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# *Living Water*

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## THE LOVE OF JESUS — PART 2

**“Now there was at table one of his disciples in the bosom of Jesus, whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23)**

John in his gospel speaks about “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. He does not tell us who it was but I have no doubt that it is John’s way of referring to himself. It is not that he claimed to be more loved than any other who belonged to the Lord, but he did seem to have a special appreciation and enjoyment of the love of Jesus.

I think John may have started off as a disciple of John the baptist. He does not tell us who the second man was of the two who followed Jesus. One was Andrew and it has been suggested that the other one could possibly have been John. They heard John the baptist saying: “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:36), and were attracted to Jesus and followed Him. They spent the day with Jesus (John 1:39). What a day it must have been. How He would have won their affections.

So you can understand that when the moment came when Jesus called the two sets of brothers— Peter and Andrew, and James and John — they answered immediately. They ran the ships on shore and followed Him (Luke 5:10-11). John became a follower of Jesus and the Lord worked with him, as He does with every one of us. I believe the Lord has in mind to make us more lovable to Himself. The Lord dealt with the son of thunder character in John (see Mark 3:17). The Lord said, ‘No, John, that is not to be the spirit’, and He put into John His own Spirit, the Spirit of the heavenly Man, so John became more like his Master.

John had his place in the bosom of Jesus. As far as the twelve were concerned it seems to have been special to John. Yet I believe that it is open to every one of us, to be so in the affections of Jesus that we are close to Him. I am sure it is true that at the present time some are closer to the Lord than others. It is good to recognise that and to keep near to those who are near the Lord. Peter learned that. John was in the bosom of Jesus and Peter had a question which he puts to John to ask and John got the answer. Keep near to those who are near to Jesus and we will be drawn nearer ourselves! Draw on the impressions of those who are in the experience of the love of Jesus.

At the cross the Lord entrusted His mother to John. He knew He could trust him. It says, “from that hour the disciple took her to his own home” (John

19:27). The Lord's trust was immediately acknowledged. Most of us are in small localities and we often pray that there might be others converted or who desire to walk in the path. This challenges me as to whether I am trustworthy. Could the Lord trust a new convert into our care? I am sure it is all part of keeping near to Jesus, conscious of His love, able to embrace one in whom God is working. John embraced the Lord's mother in his affections and took her to his home. I am sure that she was safe and happy there.

After the Lord rose from the dead the disciples had a little lesson to learn. Peter said, "I go to fish" (John 21:3). John allowed himself to come under a wrong influence. It does not tell us what John's thoughts were but if John had been true to his convictions I think he would have said, 'Peter, the Lord has called us away from that line of fishing. The Lord told us when we ran our ships on shore that we were going to be fishers of men.' John could have helped Peter at that point but went with him and they spent the night fishing and caught nothing. The Lord was not in charge of that expedition at all.

I am sure it was all part of the disciples' education and the Lord said, "Children, have ye anything to eat? They answered him, No" (John 21:5). The whole night's work had been fruitless. The Lord in His love does not rebuke them. He says, 'Come, I have everything for you' — there was fish, bread, heat, everything they needed. All our resource is to be in Him.

The Lord could entrust John with isolation on Patmos. He was cut off from everything but they could not cut his links with the Lord. In one sense he was not isolated at all; he says, "I John, your brother and fellow-partaker ..." (Revelation 1:9). His links were with all the saints and there the Lord entrusted him with His word to the seven assemblies (see Revelation chapters 2 & 3). He could trust John to pass on the word faithfully.

John was entrusted, too, with giving us the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him..." (Revelation 1:1), so that we can understand what is coming. We can turn to the Revelation and be intelligent about what God is doing. John finishes up with that message from the Lord Himself, "Yea, I come quickly". John would stimulate us to say, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). That is the thought of one who is enjoying the love of Jesus. He can stir the hearts of the saints in view of the Lord's coming.

*George Greeves*

*Extracted from an address at Chippenham, April 2002*

## **THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

It is intended to consider the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. It should stimulate our hearts and encourage us to see that there is a divine Person here with us, One who is working, securing and maintaining what is for God.

