

Living Water — Issue No 17

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THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE

Genesis 40: 9-15 & 23

Genesis 4: 9

Genesis 18: 16-17, 20-22, 27-28

I would like to speak about the believer's attitude towards the Lord, towards other believers, and towards the world. All the scriptures read are from the book of Genesis; Genesis has been described as the seed plot of the Bible and we find that many of the statements in it are developed through the whole of scripture.

The Lord as the perfect model

I begin by referring to the Lord. It is always good to start by referring to the Lord Jesus Himself. The gospels show us that He Himself was perfect in His attitude towards His God, towards His disciples and towards the world. In the butler's dream a vine was before him. It is good to have the Lord Jesus before us. It says of the vine: "it was as though it budded: its blossoms shot forth, its clusters ripened into grapes". Then the grapes were pressed into Pharaoh's cup. It reminds us of the perfect life of Jesus and how He was here for the pleasure of God in every step of His way. He yielded pleasure to God and blessing to others.

The Lord's attitude towards God.

Think of what the Lord Jesus was first of all Godward, how He was cast upon God from the womb. "I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly" (Psalm 22:10). Then as a boy of twelve He was occupied in His Father's business; as a young Man of thirty years of age, about to go into the service of His God and Father He said "... thus it cometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). In His path of service He could say "I do always the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8:29). Everything that a man should be according to God was seen in the life of Jesus. In Gethsemane (meaning winepress) before going on to the cross and recoiling from that awful transaction that lay ahead He says, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

He always thought of His Father. He was always pleasing to Him. He said "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (John 15:10). The Lord was perfect towards His God.

The Lord's attitude towards His disciples

Next let us think of Him in relation to His disciples. He chose people from different backgrounds: fishermen, tax-gatherers, different kinds of people. He then looked after them and guarded them, "those thou hast given me I have guarded" (John 17:12). He defended them. When they were verbally attacked

by others, when plucking and eating the ears of corn, He defended them. (Luke 6:1-5). Today, to all of us who love Him, He is still as the hymn puts it: 'So mighty a defender'. What a wonderful Saviour and friend Jesus is.

The disciples were far from perfect! They were often out of accord with the Lord's mind. Little children were brought and blessed yet the disciples wanted to push them away! When He told them He was going to be crucified they did not understand. So He told them again and again and again. (Matthew 16:21, 17:22, 20:18, 26:2). It did not seem to sink in, but the Lord was very forbearing with them. He even credited them with persevering with Him in His temptations (Luke 22:28).

Sometimes they were proud. They wanted a place for themselves. The Lord had to rebuke them, to help them and guard them. He even had to say to Peter "Get away behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23) when Peter was seeking to turn the Lord out of the way. But He loved them and His love for them shines through time and time again.

When He rose from the dead and found some of them downcast, disappointed and going away, He went after them, listened to them, talked with them and won them through manifesting Himself to them. How well He looked after His disciples.

The Lord's attitude towards the world

Thirdly, think of Jesus in His attitude to the world. Jesus came into an evil world, a world that had got away from God. He, the light of the world, made manifest the darkness of the human heart. But He also came to make God's love known, to care for people and help them, even for people that had no interest in Him. In the account of the widow of Nain, whose son had died, there is no record of anyone asking Jesus to intervene, yet He intervened to help. He made known in His life here the kindness and love of a Saviour God to man.

When the Pharisees spoke He exposed their state! But He made known that God was interested in man and wanted to bless man. When people did their worst to Him at His crucifixion what did He pray? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

The believer's attitude to the Lord, other believers and to the world.

Now I want to speak about the attitude of believers. I trust we are all believers. If not while it is still the day of grace, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6). I trust everyone here has called upon the Lord and found salvation and blessing in Him.

But I want to challenge you, as I want to challenge my own heart: what is my attitude towards the Lord? What is my attitude to my brother and sister in Christ? What is my attitude towards the world? Our attitude should take character from the attitude of Jesus.

The believer's attitude to the Lord.

We read about the butler whom Joseph met. Joseph had been sold by his brothers as a slave and when in Egypt was wrongfully imprisoned. One day he noticed that the butler and the baker who had also been cast into prison had sad faces. Joseph reminds us of Jesus who notices everything about us, as He does about every man, woman, child in this world.

When Joseph interpreted the butler's dream he told the butler he was going to be reinstated in his job. He then said, "bear a remembrance with thee of me when it goes well with thee, and deal kindly, I pray thee, with me and make mention of me to Pharaoh". He asked him to do two simple things. He asked him to remember him and he asked him to speak about him. What did the butler do? He did neither! It says, "He did not remember Joseph, and forgot him". You say, 'That was a mean thing to do!' But I have some sympathy for the butler. Remember, he had offended his powerful master once and he wanted to make sure that he did not get into any trouble again. So, alas, he forgot Joseph when things went well with him. We believers may do exactly the same with the Lord Jesus; I am often aware of it myself. In business things you have your career to see to. You have your job to do. Pressures come upon you and things do not always go right. You maybe have to resolve problems and spend a lot of time in various activities. What happens? The Lord and His precious things get pushed to one side. Is that not true?

In the New Testament, Paul says to Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead" (2 Timothy 2:8). Paul had sent Timothy to Ephesus, to be a good influence and to help there. Yet he says to Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ." The Lord Jesus has made it well with each one of us - we who have come to know Him and trust Him for all eternity, who have had our sins forgiven as a result of His work on the cross, through faith in Him. He wants us to remember Him and to speak of Him.

In His wisdom the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's supper before He went to the cross. There are many things that Christians initiate; some might be good, some bad. But the Lord's supper is the Lord's institution. In His wisdom the Lord Jesus instituted His supper to keep our affections warm. He knew what He was doing.

