Christ pleased not Himself' (Rom. 15. 3).

'The gospels display the One in whom was no selfishness. They tell out the heart that was ready for everybody.

No matter how deep His own sorrow, He always cared for others. He could warn Peter in Gethsemane, and comfort the dying thief on the cross'.

(J. N. Darby, *'The Man Christ Jesus: Psalm 16'*, Collected Writings, Volume 16, page 311.)

'And immediately the cock crowed a second time' (Mark 14. 72).

In his Gospel, 'Mark uses a word translated "immediately" (*εὐθύς*) forty-one times. It is used only ten other times in the whole of the New Testament.

'Of interest and import, the last time we read the phrase "and immediately" is after Peter's denials (Mark 14. 72). The very next verse (Mark 15. 1) begins the passion narrative, where Mark intentionally slows down so we might ponder the sacrifice of the Son for our salvation'.

(Douglas Sean O'Donnell, *'Ten Things You Should Know about the Book of Mark'*, number 5.)

Distinguishing things that differ: New Birth and Adoption.

(i) 'There is no conflict between the pictures of new birth and adoption. New birth shows that God gives life to those who are spiritually dead; adoption shows that God makes believers His special possession and gives them the full status of mature adult sons'.

(Don Fleming, *'Bridgeway Bible Dictionary'*, article 'Adoption'.)

(ii) 'God does not "adopt" believers as children; they are begotten as such by His Holy Spirit through faith. "Adoption" is a term involving the dignity of the relationship of believers as sons; it is not a putting into the family by spiritual birth, but a putting into the position of sons'.

(W. E. Vine, *'An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words'*, article 'Adoption'.)

'Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord' (Lev. 10. 1-2).

'Their ordination processes [Exod. 40. 12-15; Lev. 8-10] likely lasted longer than their ministries. Their unauthorized fire was met with an unquenchable one. God killed them on the spot in dramatic fashion ... They knew the clear command concerning the altar: "You shall not offer unauthorized incense on it" (Exod. 30. 9). Yet for some reason, they shrugged off the warning and paid for it dearly ...

'The Bible's pages are marked by small sins that cost people greatly: (i) eating a forbidden fruit (Gen. 3. 6); (ii) looking back at a city (Gen. 19. 26); (iii) hitting a rock (Num. 20. 11); (iv) touching the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6. 7); (v) 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 ...

'The Bible is clear that God cares how we approach Him in worship. In Leviticus 8-9, the priests did everything "as the Lord commanded" (Lev. 8. 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, and so on). But Nadab and Abihu went rogue and did what "He had not commanded them" (Lev. 10. 1).

(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/))

Paul and the pre-eminent resurrection of Christ.

'The Lord's pre-eminence in resurrection is set forth in three aspects in the Word.

(i) 'To King Agrippa, Paul declared Christ to be the first that should rise from the dead (Acts 26. 23). Here was priority in **time** ...

(ii) 'Writing to the Colossians, the apostle proclaimed Christ as the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1. 18). Here was priority also in **rank** ...

(iii) 'Again, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15. 20). Here was priority also of **fruitfulness**'.

(H. C. Hewlett, *'The Glories of Our Lord'*, pages 95-96.)

'In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem' (1 Kings 14. 25).

One of the most important historical events during the reign of Rehoboam was this offensive by Shishak (Sheshonq I). It was the first serious attack against Judah by any foreign power since the days of King Saul.

'Here's some irony. When the Lord delivered the Israelites, "they plundered the Egyptians" (Exod. 12. 36), taking that wealth to build the Lord's sanctuary. And what did Shishak plunder? "The treasures of the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 14. 26)'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, 'Egypt on the Return Address', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 3 April 2024.)

Two couples whose 'eyes were opened'—who then 'knew'.

(i) In the context of *the forbidden fruit* in the Garden of Eden: 'the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked' (Gen. 3. 7).

(ii) In the context of *the broken bread* in the village of Emmaus: 'their eyes were opened, and they knew Him' (Luke 24. 31).

'Thou hast heard me' (Psa. 22. 21).

'In this psalm, we hear Messiah bemoan His going down into the depth of suffering where none can follow, the shame and butt of man, the forsaken of God on behalf of guilty man ...

'Here is the transition (verse 21). At this point when He is transfixed, the Lord is conscious of being heard. He bows His head in death, His blood is shed. So it must be in atonement. Without this there would be no adequate offering for sin; but He who so died can commend His soul to His Father, and say, "It is finished".

'The verses that succeed express the deep joy of deliverance out of such a death ... which He first sings in the midst of those who share His rejection, and pursues with enlarging circles of blessing into the kingdom'.