### **Acts 2:1-4 & 37-42**

In Acts 2 we read of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Lord had died, been raised and gone on high. Consequent on that the Holy Spirit has come here to glorify the Man in heaven (See John 16:14). The Spirit came as tongues of fire. That was what the disciples needed — power from on high (see Luke 24:49). They were to speak with divine power and to be maintained during the Lord's absence. The Lord had told them, "ye will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The tongues of fire sat "upon each one of them". It was an amazing thing and it was visible. It was to mark out the fact that a divine Person had come down here below to indwell believers.

The first thing in the Acts is that the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they began to speak with other tongues. It was so the gospel might be made known to people from a variety of nations and souls gathered in — added to the church: "there were added in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). The Holy Spirit came to secure and to seal those who form the church. These two thoughts help us to keep in perspective the formation of the assembly or the body of Christ here on earth.

When the Lord was here, God was here, manifest in flesh (2 Timothy 3:16). Now the Holy Spirit is here and God is here in the Spirit. We do not think of that as much as we should. As we are here today we should have a sense that God's presence is here. The Spirit of God, we might say simply, is in charge during the absence of Christ. We are not left to our own devices. He is in us individually and He is with the church.

The church and the testimony of our Lord are in the care of the Holy Spirit during the time of Christ's absence. Evidence of this is found in Acts 13

where we get the Holy Spirit's direct speaking in view of the service of Barnabas and Saul. There was an underlying state in the assembly in Antioch where the Spirit was free to make His mind known. They were "ministering to the Lord and fasting". There was love and service for the Lord and at the same time there was a judging of the flesh. All this made a receptive atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to make His mind known.

In Acts 16 there is another reference to the direction of the Holy Spirit: "having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" and "the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them" (Acts 16:6 & 7). It is good to see both sides — the positive impulses and direction evidenced in, "the Holy Spirit said..." (Acts 13:2); then we see the Spirit of God forbidding. We should all be concerned to be sensitive to what the Spirit of God would say. We will not go wrong if we listen to Him. We all have our own thoughts and it is very easy to be carried away by modern or current christian thinking. The Spirit of God works within the terms of holy Scripture.

Another thought in relation to the Holy Spirit is that of 'breath'. The Spirit brings new life. At Pentecost there was "a violent impetuous blowing" (Acts 2:7). In Ezekiel we read, "Come from the four winds O breath" (Ezekiel 37:9). It is the Spirit of God energising the believer.

The Spirit of God is working to secure that which is for the heart of Christ and for the praise and worship of God. In Acts 2 at Pentecost we see how it began. When we come to the latter part of chapter 2 the service of Peter is made effective through the power of the Spirit. "They were pricked in heart, and said... What shall we do, brethren? And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptised, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:39). Through the power of the Spirit their consciences were affected. That is exactly the way we have come. In the power of the Spirit of God we have believed; our consciences have been affected so that we repent and we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then the work of the Holy Spirit in us leads to something flowing out from us which is of Christ.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is an important part of the gospel. Our need is met in the "remission of sins"; then there is the "gift of the Holy

Spirit” (Acts 2:38). The consciousness in a new believer’s soul of the gift of the Holy Spirit is very important. God has provided everything necessary for our care. He has provided a Saviour to save us from our sins and He has given His Holy Spirit to be with and in us. It is through the Spirit that we have the consciousness of forgiveness, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, that we know the reality of sonship and many other christian blessings.

We are to know that we have the Spirit just as much as those at Pentecost knew it. We become conscious of the love of God, we hate sin and we have desires to please God; all these things are the simple evidence of the presence of the Spirit. We cannot understand the things of God with our natural minds. We have the Holy Spirit to help and guide us.

Verse 42, where we read, speaks of “perseverance”. The effect of the coming of the Spirit was that: “they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers”. We see in that something of what the church is to be as a result of the Spirit’s activity and service. There are definite things to persevere in. Do let us persevere. The Spirit will help us. Perseverance, as the Holy Spirit enters into it, is lifted from a matter of duty into something that the heart delights to do. The Holy Spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance”; He brings the things of God livingly to us so that we may rejoice in them.

### **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**

In 1 Corinthians we see that, “in the power of one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body”. This encompasses every believer who receives the Spirit; all are baptised by one Spirit into one body. The baptism of the Spirit is something that the Lord does. He alone can baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire. That is what took place at Pentecost. Water baptism is a separation from the world but the baptism of the Spirit brings the believer into the body. The baptism of the Spirit sets aside what is national; Jew and Greek came into one body. The various distinctions that mark us naturally are set aside. We are baptised into one body. Things were not working properly at Corinth; they were full of their own distinction and importance



and the truth of the baptism of the Spirit was the answer to that. It has been said that the Spirit dwells in the house and forms the body. It is an inward working that keeps us together. In the power of the Spirit we are able to work together.