I do not know if everyone here remembers the Lord. I recognise that there are plenty of problems to sort out when seeking to remember the Lord, given the broken state of the church. But "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19) are the actual words of the Lord Jesus. The Lord in His wisdom has provided this occasion once a week to help to keep the affections of His people warm towards Him. I know that its observance can degenerate into being a ritual, but if we do not remember the Lord, we are in danger of forgetting Him. Let everyone of us who loves the Lord remember Him and remember His words. One of the last things that Paul said to the elders at Ephesus was, "Remember

the words of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:35). I have no doubt that the Lord gives a special manifestation to those who desire His presence to keep us fresh and warm in our affections.

Joseph also said, "make mention of me to Pharaoh". The Lord desires that we might speak about Him. In the days at the end of the Old Testament, "they that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another; and Jehovah observed it, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16). They must have spoken about the Messiah who was coming. Then too in the beginning of Luke there were those who spoke of Him; they were ready for the Messiah when He came (Luke 2:25,38). May we also be ready for the Messiah, for the Lord Jesus, when He comes the second time. It might be very soon. Let us be concerned to be ready and speak of Him to one another and then, in relation to our fellow men, to tell them what a wonderful Saviour we have found in Jesus and how He is available to all.

However, if we forget about the Lord, He never forgets us. He never forgets any one of His own. There is a lovely scripture in Isaiah which speaks about Zion graven upon the palms of God's hands (Isaiah 49:16). Think about the way that the Lord always remembers His people. Sometimes I forget about Him but He never forgets about me!

But He wants to be remembered; He wants to be actively in our affections. As we come to know Him, His love, support, friendship and care from day to day, surely we want to keep Him actively in our affections and to speak of Him to others.

The believer's attitude to other believers

I come to the second scripture. I would suggest that one important feature of God's truth that is developed throughout the whole of scripture is that a person is his brother's keeper. For example in Leviticus chapter 19 much is said about a person's relations with his neighbour and with his brother.

I believe that underlying the whole concept of the truth of the body as set out in the New Testament is that each believer is the keeper of his brother and sister in Christ. Cain was no example of this truth. In the New Testament it says that Cain was of the wicked one and slew his brother (1 John 3:12). Here was a challenge raised by God to Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" What he says is, "I know not". He was not bothered about his brother! He had no interest in his brother. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Each one of us should accept responsibility for being the keeper of his brother or sister.

I have been impressed by the number of references in the New Testament to "one another", which implies mutuality. For example in the epistle to the Romans, before chapter 12, a great deal is said about a man's relations with God. Then from chapter 12 onwards Paul develops the teaching of a believer's rela-

tions with others. A number of very interesting expressions is used. "Have the same respect one for another" (Romans 12:16). I ought to respect every brother and sister in Christ. You say, 'Well, sometimes you do not see much to respect'. That might be true, but I can always respect what each is in the sight of heaven. Persons under the shelter of the blood of Christ are precious to Christ and should be to us. The hymn says: 'Nor what is next Thy heart can we forget'. I believe that was an expression divinely taught. Every brother and sister is on the heart of Christ. He loves every one, whoever they are, whatever they have done, whatever their ecclesiastical position. I need, as a believer, to learn to respect every brother and sister in Christ.

It also speaks about loving one another. "Owe no one anything, unless to love one another" (Romans 13:8) and "as to brotherly love, kindly affectioned towards one another" (Romans 12:10). When we come to know Christ as our Saviour we are drawn in affection to every brother and sister in Christ.

I am sure everyone here who loves the Lord has had the experience of meeting a brother or a sister for the first time. Your heart goes out to them and you gain blessing from the contact with them. It is of God to love every brother and sister in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

Another expression in Romans is, "Let us no longer therefore judge one another" (Romans 14:13). There is always a danger of a censorious spirit which is foreign to christianity. We should not be looking out for faults. Isaiah speaks of all that watch for iniquity, that make a man an offender for a word (Isaiah 29:20, 21). That is not of God and it should not be characteristic of believers. We are further instructed, "not to put a stumbling block or a fall trap" before one another. I should be thinking about my brother and sister and endeavour not to offend them, but rather seek to further God's work in them - "So then let us pursue the things which tend to peace, and things whereby one shall build up another" (Romans 14:19).

However Paul also speaks in Romans 15 of them being "full of goodness", "able to admonish one another" (v 14). That is what marked the Lord. He loved His disciples with a faithful love and if He saw one or another saying or doing something they should not, He did not ignore it or pass it by. He admonished them. We belong to a holy nation and one of its features is being "able to admonish one another". I should accept from the Lord that I have a responsibility to others, to my brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is interesting to see how this theme is worked out in Genesis. Take, for example, the relations between Abraham and Lot. Lot was not exactly Abraham's brother; Lot was his nephew but the Bible says, "his brother Lot" (Genesis 14:16). They went on together for a while and then a difficulty arose. Their flocks and herds multiplied and they needed pasture for them. We can well understand the herdsmen quarrelling over where the sheep were to graze. "And Abram said to Lot, I pray thee let there be no contention between me and

thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren" (Genesis 13:8). Contentions are not proper to brothers and sisters in Christ. I submit to everyone here that one of the biggest challenges that face many of us today is how to resolve problems in the fear of the Lord without parting company from one another.

When Abraham put certain propositions to Lot, he should have replied, 'I need your company. I want to stay with you'. They could have worked out a solution, even if it meant killing off half their sheep, and stayed together! However Lot went off on his own way. Alas, he got associated with bad company. That is a warning for us! If we go away from a person more spiritual than ourselves we, too, may end up in bad company.

Lot became involved in the affairs of Sodom and was taken away captive. Did Abraham say, 'Well, it serves him right! He should not have gone away from me. He should not have got into that position.' Is that what he said? No! Abraham, in effect, said, 'I am my brother's keeper'. He understood what Cain never understood. He organised his men and rescued his brother Lot. Lot had gone away on wrong lines but Abraham still acted as his brother's keeper. I know that Lot was not helped in the long term but Abraham acted as a true brother and fulfilled the scripture: "A brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17).

