

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 22 March 2021

Greetings.

Following a few weeks' break, this is my 'Monday Musings' email.

With Good Friday and Easter Sunday less than two weeks away, I thought that it would be fitting for us to direct our attention to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

The attached Word document, therefore, focuses on the early section of 1 Corinthians 15; first, providing an introduction to the chapter and, then, concentrating on the first ten verses.

The document has been reproduced in full from pages 231 to 238 of my 'Studies in First Corinthians', published by Precious Seed Publications in 2016. I am very grateful to John Bennett (Chairman and General Editor) for permission to reproduce the material in this way.

You will find a short extract from the exposition there at the close of today's 'Food for thought'. (See the attached 'Alert' picture.)

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

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### (i) Scripture.

I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me.

For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

1 Corinthians 15. 3-10 (*English Standard version*)

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### ***Christ, the 'firstborn'.***

As the 'firstborn', He is preeminent in:

(i) ***Creation***: 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation' (Col. 1. 15 RV).

(ii) ***Resurrection***: 'And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead' (Col. 1. 18).

(iii) ***Salvation***: 'Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8. 29).

(iv) ***Dominion***: 'When He again bringeth in the firstborn into the world He saith, "And let all the angels of God worship Him"' (Heb. 1. 6 RV; cf. Psa. 89. 27).

#### ***'Authority to execute judgment ... because He is the Son of man' (John 5. 27).***

'The Lord stated, as the reason why the Father had committed all judgment into His hands, that He is the Son of man. He it is who through His incarnation combines in Himself the two natures of Godhead and manhood. He is thereby uniquely qualified to act as the judge. Being one in the Godhead with the Father, He has perfect knowledge of the character and the requirements of God; and being perfect man, having passed through human experiences, with all human temptations, sin apart, He has complete knowledge of man. On this account, He alone could look on the book and open its seals. By Him, and Him only, the judgments contained therein can be executed'.

(W. E. Vine, 'The Sealed Book of the Apocalypse', page 9.)

#### ***'Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven ... as Elias did' (Luke 9. 54).***

'James and John were the two disciples whom Christ had called Boanerges - sons of *thunder* (Mark 3.17); and will not that serve them, but they must be sons of *lightning* too?'

(Matthew Henry, 'Commentary on the Whole Bible', on Luke 9. 54.)

### ***Wanted and sought by God.***

God wants us to worship Him. He doesn't need us, for He couldn't be a self-sufficient God and need anything or anybody, but He wants us. When Adam sinned, it was not he who cried, "God, where art Thou?" It was God who cried, "Adam, where art thou?" (A. W. Tozer, *Worship: The Missing Jewel*, as quoted in Vernon K. McLellan (2000), *Twentieth Century Thoughts that Shaped the Church*, page 265.)

### ***God's sovereignty and man's freedom.***

'God's sovereignty ... is clearly to be understood not in terms of absolute control over human behaviour but as a much more glorious thing: the devolving of real power to creatures made in God's image, so that they are not mere programmed automata but moral beings with genuine freedom – creatures with the capacity to say yes or no to God, to love Him or to reject Him'. (John Lennox, *Determined to Believe?* page 45.)

'If God rules His universe by His sovereign decrees, how is it possible for man to exercise free choice? And if he cannot exercise freedom of choice, how can he be held responsible for his conduct? Is he not a mere puppet whose actions are determined by a behind-the-scenes God who pulls the strings as it pleases Him? ... Here is my view: God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfils it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it. If, in His absolute freedom, God has willed to give man limited freedom, who is there to stay His hand or say, "What doest thou?" Man's will is free because God is sovereign. A God less than sovereign could not bestow moral freedom upon His creatures. He would be afraid to do so'.

(A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, page 76.)

### ***Proverbs and parables.***

"Behold, a greater than Solomon is here". In his proverbs Solomon adapts earthly truth to the heavenly-minded; our Lord in His parables illustrates heavenly truth to the earthly-minded'. (A. Naismith and W. F. Naismith, *God's People and God's Purpose*, page 109.)

### ***Spiritual growth.***

(i) 'Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ' (Eph. 4. 15).

(ii) 'As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby' (1 Pet. 2. 2).

(iii) 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever' (2 Pet. 3. 18).

### ***'When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face' (Gal. 2. 11); 'our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him' (2 Pet. 3. 15).***

'It was well done of Paul, to reprove Peter to his face; and it is well done of Peter, to praise Paul in his absence. Paul's censure of Peter behind his back, had been calumny; and Peter's commendation of Paul to his face, had been flattery'.