We see it in operation in Antioch in Acts 13. There were in the church there those from different nationalities and those of different social standing, but they merged together in “ministering to the Lord and fasting”. That is the body working. All are to take direction from the Head and to work as one. You cannot have a living body without a head giving direction. Wonderfully we have a Head in heaven and the body is here on earth. We have been joined together, baptised, “in the power of one Spirit into one body” — that cannot be annulled. It will be seen demonstrated in the day to come.

What affects the body affects the Head. It is very significant that the apostle Paul’s ministry is largely connected with “the body, the assembly”. His first contact with Christ in heaven was in relation to how he (Saul of Tarsus) had been treating Christ’s body on earth. The Lord’s question to him was, “Why persecutest thou me?” That impression from Christ never left him.

In the latter part of the chapter Paul gives us some practical illustrations of the working of the body. He speaks of being affected when others are under pressure or rejoicing when they rejoice, and of appreciating what others contribute. There is a diversity that we are to value and we are to respect all that the Spirit of God is doing. God has set certain in the assembly — all have a part to play.

### **Ephesians 2:18-22**

In Ephesians we read, “we have both access by one Spirit to the Father”. We have been secured, then baptised by one Spirit into one body but now we have access by the same Spirit to the Father. In the Jewish order the priests had access only into the holy place and the high priest was allowed only once a year to go into the holy of holies. Now we have access through Christ by one Spirit to the Father and that is the privilege of every believer. It is wonderful that we have this upward access and it is through Christ, by

the Spirit. We are sustained, we are supported, we are encouraged to go into the Father's presence.

It means that the Father is available and we have a way in. The high priest went in by blood. Now, the Lord Jesus has shed His precious blood and our access is through Him, the One who has done all to the entire satisfaction of God. The Father would have us take advantage of the place to which we in grace are brought.

There is a building going on here; the house is the habitation of God in the Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost made the church the house of God. As Paul could write to the Ephesians, "all the building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the Lord". It is holy and it is a temple. The idea and the objective is praise and worship. This would encourage us in a day of ruin and failure. This is what is being carried forward on the divine side.

### **Revelation 22:17**

In the passage we read we find a further view of the service on earth of the Holy Spirit: "the Spirit and the bride say, Come". It is not just the Spirit saying "Come"; nor is it just the bride saying, "Come". What a wonderful moment is about to burst upon our souls as we go up to be with the Lord. The Spirit has been working for nearly 2000 years and soon that precious service will be completed. The call is a present matter. Scripture speaks here, not of what will be said, but of what is said. Are our hearts longing for Christ? Are we longing to be with Him where He is? If we are that is the result of the Spirit's work in our souls.

The bride is being formed now; she is precious to Christ and is to be for Him. This call of the Spirit and the bride draws forth an answer from the Lord. His response is: "Yea, I come quickly" (v.20). Then John adds, "Amen, come Lord Jesus". He was in line with the divine mind. We should seek that this should be true for each one of us.

*Marcus Chapman*

*Based on a Bible reading at Chandler's Ford, 29th November 2003*

## GREAT DAYS

O wondrous day when God, who made  
The heavens, made earth below;  
The morning stars, the sons of God,  
Are stirred and praises flow. (Job 38:7)

More wondrous day when Christ was born,  
The skies were filled with praise;  
How bright the heavenly glory shone,  
Upon that day of days! (Luke 2:10-14)

O solemn day, turned into night  
When Christ was crucified!  
Yet through that darkness we have light;  
We live because He died. (Luke 23:44)

Triumphant day when He arose,  
The Firstborn from the dead,  
Victorious over all His foes,  
Of all creation Head. (Matthew 28:6)

O glorious day when Jesus comes  
To take His power and reign,  
As King of kings and Lord of lords,  
Jesus the Lamb once slain. (Hebrews 9:28)

Then finally, the day of God,  
God all in all shall be,  
His tabernacle then with men,  
In love's complacency. (2 Peter 3:13)

*Charles Deayton (1959)*

## TOMORROW

Korah and his rebellious band  
Raised their seditious voice —  
'Tomorrow', Moses, patient, said,  
'God will make known His choice!'