There are other accounts in Genesis of brothers who went separate ways. Esau and Jacob parted company. I do not think either of them were right when they parted company. Esau despised his birthright and lost the blessing. He was a profane person. He was not right before God. Jacob was not altogether right either. He was a cheat; he lied and deceived his father. Esau decided to kill his brother. How terrible is the spirit of murder between brothers! They parted and went different ways.

Twenty years later when God told Jacob to return to his land he knew he had to meet his brother. That must have been a big test. He remembered that Esau had wanted to kill him and poor Jacob was frightened. He first sends a message to Esau telling him what great possessions he had acquired, not saying a word about God, but before he met his brother he had to meet God. If you know any brother or sister who has become estranged from you and you wish to be reconciled make sure you speak to God about it before you speak to them. Jacob went through a very severe and painful night when he wrestled with God. But he came out a prince and then he was able to meet his brother Esau.

In the long run the reunion did not work out, and Esau's descendants, the Edomites, were great opponents of Israel. When Israel was carried off captive, Amos and Obadiah describe the terrible way that Edom treated his brother and how God took account of it. Edom took advantage of Israel's troubles and God hated the way he despised the brotherly covenant.

I speak now about Joseph and his brothers who became separated from one another. Joseph loved his brothers, but most of them did not love him. One day, Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers and someone found him searching for them. Do you know what Joseph said to him? "I am seeking my brethren" (Genesis 37:16). Are you and I doing that? Am I seeking my brothers and sisters in Christ? That is what Joseph was doing. You say, 'He did not get much thanks for it. He was put in the pit and then sold into Egypt!' But God overruled and his brothers had to come for food.

It is very interesting how Joseph dealt with his brothers; He acts like God. When his brothers come to him he gives them food and returns their money. He acts like God; he is generous. There was however a big moral issue which Joseph did not ignore. If there are moral issues, issues of righteousness, relating to past sins, we cannot just cover them all up and pretend that bygones are bygones and nothing needs to be settled. That is not righteousness. That is not the way God would deal with things. He would have things out and cleared up righteously before Him.

Let us learn from these illustrations how to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ as God has treated us. That is what God says in Ephesians, "Forgiving one another, so as God also in Christ has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

The believer's attitude to the world

Now I would like to speak about a believer's relations with the world. Abraham was called out by God. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you too have been called out of this present evil world. The gospel comes to people to take out of the world a people for God's name. God's purpose in the gospel is to secure a people for His pleasure. Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans by the God of glory and he then lived a life of faith.

He had many tests and trials. He was tested in his patience and in his dependence on God but he also received appearances from God and a special word from God from time to time. God helped him and blessed him. He made mistakes, bad mistakes, like every one of us who love the Lord but Abraham characteristically was on the line of faith. He sought to do what was pleasing to God. He was a friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7). God was going to destroy Sodom and He tells Abraham of His plan. Abraham went with the three men to conduct them as they went towards Sodom. They were going on their way to bring judgment. Do you know that this world is under judgement? God's wrath is going to come upon this world. It is a solemn consideration.

I wish to say three things about Abraham. The first is that he was with God and understood what He was doing. Every believer ought to understand what is going to happen to this world. It is foretold in the Bible. Yet God is patient and longsuffering towards all, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). His desire is that all men should be saved and

come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). But one day He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has appointed (Acts 17:31). His fury is to come upon this world (Isaiah 66:16).

Believers at the present time should be in sympathy with God. We live in a dreadful world. If we were more in the sanctuary we would get the mind of heaven about this world. You think of the way things are going to pieces. Human relationships, that God in His wisdom and goodness has established for men, are being thrown overboard in this very society in which we live. God hates that. God loves what He instituted and will not permit the decay that has set in to go on for ever! When evil is full blown, the iniquity of the Amorites will be full, and then God's judgment will fall. Each of us who believes should be in keeping with the mind of heaven in relation to this world. It solves many questions about separation. We should not want to be going on with the things of this world nor give any impression that we sanction the way of life of ungodly men and women.

Secondly Abraham, when praying said, "I, who am dust and ashes". He does not only say he was dust. God said that after the fall of man, "dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). We are all dust; we are all made of dust. But Abraham said, "I, who am dust and ashes". That means that he accepted judgment in relation to himself. I am not any better than any other sinner in this world. I deserve God's judgment just like the other persons in this world; I am not intrinsically any better. It is only through God's mercy that I have been saved by Christ from wrath and that is true of every believer.

We will be no help in witnessing to our fellow men unless we recognise that we are all sinners, all deserving God's judgment. In saying, "I, who am dust and ashes", Abraham accepted not only the frailty of his condition, "dust", but accepted that he too deserved God's judgment, "ashes". After all, he was brought up in idolatry but was delivered from it. Thank God if we are delivered from idolatry.

The third thing is Abraham's intercession. When God tells him what He was going to do to Sodom he draws near and intercedes for souls. Six times it is recorded that Abraham intercedes with God in relation to Sodom. That ought to mark us as believers. On the one hand we should not go on with any of the evil things that are in the world but seek God's help to be faithful. On the other hand we should seek to have God's feelings of compassion, longsuffering, goodness, and kindness towards our fellow men. Abraham drew near to God and kept praying for others.

Do you pray for your fellow men? I was brought up in Glasgow where I knew a very evangelical brother. He told me he used to wake up at night and pray for souls. Prayer for souls forms the first thing that should mark believers' prayers in the house of God. Prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings are to be made for all men (1 Timothy 2:1).

I believe that these are features should mark us in our attitude to our fellow men. On that basis we can go out and speak to them about Jesus. Firstly we know God's judgment is going to fall. Secondly we are sinners ourselves and deserve God's judgment and only through God's mercy have we escaped. Thirdly we should be praying, interceding that God might intervene.

May the Lord help each one of us and encourage us, I trust, but challenge us too. Let us measure ourselves by God's great standard in the Lord Jesus who was perfect towards His God, to His disciples and to God's creature, man.