(W. Kelly, 'Notes on Psalms', 1904, comments on Psalm 22.)

'While we were ...'.

Question—Who would die for a weak person? Answer—The One who died for you and me!

'While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly' (Rom. 5. 6).

Question—Who would die for a sinner? Answer—The One who died for you and me!

'While we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5. 8).

Question—Who would die for an enemy? Answer—The One who died for you and me!

'While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son' (Rom. 5. 10).

Question—Who would die for a dead person? Answer—The One who died for you and me.

'While we were dead in sins ... made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2. 6).

'We prayed to our God, and set a watch against them day and night' (Neh. 4. 8–9).

Compare the maxim often attributed to Oliver Cromwell: 'Trust in God and keep your powder dry'.

'Nehemiah understood well the principle that we're both dependent and responsible ...

'Note Nehemiah's response to the threatened attack. His people prayed and posted a guard. He recognised his dependence on God, but he also accepted his responsibility to work—to stand guard.

'Today, we would tend to divide into two camps.

'The more "spiritual" people would call an all-night prayer meeting. To them, posting a guard would be depending on human effort instead of God. 'The "practical" ones among us would do a fine job organising the guard and assigning everyone to various watches, but they would be too busy to pray.

'Nehemiah and his people did both'.

(J. Bridges, 'Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts for Your Spiritual Journey', page 84.)

Innocence.

(i) 'Innocence is life untested, but virtue is innocence tested and triumphant'.

(W. H. Griffith Thomas, 'Hebrews: A Devotional Commentary', page 64).

(ii) 'What do you mean by "the fulness of time" (Gal 4. 4)? Well, it was clearly the moment when the probation of man was over.

'The first man had had a fair, full, and complete trial. Tried in innocence, he had fallen, and become guilty: tried without law, he was lawless: tried under the law, he had broken it. God had one resource left—the secret thought of His heart from eternity. It was to send into this scene His own Son; His own beloved Son became man, that, as man, He might bless and redeem man, fallen man, and bring him to God'.

(W. T. P. Wolston, 'Night Scenes of Scripture', Chapter 1: A Night in Bethlehem.)

'Apart from'.

(i) 'I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you"' (Psa. 16. 2 ESV).

(ii) 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny ('an assarion', with the value of one-tenth of a denarius)? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father' (Matt. 10. 29 ESV).

(iii) 'I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15. 5 ESV).

'Now the ruler of this world shall be cast out' (John 12. 31).

(i) 'Satan's apparent victory became his most mighty and decisive overthrow, and the apparent overthrow of Jesus became His most mighty and triumphant victory'.

(Eric Sauer, 'The Triumph of the Crucified', page 43.)

(ii) 'When the priests and elders came to lay hands on the Lord Jesus, He said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke 22. 53).

'His hour had come (John 13. 1) and their hour had come, and so the cross became the scene of a great conflict the issue of which was never in doubt. It was an outstanding victory for the Son of God, the proof of which was His triumphant resurrection'.

(A. Naismith, 'The Cross of Christ: The Triumph of the Cross'.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Archie Campbell was taking a walk in Edinburgh one cold morning when he heard an almighty crash behind him. Turning around, he saw a large truck lying on its side.

The truck had a commercial poster on its broken rear door which read, 'Galbraith's Soft Drinks'. There were dozens of broken bottles all around the truck and streams of fizzy liquid ran into the gutter.

Although the driver didn't seem to be injured, he was sitting on the pavement sobbing loudly. A crowd quickly gathered.

'What ails ye?' Archie asked the driver, 'Are ye hurt?'

'Och no, laddie', replied the driver. 'The thing is that the boss, Mr Galbraith, is sure to blame me for the loss of his load of soft drinks and deduct the cost from my pay packet'.

An older man suddenly stepped forward and called out to the crowd, 'Ach, d'you hear what this poor hard-working chappie just said? He's going to lose a lot of money because of this accident. We canna let this happen'.

The man took off his hat, put it on the ground next to the driver and dropped a £20 note in it. 'Dinnae hold back', he appealed to the crowd. 'Have ye no heart? Help this poor driver oot'.

In no time, the hat was overflowing with money.

The man bent down, picked up the hat full of money and gave it to the driver. Smiling, the elderly man said to him, 'Dinnae fret yerself. Get back noo to yer office and give this to yer boss'.

As the man walked away, Archie said to the driver, 'Wow! We must tell "The Edinburgh News" about this. What a splendid example that old man set. Have ye ever seen him before?'

'Oh, many times', replied the driver. '*That's my boss, Mr Galbraith*'.