Flesh wants to rush and settle things  
Itself to vindicate —  
The man of God possessed his soul.  
Faith can afford to wait! (Numbers 16:5)

When famine filled Samaria  
With dire calamity,  
'Tomorrow', said the prophet calm,  
'Abundance there will be!' (2 Kings 7:1)

When mighty armies Judah pressed  
'Neath infidel command,  
'Tomorrow', said the singer bold,  
'Our God will show His hand!' (2 Chronicles 20:14-19)

O wondrous lesson for us now,  
When Satan presses sore,  
The issue leave in God's own hand,  
Thou'lt praise Him yet the more

*Charles Deayton (1962)*

## SALVATION IS OF THE LORD

How great is the salvation  
Which we find, Lord, in Thee!  
The sure unfailing refuge  
Of all who to Thee flee;

All power to Thee is given,  
To Thee whose blood was shed,  
O'er every foe victorious,  
The Firstborn from the dead!

Our Covert from the tempest,  
Our Shelter from the storm,  
Stronghold in time of trouble,  
Protector from all harm;

Our strength in all our weakness,  
Our comfort in distress,  
Our joy in times of sorrow,  
Our stay when foes oppress;

Our peace in scenes of turmoil,  
Our light through all the night,  
Our succour in the conflict,  
Our victory in the fight.

We cannot do without Thee,  
We need Thee all the way,  
Beneath Thy wing then keep us,  
Blest Saviour, every day;

Proving Thy great salvation  
From every hostile power,  
Our Rock, our Shield, our Fortress,  
Thy name a mighty tower.

Soon there above in glory,  
We'll see Thee face to face,  
And, in Thy blissful presence,  
Drink fully of Thy grace.

Faith will be changed to seeing,  
Earth's trials ever o'er,  
Exchanged for bliss eternal  
With Thee, Lord, evermore.

*Charles Deayton (1932)*

## **RICH IN MERCY**

Come, let us sing of sovereign love,  
The fountain head of all our joy,  
It had its source in heaven above,  
Its praise let every tongue employ.

We'll sing of mercy infinite,  
Extol the matchless grace of God;  
Our praise shall be with great delight,  
Of Jesus, and His precious blood.

Of Jesus, glorious Son of God,  
The spotless Lamb, for sinners slain,  
Jesus, whose precious, precious blood  
Has washed our souls from every stain.

O let the song on earth begun,  
Rise higher, filling heaven above,  
Flowing from hearts divinely won  
To God's own heart, the source of love.

*Charles Deayton (1945)*

## I SAW SOMEONE WITH A FORGIVEN PAST

Taking a deep breath he said, 'You know you said that Jesus died in order to pay for sin? Well, I have been thinking...can God forgive all sins, every sin, any sin?'

I looked at his troubled face and wondered why he was asking. 'Would you believe me if I said "Yes"?' I asked.

'I am not sure, because I am not sure that God can forgive any sin' he replied.

'If I showed you that in the Bible it clearly says that God can forgive all sin...would you believe it?' I asked.

His face cleared a little and he replied, 'You can trust the Bible can't you?'

I opened my Bible and showed him the verse, "...the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin". He looked at it thoughtfully and then smiled. It was like the sun shining after a storm. 'That's it isn't it!' he said. God can forgive all sin.

He looked at me and said, 'Five years ago, I did something very wrong and ever since I have felt so guilty and I thought that God could never forgive me...now I see that He can.'

'What should I do to make sure that God does forgive me?' he next asked.

'Ask Him...pray. Tell Him that you are sorry for your sins, all your sins. Tell God that you believe that Jesus died in order to pay for your sin, ask God to take control of your life and then you can be sure He has forgiven you.'

Away he went with a new spring in his step. I thought about the words of Jesus, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". The next time we met he said, 'I did it, you know; I asked God to forgive me and I really believe He did'.

As he went away I saw someone with a forgiven past, an improved present and a perfect future with Christ in heaven, together with all those who have admitted their sins, believed God and become disciples of the Shepherd, who loved them and gave Himself for them.