Let us be concerned that we remember the Lord, that we do not forget Him and that we speak about Him. Let us recognise that despite all the difficulties and problems of the present time, each one of us is our brother's and sister's keeper, and let us be concerned to be with God in relation to our fellow men. May the Lord help us all.

Ken Hollands

Copies of this address and the Bible reading which preceded it are available free of charge from: Marcus Chapman, April Cottage, 7 Upper Woodcote Village, Purley, Surrey CR8 3HE

FIVE LESSONS AT THE RIVER EUPHRATES

Genesis 12: 1
Psalm 137: 1 & 2
1 Peter 5: 13
Revelation 9: 13-16
Psalm 72: 6-8

I want to speak about five lessons that can be learnt on the banks of the river Euphrates; about the ways and purposes of God with individuals, with nations and for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 1. The need to obey the call of God

In the first scripture we read of Ur of the Chaldeans, a city built by the Euphrates. That was where Abram lived. Archaeologists have shown that Ur was a city which was far advanced for its times; it had music, artists, temples and learning but Abram left it all behind. Why did he do that? Because the God of

glory spoke to him in Mesopotamia and said, "Go out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, to the land that I will show thee."

What did Abram do? Scripture says that he left it, not knowing where he was going. Is that all scripture says? No, it says that by faith having been called Abram obeyed. The first lesson you learn on the banks of the Euphrates is that the call of God must be obeyed in faith; Abram obeyed that call and he left Ur of the Chaldeans behind and he set off for a better city.

Where was Abram going to? Hebrews tells us that he had his eyes on a better city, a city whose builder and maker is God. He left the city of this world behind and, in effect, he says, 'I am going to God's city, to the heavenly city'. Think of what the appearance of the God of glory must have been to him! The brilliance of it showed Abram the darkness and the depravity of the Chaldeans for God called him to better things. By faith he obeyed the call of God. That is the first lesson to be learnt on the banks of the Euphrates.

Have you heard God's call? Have you obeyed it? What is God's call? If you want to be blessed by God eternally you must obey His call. His call to you is that you are a sinner and He wants to bless you and save you from your sins and deliver you from this world. The way of blessing is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whosoever shall believe on Him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life. What is that? It is citizenship in God's city; that is what He offers you but it is available to you only as you accept by faith what Christ has done for you. He would lift the burden of your sins and give you the liberty that belongs to those that have the right to be called children of God. As a believer in Jesus He would set you off on your journey on the way that God has appointed.

Abram went on this journey and to these patriarchs of old who walked with God in faith the Spirit of God gave first-class honours; He says of them that if they had thought of whence they had come they had opportunity to return but none of them did! They had eyes fixed beyond this earth and they did not return to those things they had left.

The journey can be a long one. When you first accept Christ as your Saviour and you answer to the call of God, a new purpose comes into your life—to follow Christ. But then trials and tests come in and, alas, we may get captivated by other things. Psalm 137 shows how the people of God were captive in Babylon as a result of their unfaithfulness.

Lesson 2. God cares for His people who have missed their way

Babylon was another city built by the Euphrates. Psalm 137 says: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down ...We hanged our harps upon the willows". Babylon is an attractive city; it has a lot to offer, many pleasures and attractions, but the attractions of Babylon can never satisfy the heart of a believer. Babylon and all the powers it has can never erase from your heart the

work of God. It can never erase from your heart the love of God that the Spirit of God has put there. When believers sit down in Babylon they do not feel at home.

It is a sad picture. If the believer finds himself in Babylon his song does not fit there and he does not fit in either and neither does his Saviour. The harp is hanging on the willow tree. You can hang your harp on the willow but you cannot put your heart there; the heart stays within and even though you are not playing the strings of your harp God is plucking at the strings of your heart and you know what He is saying to you. He is saying, 'It is time to make a move, a move back to Me.'

It is a wonderful story, the way that the people of Israel returned to the Lord. It took a number of years; they did not all come back at the same time. Do not look at your friends and say, 'We are all in it together'. Somebody had to make a start; Zerubbabel made the start and there were many who followed him. Over the years there were others who trod that same journey. I do not know how far away it is that you as a believer have got from your Saviour; it might be a long way back but make a start. God is plucking at your heart strings and He is saying to you, 'You know where you should be. You know what you should be doing.' Zerubbabel started to lead them back.

They all had different experiences on the way back; it was a long journey, about 800 hundred miles, and it took them several months. It may not all happen overnight but make a start now on your way back to the Saviour. There were those who followed under Ezra in later times; they had not got very far on their journey when they stopped because they started to assess the dangers of the way back. They wondered what they should do about it; should they ask the king of Babylon for help? They decided they had better not because at one time they had testified to the king that God would protect them and those who seek after Him. So, instead, they sat down and they prayed and then they set out on their journey. Do you know what the Spirit of God says about them as they went on that long journey back to God? He just says this, "and the hand of our God was upon us and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and of such as lay in wait by the way" (Ezra 8:31).

The second lesson you learn on the banks of the Euphrates is that even if you have missed your way God still cares about you and is going to bring you back; He will not let you go and on the way back He will be all you need. Jesus has said, 'My grace is sufficient for all your needs.' Make a start now on your way back to God.

Lesson 3. The continuing triumph of the Saviour.

In 1 Peter we find another mention of the city of Babylon. I refer to it because there is a wonderful victory in that verse. In New Testament times there was somebody in Babylon saved by the gospel! "She that is elected with you in Babylon salutes you". What a triumph for the Saviour.

He is still blessing souls today. Look at the work of evangelism that is going on in the middle east; the power of God is in it and even today there are souls being saved in these lands around Babylon. What a mighty Saviour we have! It means that at the first resurrection those in the Old Testament who believed in faith, those who believed in Christ when they heard the gospel in the years following Pentecost and right down to the present day, all those who have believed in faith in the work of Christ and are lying in their graves, will be raised from their graves, even from the region of Babylon, so close to the very place where sin entered into the world in Eden. What a mighty triumph for the Saviour! Satan has been conquered. What a triumph.