(Thomas Adams, *The Second Epistle general of St. Peter*, page 771.)

### ***The purpose of trials.***

'There is nothing – no circumstance, no trouble, no testing – that can ever touch me until, first of all, it has gone past God and past Christ, right through to me. If it has come that far, it has come with a great purpose which I may not understand at the moment. But as I refuse to become panicky – as I lift up my eyes to Him – and as I accept it as coming from the throne of God for some great purpose of blessing to my heart, no sorrow will ever disturb me, no trial will ever disarm me, no circumstance will cause me to fret – for I shall rest in the joy of what my Lord is'.

(Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*, page 166)

### ***Encouragement in spiritual conflict.***

'Let this encourage thee, O Christian, in thy conflict with Satan—the skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long ... it is but a little while ... The cloud while it drops is rolling over thy head, and then comes fair weather, an eternal sunshine of glory. Canst thou not watch with Christ one hour or two? keep the field a few days? ... Bid faith look through the key-hole of the promise, and tell thee what it sees there laid up for him that overcomes'.

(William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, page 150.)

### ***Fervent.***

(i) Barnabas, in spirit: 'Being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus' (Acts 18. 25 ESV; cf. Rom. 12. 11).

(ii) Epaphras, in prayer: 'Always labouring fervently for you in prayers' (Col. 4. 12).

(iii) God's people, in love for one another: 'See that you love one another with a pure heart fervently' (1 Pet. 1. 22; cf. 1 Pet. 4. 8).

**'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. 5. 48).**

'God himself sets us an example in this regard. "Your Father who is in heaven... makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5. 45). He bestows His blessings without discrimination. The followers of Jesus are children of God, and they should manifest the family likeness by doing good to all, even to those who deserve the opposite. So, said Jesus, go the whole way in doing good, just as God does'.  
(F. F. Bruce, *'The Hard Sayings of Jesus'*, page 75.)

**The grace of God (1 Cor. 15. 10) - 1.**

'It is grace at the beginning, and grace at the end. So that when you and I come to lie upon our deathbeds, the one thing that should comfort and help and strengthen us there is the thing that helped us in the beginning. Not what we have been, not what we have done, but the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Christian life starts with grace, it must continue with grace, it ends with grace. Grace wondrous grace. By the grace of God I am what I am. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me'.  
(D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *'Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures'*, Chapter IX: Labourers in the Vineyard.)

**The grace of God (1 Cor. 15. 10) - 2.**

'It is as much the "grace of God" that has given us to serve, and the "grace of God" that strengthens for service, as it was the "grace of God" that saved us at the beginning'.  
(Anon., *'Abigail, The Wife of Nabal the Carmelite'*, *'The Christian's Friend'*: 1875', page 226.

**'Christ died ... and ... rose again' (1 Cor. 15. 3-4)**

'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. We can compare Paul's summaries elsewhere; 'to this end Christ died and lived again' (Rom. 14. 9 lit.), and 'if we believe that Jesus died and rose again' (1 Thess. 4. 14)'.  
(*'Studies in First Corinthians'*, Precious Seed Publications, page 235.)

[See the attached 'Christ died and rose again' document.](#)

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

1. The young couple, Tommy and Ivy, had just been married.  
On their way to their honeymoon, Ivy looked her new husband in the eye, and said, 'Tell me honestly, Tommy, would you really have married me if my father hadn't given me the fortune which he has?'  
'Darling', Tommy replied, 'I mean it from my heart when I say that I would have married you *no matter who had given you the fortune*'.

2. Two wordplays:

(i) Henry asked Len, 'Tell me, Len, is your wife very outspoken?'  
'No', replied Len, *'not by anyone I've ever met'*.

(ii) Bill was doing some roofing work for Mr Edwards.  
When he neared the top of the ladder, he started shaking and feeling dizzy. He called Mr Edwards and said, 'I think I will have to go home; I've come all over giddy and feel quite sick'.  
'Grim', Mr Edwards replied, and asked, 'Have you got vertigo?'  
'No', Bill replied, *'I only live around the corner!'*

[Groan! My apologies for that one.]

See the attached 'Stay safe' picture.

*Spoiler Alert:*  
THE TOMB WAS  
*Empty!*

LUKE 24:24

*Skinny People*  
ARE EASIER TO  
**KIDNAP!**  
STAY SAFE  
EAT *Chocolate*