*Andrew Taylor*

*Extracted from “Lasting Peace — Changed Lives” published by Christianity Today.*

## **WHAT THE FLESH IS BEFORE GOD**

(Extracts from the notebook of Frank Purday)

God made a trial of the first man in Eden, and man failed. He then left him to himself until the flood — corruption and violence filled the earth. Then after the flood, man was given another trial. Again there was still more grievous departure, manifested in the building of babel and the worshipping of idols. Then God called out Abraham, He would have a chosen people. They went down into Egypt, but He brought them out and dwelt among them. Eventually He had to retire from them, and they were carried into captivity, so that His name was blasphemed among the Gentiles. When He restored them to their land, and sent His Son, they said, “This is the heir; come let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours”. Under every trial man has failed, and the result has been that the Lord would not commit Himself unto man, even when he believed on Him, “for he knew what was in man”.

*J. B. Stoney (11:196)*

I find things here as He left them — the world as unwilling to accept me when I am like Him as it was to accept Him; opposing and hindering me as it did Him. And seeing that it is in order that we should represent Him here during His absence that He has left us here, how imperative it is that we should walk in His steps...

*J. B. Stoney (12:38)*

Christ’s death was God’s judgment upon man. What came out at the flood was, “the end of all flesh” — not sin — “is come before me”. Everyone



admits that sins must be put away but besides that, the thing that committed sins must go. There is atonement for sins, but there is no atonement for sin. Christ has appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. What people have thought to improve or get atonement for must go.

*J. B. Stoney (6:50)*

The death of Christ is the declaration of God's righteousness and love. In the death of Christ — the cross — is a real demonstration of God's thought for man, but it was also the end of that man before God; the death of Christ was both declarative and judicial. If all that was of God was to come out, God took care to demonstrate the true condition of man before Him. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." That is the declaration of God's love. Man, in hanging Christ on the tree, only demonstrated his own wickedness, and man's true place in regard of God, but there was also in it the declaration of the love of God.

*F. E. Raven (13:235)*

The first covenant only became valid by death — the blood of calves and goats. The new covenant is established in the death of Christ, the death of the Testator, so the disposition of God is shown out. The new covenant becomes thus a means of teaching the disposition of God towards us. There is a great contrast between the two covenants; in the first, man after the flesh was recognised and God was hid. In the second, man after the flesh was annulled and God was revealed

*F. E. Raven (19:540)*

The earth has been affected by three things: darkness, hatred, and lawlessness. They are the three principles that have come in, and by which man have been affected. Well, I think the coming of the Lord, the bringing in of eternal life, brings in righteousness, love, and light, and just as the world has been affected by darkness, hatred, and lawlessness, so in the coming of the Lord, the earth will be affected by what He brings.

*F. E. Raven (16:97)*

The death of Christ is the stain on the glory of the world. Where Christ was made sin all the glory of Man was cast into the burning! As the apostle says,

“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world”. That is the position of the christian down here, and the desire of every true christian would be to be maintained in consistency with the death of Christ. Not a single bit of the glory of this world is for God.

*F. E. Raven (12:24)*

Every sinner is under the righteous judgment of God because he has the nature of a sinner. You see it in a baby; the nature shows itself. When God addressed Adam, what did He say? Not, ‘What hast thou done?’ but, “Where art thou?” Adam hid himself because of what he was. He said, “I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself”.

God said to the woman, “What is this thou hast done?” She had believed the lie of the devil when he told her, “Ye shall not surely die”. To man’s eye they did not die, but in God’s sight from that moment, man was morally dead. How slow all our hearts are to accept the place of death.

*J. B. Stoney (6:94)*

There is no room for God, and that which is of God in this world. So much the more perfect therefore is the love which brought Him down to earth. But He began in a manger and ended on the cross, and along the way He had not where to lay His head.

*J. N. Darby (“Synopsis of the books of the Bible” Vol. 3 p.209)*

It is one of the saddest proofs of Satan’s power over men that so many are found who really hate the thought of redemption. This will culminate in the last act of the ten kings and the beast; they will “make war with the Lamb”.

*C. A. Coates (“Outline of the Revelation” p.234)*

References, given only so that any extract may be considered in its context if desired, where expressed by numbers only, relate to the “New Series” editions of the ministry of the individuals named. The reference to the first extract in this article is given as (11:196), i.e. the extract is taken from the “Ministry of J.B.Stoney” (New Series) Volume 11, page 196. Other references are given in full, e.g. “Outline of the Revelation”, together with a page reference.