My friend, claim your part in the first resurrection by believing in Christ and taking up your path as a christian. At school in morning assembly we often sang John Bunyan's hymn where he writes that he would never be diverted from his avowed intent to be a pilgrim. Yes, be a pilgrim, a christian pilgrim, someone walking through this world who knows where he is going at the end of this life; he is going to be with Christ, going to have part in the first resurrection. Whether you are alive or dead, if you are a believer in Christ you will have a part in it. "We shall be caught up together...to meet the Lord in the air" (thessalonians 4:17)

Lesson 4. Everything in this world is in the hands of God

In Revelation 9, we find another lesson at the Euphrates. Believers have been caught up to be with Christ, times of tribulation have come upon the earth and the momentous incident prophesied in Revelation takes place. God says, "Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates". The four angels are loosed who are prepared for the hour and day and month and year. The lesson we learn here on the banks of the Euphrates is that everything in this world is in the hands of God. God is in control, to the hour and the day and the month and the year. These four angels are held there today; God has not said, 'Release them'. He has His ways and His purposes for the nations. When the angels are released it is that they might slay the third part of men.

The third part of men will be slain. In God's judgment, this is not the first time something awful like this has happened; if you look back in the book of Revelation you will see that already a quarter of the world is slain. A quarter plus a third—more than half of mankind is obliterated in divine judgment. We little realise what God is restraining. When He removes His restraint what happens! The number of their hosts of horse was "twice ten thousand times ten thousand"—two hundred million. What a mighty force this is that God is holding back for that day. When they are released things are awful; there is fire, brimstone and plagues. The ensuing verses tell us about them. They tell us also about the depravity of man in those times. Men are worshipping demons, worshipping idols, murdering, following witchcraft, fornication and theft; how depraved humanity will become.

This scripture must be linked with the later one in Revelation 16 which tells that the waters of the Euphrates are dried up that a way might be made for the kings of the east and their armies to cross. They will cross over the Euphrates and will head towards the holy land; at the same time, we are told, the dragon, the beast and the false prophet energised by demon possession are controlling all the nations of the world and are gathering them all together, the kings and the armies of the east as well, to congregate at that place called Armagedon. Having gathered there the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heavens. The Lord Jesus appears as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The beast and the false prophet will be taken and put alive into the lake of fire; the devil himself will be bound for a thousand years; the King of glory has come! The kingdoms of this world, to whom do they belong? The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever. The One who comes as the King of kings, He is the One who was the carpenter in Nazareth, a stranger in Galilee, the Christ of Calvary. He it is who is the conqueror at Armagedon; He is the One who is the Prince of peace. He will have His millennium of peace on this earth. What a mighty Person Jesus is and what a reign will be His!

Lesson 5. The dominion of the Saviour is from the river to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 72 gives us the Prince of peace. He will come down like rain on the mown grass, the showers that water the earth. The longed-for glorious Lord has come. All creation travails, groans, till He shall come. "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon be no more. And he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth". The One who has come, Jesus, the Prince of peace, He is the One who is greater than Solomon. Solomon's kingdom, Solomon's dominion, extended as far as the river Euphrates and no further. When the Prince of Peace comes His dominion is from sea to sea and as far as the river Euphrates? Yes, but beyond that, from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth. How mighty is Jesus, how great is His kingdom.

He is the One, you remember, who, when He was here, sat in a little boat on the sea of Galilee; the storm came up and He said, "Peace, be still". He is the One who will come and speak peace to the nations. They will turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning knives; all will come to know His law and His authority.

How kind He will be. It says He will take care of the children. He will help the needy and those who have no helper. The gentle Jesus, meek and mild, will look upon the little child; He will take up the children of the needy, the orphans, and He will bless them, bless them abundantly. His dominion extends beyond the Euphrates, across the whole world.

Continued on Page 18

HE TOUCHED HER HAND

Mark 1:30 - 31

He touched her hand and the fever left her,
He touched her hand, as only He can,
With the wondrous skill of the great Physician,
With the tender touch of the Son of Man.

And many a life is one long fever,
The fever of anxious suspense and care,
The fever of fretting, the fever of getting,
The fever of hurrying here and there.

He touched her hand and the fever left her,
Oh! we need His touch on our fevered hands,
The cool, still touch of the Man of Sorrows,
Who knows us and loves us and understands.

Whatever the fever, His touch can heal it,
Whatever the tempest, His voice can still;
There is only joy as we seek His pleasure,
There is only rest as we choose His will.

Ah, Lord! Thou knowest us altogether,
Each heart's sore sickness whate'er it be;
Touch Thou our hands! Let the fever leave us,
And so shall we minister unto Thee.

L. T. M.

The 23rd. Psalm

The God of love my shepherd is,
And He that doth me feed:
While He is mine, and I am His,
What can I want or need?

He leads me to the tender grass,
Where I both feed and rest;
Then to the streams that gently pass:
In both I have the best.

Or if I stray, He doth convert
And bring my mind in frame:
And all this not for my desert,
But for His holy name.

Yea, in Death's shady black abode
Well may I walk, not fear:
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
To guide, Thy staff to bear.

Nay, Thou dost make me sit and dine,
Ev'n in my enemies' sight:
My head with oil, my cup with wine
Runs over day and night.

Surely Thy sweet and wondrous love
Shall measure all my days;
And as it never shall remove,
So neither shall Thy praise.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Think of Jerusalem today, with the strife and hatred that marks it, then think of Christ's reign, boys and girls playing in the streets. No harm will come their way, not in Jerusalem, nor in any of the cities of the earth. Perhaps the Euphrates will be needed no more. A new river will flow out, bringing with it healing to all creation. Scripture says that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. This psalm ends, "Blessed be Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel, who alone doeth wondrous things! And blessed be his glorious name for ever! and let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen." Somewhere, probably more than once, it says, "All the people said, Amen." In this day when Christ reigns all will say Amen. Heaven and earth will say Amen. Let our hearts be filled His glory and may we say 'Amen'.

Brian Pirie

OUR SPIRITS

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." (Philippians 4:23)

The apostle Paul closes this remarkable epistle in which practical christian life and experience are set before us at the highest level with these words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit". In this epistle Paul is not stressing his apostleship but speaks as a bondman of Jesus Christ, and the deep exercises and experiences which he describes would be normal christian experiences, that is of those whose hearts and minds have been so completely captivated by Christ that their one desire is to reach Him where He is and to be with Him and like Him.

We need to give great heed to our spirits. We are apt to be unduly burdened and concerned as to our bodies. We should not be so; they are presented as a living sacrifice to God. We are going to get new bodies, that is, as to their condition, bodies of glory like unto His body of glory. But we are not going to get new spirits and therefore we ought to give heed to our spirits. The work of God at the present time is not in relation to our bodies but to our spirits. He might find it necessary to break the earthen vessel with a view to the perfecting of our spirits. But if He does, it is all in love. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9). Many a worn and broken body may house a beautiful Christlike spirit, while a contrary spirit might be in evidence where the outward is beautiful and attractive.

We are perhaps inclined to attach too much importance to service and activity in divine things, but that is not our true measure. Stephen, who was not an outstanding servant but a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, with his body bleeding from the stones of the enemies of Christ could say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit", and again, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". What a challenge to us. If the Lord were to take us now, what kind of spirit would we

hand over? What would be our measure? Our true measure is according to how far the work of God has been perfected in our spirits. How much have we taken on the spirit of Christ? The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with us and serves us to this end, the grace of the One who, being rich, for our sakes became poor. May we be subject to Him and allow Him to have His perfect way with us. David could say, "thy condescending gentleness hath made me great" (2 Samuel 22:36). This is true greatness.

Alex Dickson

19 November 1952.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF THE LORD IN KROPOTKIN

In December 1995 Sergei Sidorenko took a kiosk in the local market in Kropotkin to distribute Bibles and christian literature. The extract from one of his letters given below gives some account of the work that is proceeding.

January 1996

One month has passed from the time I opened the kiosk. Every day except Monday, when the market is closed, I am there from 8.30 am till 3 pm. The market is a busy place because it is opposite the bus station. In front of the kiosk I have a table with Bibles, New Testaments, and christian books for children. I also have a wooden frame with quotations from the Bible. My father has good handwriting and has already written six posters in big letters. I change the posters every two or three days. Today the poster was:

"Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide the gate and broad the way that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter in through it. For narrow the gate and straitened the way that leads to life, and they are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

Tomorrow, if the Lord will, I will change it to:

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12)

and:

"Jesus says to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father unless by me." (John 14:6)

The posters attract the attention of people and they come and ask questions. I have had talks with christians of various denominations, unbelievers, Jehovah's Witnesses, magic arts people, those with family problems and drug takers.

One day I had an experience which brought to mind Luke 18:1-5. A lady came to me asking for a Bible in large print because her sight was poor. I told her that I would get one for her the next time I went to Krasnodar. She came the next day with the same request. I told her that I meant the next time, not the next day. Two days later she came to the kiosk again with the question: "Have you been to Krasnodar?" I told her that tomorrow she would have a Bible and the next day I gave her my large print Bible which I brought from Scotland in 1991. She was very happy to get it.

I have up to five helpers every day. They are young christians who want to proclaim the love of God and sometimes we have a crowd and there is work for every one. I now have a more close relationship with many christians in Kropotkin and many young people visit me with different questions. I did not realise how big my experience would be in relationship with God. He helps me with so many questions and answers that I can share with my brothers and sisters in the Lord. I always give thanks to God for His great revelations to me. So many times He has taught me and supported my faith.

Sometimes I wish to divide myself into two parts: one part to work with christians and the other to work with unbelievers. Many people repented last year and now all of these need spiritual help. The situation in the churches is not perfect. The churches are sleepy, but there is one good pastor and some older brothers who preach and wake christians up.

One day a young man bought a book on magic in the market. He had repented a short while before but had then got depressed and had returned to his old ways. As he came from the market he saw my display of christian books and God showed him his situation. He invited me and one of my helpers to come to his house where he told us about his life. He had learned white and black magic; it landed him in a mental hospital and he was a slave of Satan. Then he had turned to God and he told us that he had burned four big bags of black magic books. We collected two more bags during the visit to his house. The titles were enough to make my hair stand on end. There are a lot of persons in this kind of situation. I think the call to warn the wicked given in Ezekiel 3:18 & 19 is very important to every christian. We have a revelation from God of what the end will be and we know it is true.

On Christmas Day there was a special gathering in the church and I wanted to attend. I prayed for guidance and went to my kiosk instead. I wanted to share with people my great joy that Jesus is going to come again soon. That day hundreds of people read my poster:

And this is the witness that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life: he that has not the Son of God has not life. (1 John 5:11-12)

One man got a Bible, some got New Testaments and I understood that if only one person had come to know God as a result it would have been worth it. Even if no one had stopped, hundreds would have seen God's word, and, praise God, have the opportunity to be saved.

Every day I see unhappy people with no answer to the problems of life. One young woman said to me "If God is a God of love why did my baby die?" A short while before I had read about the situation with king David as given in 2 Samuel chapter 12 but I also had an illustration from our own times. So I told her that if you ask God for anything you need to trust Him. As christians we know that we are children of God (John 1:12). We can ask our heavenly Father about everything and He knows best what is good for us. In Kropotkin there is a fine christian family who had a young daughter. She became very ill and the parents prayed to God with fasting for her to recover. They loved her too much and did not think of saying "Thy will be done". In such cases God alone knows best whether someone should live or die. They prayed and prayed; they got the result and the girl got well. When she grew up she became far from God and her parents. She started to smoke and drink and go on with all kinds of evil. Now she seems to be going straight to Hell. Now her parents pray for her with the words "Thy will be done" and they are very sorry that they did not trust God when she was young for only He knows what is good or evil for us. I asked the young woman: "Can you tell me what would be good for your baby?" She had no answer.