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## THINGS ENTRUSTED TO US — THE HOUSE OF GOD

### Leviticus 8:33-36

In the last two issues we have looked at our natural life and our service as things entrusted to us from God. Now we come to what is even greater. In Leviticus 8. we read of that most sacred trust which was entrusted to the priests. It is a large subject, but I would like to put it briefly for the prayerful consideration of our hearts. The greatest privilege and the greatest trust that our God has put before us and committed to us is that of the interests of the house of God.

Wonderful light has been given as to the truth of the house of God. The privilege that belongs to God's assembly, its love and joys, its liberty, its links, have come to us. This sacred trust has been committed to us as having the light of this great truth, and our God would have us consecrated that we might take up "the charge of the Lord", and that we might be true to this holy trust.

Do we think of this holy matter when we are inclined to pursue our own way, to choose our own path, or to decide for ourselves where we shall live, what occupation we shall take up and what we shall do? Are we having regard to this trust — the love and joy of the house of God, and its holy service which has been entrusted to us, and which it is our privilege to carry as the charge of the Lord? We do well to remember the exhortation of the prophet when he said, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord", that we may "come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing". There is committed to us a holy trust; only the consecrated priests may carry the ark. Only those devoted to God and to His pleasure and His glory can carry out the service of the house of God, for all these are holy things. This holy trust carries with it wondrous spiritual blessing, but also a call for consecration, holiness and separation, as becomes those bearing the holy vessels of the Lord.

The charge of the Lord is connected with the seven days of consecration which cover the whole of our lives. Our lives are made up of weeks of seven days. We are privileged to start with the Lord's supper, when we

may touch assembly privileges and joys together as sitting before the Lord engaged in the holy service of God.

From this we may take up, in His fear, and with holy hands, our business life, and our home life. Even the boys and girls in their school life may come under the impress of the Lord's own hand. Seven days our consecration has to be maintained, and when that week is completed we begin another with praise and worship. So our whole life is made up of seven days of consecration to the Lord. Is it not a wonderful trust? It is well worth while to consider it in all its seriousness.

Then as we see the children growing up among us, one after another coming to the age of intelligence, we may regard them as those whom the Lord has put into our midst to take care of for Him. They are part of the holy trust He has committed to us. Are we concerned that they should get help and encouragement through His people? They are connected with His interests, for He would have them enjoy the privileges of the house of God. Are we concerned, too, that there should be a living testimony in the gospel in power and blessing? Are we all taking up our privileges from the assembly that there may be praise Godward and blessing manward? All these things are within our reach.

There are many things which we cannot explain but which we can enjoy. I once went to the bedside of a dear old blind person and asked her, 'Do you know the Lord?' Her reply was wonderful, she said, 'I have been talking to Him all the morning'. She was in touch with the house of the Lord. She could not have explained the doctrine of it, but she could give the impression of its liberties. Her heart was free to be in communion with the Lord. The simplest can enjoy the liberty and fatness of the house of God even though they may not be able to express much. Joy does not lie in our ability to explain these things, but in the power of the Spirit of God, though doubtless if we enjoyed them more we should find we could express more.

May we be more true to the charge which God has entrusted to us! The trust will soon be over. A few short days and the special opportunities we now have will be past for ever. May we realise the greatness, the sweetness

and the preciousness of the privileges God has committed to us as a sacred trust — the joys of His own house and all that belongs to it!

*F. S. Marsh*

*This concludes the series on the “Things Entrusted to Us”*

## **THE DEATH OF CHRIST**

The Lord Jesus Christ has given Himself a sacrifice for sins. He has gone down into death so that we may live. In the power of the Spirit we are brought to appreciate that death, and all the love that was expressed in it; we live by it.

It is only by the Holy Ghost that we can appreciate the love that made Him die; but as having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts we are brought to love Christ, and to love those that are His. We become taken up by His interests; we are no longer influenced by the things of this world, but we are nourished by the bread of heaven. How we need to know Him who has died for us! He has died so that life might be brought within our reach; we live by His death. How it touches the heart!

The only thing that can keep us in days of weakness and ruin such as we are is the exercise of spiritual affections. Think of the Corinthians: they could speak with tongues, and perform miracles of healing, but what was the good of it all? There was very little love there, and the apostle could only speak of them as babes. If our souls are nourished in the love of Christ, we shall not be so much occupied with gifts (they will be there all the same), but we shall love, and in loving we shall know life.