Sergei Sidorenko

THE HOUSE OF GOD

When you receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, God intends that you should come into what is here on earth for your blessing. God has a house down here and I want to refer to a few scriptures which relate to God's house.

Hebrews	3: 1 - 6
1 Peter	2: 4 - 5
Matthew	21: 12 - 13
Luke	14: 16 - 24
1 Timothy	3: 14 - 15
1 Peter	4: 17 - 18

The first of these scriptures tells us who builds the house, "He who has built all things is God". The next three passages refer to the main functions of the

house, that is, praise, prayer, and preaching. Then finally, in Peter, it is the place of judgment where things are rightly assessed.

Building God's House

We will start with Hebrews to see first how the house is formed. God built this house by Christ. He is the builder, a fact which brings out His deity. It is a tribute to who Christ is. He is also Son over His house. The thought of dwelling was always in God's heart.

You may recall that when He brought His people out from Egypt they were not long in the wilderness before He said to Moses, "And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). God desired to be in touch with His people. Later on, centuries later, David desired to provide a dwelling place for God but it was left to his son. God said, "When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. It is he who shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Samuel 7:12-13). We know that Solomon built the house, but God had not Solomon in mind in what He said; He had Christ in mind. Christ was going to build the house—and of His kingdom there shall not be an end.

When the Lord Jesus completed His ministry down here, He provided the material on which the Holy Spirit would descend to form God's house. It is not composed of bricks and mortar; it is composed of persons.

God's House as He sees it

What I want to set out for you first are the original features which belonged to God's house, to see it in all the excellence and beauty in the Divine mind and reflect upon how it began, how the house of God was formed down here by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We are told in the Acts that the heart and soul of the multitude were one; all were together and they persevered in the apostles' doctrine, teaching, breaking of bread and prayers. The house was established in the very city where a few weeks before Christ had been crucified and cast out. What a demonstration of the power of God.

The Hebrew Christians are written to so that they may be re-established in the great truths they had once enjoyed. They were beginning to drift, beginning to be overcome by adverse circumstances. How like us all! I expect that some of our younger brethren feel a bit disillusioned at times, despondent and discouraged by all the confusion and the ups and downs which mark the Christian pathway, but it has never been very much different.

The point raised in Hebrews, in relation to ourselves, is whether we will go through in relation to divine things. The house has been established; it has been built and Christ is Son over the house. No one can unseat or displace His position. He has His rights and His authority in the house of God down here,

and I have to submit to Him and so do you. It is not your house, it is not mine. If you go into someone's house (if you are well mannered) you submit to the arrangements that are in it. How simple it would make things in our administration if we realised it is God's house. There is not any place for human ideas to come in and change things; we are to submit to God's ordering.

It now adds, "If indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end". The "boldness" would be the exercise of faith, and the "boast of hope" the coming of the Lord. These two things then, the exercise of faith in relation to the maintenance of what is for God down here and the boast of hope in the imminent coming of the Lord, are things we are to lay hold of.

Praise in the House

I refer now to the three basic features of the house of God. Peter speaks about praise. Notice how he begins this little section: "to whom coming". That is not only coming to have your sins forgiven, but it is a current matter. Peter was thinking of the saints continuing in their links with Christ and not surrendering them.

He was writing to scattered brethren, who might have thought that everything was dispersed. It speaks about those in the dispersion in the first chapter; he writes to them showing that although their circumstances had changed, divine things remained. So he says, "to whom coming, a living stone, cast away indeed as worthless by men". That was so when He was crucified. Peter brings that condemnation against them in Jerusalem. "He is the stone which has been set at nought by you the builders, which is become the corner stone" (Acts 4:11).

So we come to the first feature of the house. "To whom coming ... as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God." To fill that out I have to find others like-minded, who are living stones as well, who desire to provide a place morally suitable for the celebration of the supper where the Lord Jesus can be remembered, where His precious death can be set forth as a demonstration to the world that we are believers on Him and that we love Him. As the saints come together to remember the Lord, He comes in Himself and leads the praise; the spiritual sacrifices offered are acceptable to God. It is a wonderful experience that cannot be imitated. Let us come together, dear brethren, not only physically, but morally and spiritually, to be led by Him in offering these spiritual sacrifices.

You may wonder what a spiritual sacrifice is. It is an impression of Christ, some ray of His glory. If you are not sure how to express it ask the Spirit of God to help. To say 'Lord Jesus, how much we love Thee', is a spiritual sacrifice. It is not too simple for the Lord and it delights His heart. Or we can tell the Father of our appreciation for His Son. That is a spiritual sacrifice.

The House of Prayer

Now I would refer to Matthew's gospel. Jesus entered the temple of God and cast out all that sold and bought, overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of those that sold the doves and said, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer".

If we are in the house of God we are to think of all men everywhere. Paul says to Timothy, "I will therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up pious hands" (I Timothy 2:8). Luke's gospel shows Jesus as a Man of prayer. If we pray we will increase in power, for the secret of power is prayer. So God says: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the peoples" (Isaiah 56:7).

Every interest of God is represented in His house. He is thinking of all men, and is cognisant of the catastrophes that occur. He expects to hear supplication from His people in relation to them.

Entry to God's House

Now I go quickly on to preaching. God's house is to be filled. God wants us to be evangelical in our outlook. I would seek to arouse your interest in relation to this. We see the day growing darker with the increase in Satan's power and the black clouds of God's judgment, and this should make us earnest in our desire for the blessing of men. God wants His house to be full. In the parable Jesus told He spoke of persons who were compelled to come in. Those who were initially invited refused, so the poor, crippled, lame, and blind (the remnant of Israel) came in. Subsequently the highways, the fences and the uttermost ends of the earth have been reached by the light of the gospel. I trust then that we shall increase in evangelical activity. Bring persons in that they might enjoy the fulness of God's house and find the spiritual resources among the saints that are inexhaustible.

Conduct in God's House

Now we come to something which should concern us all. Paul says, 'I have written to you, Timothy, hoping to come to you, but if I delay...' How long the absence of Paul has been but there is no need to give up God's standards. Paul wrote so that Timothy might know how to conduct himself in God's house.

The first epistle to Timothy shows the house of God in its normal setting, as it was set up in divine order, energised by the Spirit and maintained by apostolic power. The deportment to mark men and women is there to be read and we are to conduct ourselves accordingly. Our mode of conduct is to be in keeping with God's house. We are to represent God.

People watch and they know if you are set in relation to the things of God. Some years ago when a young sister was at her work someone said to her, 'I would like to have what you have; you are different'. Through the grace of God she was later converted. There was something in that sister's deportment and manner that commended itself to this person and produced a longing to get

the blessing. Would you like to be like that? We have a sense of satisfaction and peace in the soul that testifies to a restless world, a world filled with entertainment, enjoyment and excitement but how empty it is.

May we learn to conduct ourselves in God's house which is the assembly, the pillar and base of the truth. It cannot be overthrown even though the assembly publicly is in complete ruin and any attempt to rebuild it outwardly will only end in failure as we have proved.

Judgment in God's House

Now I have three minutes left! and I want to touch upon judgment. Judgment shall begin at the house of God. You will find that Peter in his epistle is referring to the ninth chapter of Ezekiel when those that had charge of the city were told to go through the city and smite those who were guilty of idolatrous conduct. How solemn when God's glory left Jerusalem. It had been His place of dwelling but it was taken away and the people were taken captive to Babylon. It is a picture of what has happened to the assembly publicly; it is in captivity to the world. So the time of judgment has begun at the house of God. It is a time when things are assessed and our judgment is to be in accord with the throne.

In Ezekiel 43 the glory of the God of Israel returns and it lights up the whole earth and it fills the house. The Man standing by said, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever; and the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, they nor their kings, with their fornication..."(v.7). Then verse 12 says: "This is the law of the house..." Judgment therefore is to be impartial and fair. Let us learn to judge things in accordance with the throne. When Christ judges this earth it will be in absolute righteousness; it will be absolutely fair. Nobody will complain that it was not done as it should be. The great white throne will be the same.

Well, let it be so in our local settings. I appeal to my brethren that we might have respect unto the throne. Grace is the ruling principle of the throne at the present time; righteousness underlies it, but grace reigns through righteousness. Grace is the principle and therefore it is what underlies the enjoyment of holy conditions in God's house. The saints are set together in divine affection, loving one another. God's house is the place of most blessed affection. If we realised it more it would do away with many things which come in to spoil our relations together. We realise that God loves us and desires us to enjoy His presence down here. Soon it is to be above in the Father's house

Remember therefore the three 'Ps': praise, prayer, and preaching in relation to God's house. Other things enter into it like care, eldership, overseership and deacon service. May the Lord help us to do what is needed to further His interests here.

May He bless His word.

David Bond

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT FAMILY LIFE

The extract which follows is taken from "Living together God's way" and is used with permission of the Scripture Gift Mission. The only change that has been made is that quotations are from the Darby translation of the Bible. Copies of the booklet "Living together God's way", using a combination of NIV/GMB, are available from SGM free of charge for personal distribution. Their address is:

Scripture Gift Mission
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LIVING TOGETHER GOD'S WAY

HEALING THE WOUNDS

Married life may have its difficult patches. To admit this is not failure. Breakdown is not inevitable because with God there is always hope. He can strengthen us to face any situation.

God said: "My grace suffices thee; for my power is perfected in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you should abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Cast all your care upon him, for he cares about you. (1 Peter 5:7)

We also boast in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works endurance; and endurance, experience; and experience, hope; and hope does not make ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

A fresh start is possible

If thou, Jah, shouldest mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee.. (Psalm 130:3-4)

After his unfaithfulness King David wrote:

Be gracious unto me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the abundance of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me fully from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin...Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not the spirit of thy holiness from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and let a willing spirit sustain me. (Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12)

Jesus said: "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Children are a gift from God—special in His sight

And they brought little children to him that he might touch them. But the disciples rebuked those that brought them. But Jesus seeing it, was indignant, and said to them, Suffer the little children to come to me; forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say to you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter into it. And having taken them in his arms, having laid his hands on them, he blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

The Bible gives advice for bringing them up

Discipline is important...

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. (Proverbs 19:18)

Train up the child according to the tenor of his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

Chasten thy son, and he shall give thee rest, and shall give delight unto thy soul. (Proverbs 29:17)

...but it must be exercised in an atmosphere of love

And ye fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Fathers, do not vex your children, to the end that they be not disheartened. (Colossians 3:21)

And ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul...And ye shall teach them unto your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou goest on the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

Children also have responsibilities...

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest be long-lived on the earth. (Ephesians 6:1-3)

My son, observe thy father's commandment, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother; bind them continually upon thy heart.. (Proverbs 6:20-21)

...and these continue into adult life

But if any one does not provide for his own, and specially for those of his house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than the unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)

Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. (Proverbs 23:22)

But thou, abide in those things which thou hast learned, and of which thou hast been fully persuaded, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the sacred letters, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

THE FAMILY AND PRAYER

Help is available in all these things. The Christian family can bring everything to God in prayer through Jesus Christ.

Be careful about nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus...But my God shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 & 19)

Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we have not a high priest not able to sympathise with our infirmities, but tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart. Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Jesus shows us how to pray

...he said to them, When ye pray, say, Father, thy name be hallowed; thy kingdom come; give us our needed bread for each day; and remit us our sins, for we also remit to every one indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation. (Luke 11:2-4)

Jesus needs to be at the heart of every family

A man once asked Christ's followers: "What must I do that I may be saved?" They replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spoke to him the word of the Lord, with all that were in his house...And...he...rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God. (Acts 16:30-32 & 34)

Jesus said: "As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you: abide in my love. If ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love...I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full. (John 15:9-11)