Surely our hearts must go after Him who died for us! How can we take honour from a scene from which He has been cast out? How we shall long to be in His company, to enjoy the scene of life He has opened to us through His death.

*Venkata Krishna Rao*

## **CHRIST IN AUTHORITY**

**Luke 7:1-10**

**Acts 4:5-14**

The link between these two scriptures is that in both we find what is official. The Roman centurion called the Lord's attention to the fact that he was in a position of authority; the proof of it being that those placed under his control would immediately obey. He calls the Lord's attention to this not to occupy the Lord with the fact that he was a Roman officer, but as recognising that the Lord was in a position of authority. The authority of the Roman centurion was not the point. In the matter in question, the healing of the servant, the centurion had no power whatever. He might very easily put a man to death, but he could not recover a man from illness, or raise a man from the dead. Not all the authority of the Roman empire was sufficient to restore a man to health, or raise a dead man.

Now, the Lord is in an official place. The idea of an official is right, provided you have the right man in the position of power. If you have that, then you get something good done. This centurion was a kind hearted man. He had built a synagogue and he was concerned for the health of his servant, but how was the servant to be recovered? He says to the Lord, "I also am a man under authority". What he really doing was drawing attention to the fact that the Lord was in authority. He says, "Say in a word and my servant shall be healed". He recognised that the Lord was here on earth, officially delegated, as it were, on the part of God for the good of man. What was the centurion's business. He was there on the part of the emperor, to carry out his decrees and he recognised that the Lord was here with authority from God. This indicates that he had light in his soul, for there was nothing outwardly in Christ that told of His official greatness. Hence the Lord says, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel".

I want to put a question to everyone here to-night, 'Has it ever dawned upon you that the Lord Jesus Christ is installed in office? We all know what it means to be installed. Only recently the President of the United States was installed by the people. A man is put into the supreme office of the nation. Now has it really occurred to you that the Lord Jesus Christ has been installed in the supreme position in the universe, not by the power of the people but by the power of God: "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ".

Now, as to the result of the installation, all depends on the character of the person who is placed in office. Before a man is placed in the supreme office of this nation he has to prove himself. In this country everyone knew publicly the character of the man who has recently been installed as President\*. The American nation took no chance at all from a political point of view when it placed the present man in the position of power. Why? Because he had been tested. He had opportunity to prove his character. Now the Lord Jesus has been tested, and that is what I wish to dwell upon.

The Lord Jesus was down here as a humble Man amongst men and His constant activity was doing good. Can you find a single instance where the Lord did not help those who were in need where He came into contact with them? Take the incidents given in Luke 7. What a marvellous presentation it is of the heart of Christ! The chapter begins with Christ recognised by the centurion as in an official position, and what does He do? He heals a sick man. The Lord was a Man in authority, He only had to speak a word for the servant to be healed.

Now look at the following picture: the woman at the gate of the city of Nain. What will He do now? What could all the power of the empire do

\*A reference to the installation of Theodore Roosevelt as President following the assassination of President McKinley in 1901. Roosevelt was elected in 1904.

for that dead young man being carried out of Nain? Simply nothing! Yet the Lord Jesus had compassion on the widow and raised her son from the dead. I say that is the Man who ought to be in the place of power! I could understand any of the characters in Luke 7 - the centurion, the widow at Nain and the woman who came into the Pharisee's house - saying to themselves, 'What a wonderful thing it would be if that Man were in the place of the emperor'.

Now, what did God do? He has put Christ in the supreme place in the universe. Everywhere the power of Christ will triumph until every hostile power is removed from God's universe. I say it is only what is right and proper, that the meek and lowly Man, the One who died for His people, should be exalted and given the highest place in the heavens.

There is a passage in Acts 5 which supports what I am saying. It reads, "They ceased not teaching and announcing the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 5:42). What were the glad tidings? That Jesus, the Man who would do anything to help people, has been made Lord and Christ! That is good news! Christ has every resource at His disposal.

Look at those poor disciples whom He left down here in a hostile world. He is going up into heaven, to the place of power, will He forget them? No, the very first thing that He did was to pour out upon them the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was what they needed. The Lord Jesus did the very best thing possible for the disciples and for man in the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was the only possible way that the people of God were to be kept in view of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was absent from this world. While Christ was down here He kept them; for He says, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled". Now that He has gone away, how are they to be kept? The only way is through the gift of the Holy Spirit; "He hath shed forth this", says Peter, "which ye now see and hear". The



power of the Holy Spirit was present. The Lord in going to the right hand of power had done the very best He could have done.

Maybe you would like a position in this world. The Lord would not give you such a position, it is not good enough for you! He would give you a place in His own world. He has established a different world from the present one. It is a world entirely of His own order and He proposes to give you and me an abiding place in it. He has nothing less in mind for you. But He would meet your present need. There was the need of the centurion. I do not know what your need is, and perhaps you do not know what it is, but the Lord knows. He knew the centurion's need, and the need of the woman at the gate of Nain, and He meet those needs.

Then the woman in the last part of the chapter who came into Simon's house, what did she need? She needed forgiveness, and she received forgiveness but I do not think that she came only for forgiveness. She had affection. If it had been merely a question of need she would have waited until Christ came out of Simon's house. You must remember that this house was no ordinary house. Simon's house was the house of a Pharisee, and it would be the last place in the world where a woman such as she was would dare to enter and ask forgiveness of Christ. Everything (the whole atmosphere of the place) was against her. If you want to ask a favour of a person, you wait until you find them under the most favourable circumstances, hence, I think if this woman had wanted forgiveness only, she would have waited until the Lord came out.

What do you think took this woman into that place? Christ drew her in! She had affection. The Lord said of her that, "she loved much". Christ had become a magnet to her heart and she saw no barriers. All the barriers are overthrown by love — it is strong as death. Then, this woman had to go out of Simon's house again, and I will tell you why; the house did not belong to Christ. There she was at the Lord's feet weeping, washing His feet with tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head. That woman

was not thinking of forgiveness: what she had before her was Christ. He did forgive her. The Lord says, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much”. The Lord tells her, “Go in peace”. Why had she to go? Because the house was Simon’s. She only came in because Christ was there. She would not have come in otherwise and He did not ask her to stay.

Friend, if you come to Christ tonight, He will never send you away. He will not say, ‘Go’, because He has a house now. The atmosphere is not adverse. It is the best time to come for forgiveness; but do not come for forgiveness only, come for Christ. You will find Him in His house.

You will never find the Lord’s people turning you away: they have love for you. If you want forgiveness, you will find it, but you may stay too. You will not only get a scripture to prove that your sins are forgiven, but you will get the atmosphere of forgiveness amongst the Lord’s people and you will not want to go away.

I wanted to connect Luke 7 with Acts 4, because in the fourth of Acts you get the idea of an official. Peter had preached his third sermon, as far as the scriptural record goes, since the descent of the Holy Ghost. I think that the prominent thought in every one of those sermons was that people had been blessed. That was what he was speaking about: it was the proof of Christ’s exaltation. There was a witness here: the man who had been healed at the gate of the temple was Peter’s witness, he was there with him.

I always read a Scripture myself when I try to speak, and it is necessary to support everything you state by Scripture, but the basis of your preaching is not exactly Scripture. I suppose all will admit that the apostles were the best preachers. Notice how they presented the gospel: Peter quoted Scripture, but the great convincing argument was in the man who had been healed - “Beholding the man which was healed standing with them,

they could say nothing against it". It was undeniable, an evident support to the testimony Peter bore.

I think from Peter's preaching in these three sermons you will get the true idea of preaching; his point in each case was what was there already, what nobody could deny, and this was the result of Christ being made Lord in heaven.

Among the one hundred and twenty were the wonderful things of God. Beloved friends, it may be you do not know much about the things of God. They were all there at the beginning, every one of them, and every single thought of God is wonderful. When the Holy Ghost came into the one hundred and twenty the wonderful things of God were there; all that is in the heart and mind of God.

Believers were talking about these things and Peter stood up and explained the matter. It was a masterpiece, the sermon that Peter preached. It was an explanation that what was there in Jerusalem on that day was consequent on the installation of Christ on high. The best Man, the only Man for the place had been installed into office at the right hand of God, and the result was the presence of the Holy Ghost down here in those that believed.

In the second chapter of Acts Peter preached to the men of Judea and the inhabitants of Jerusalem;; in the third he speaks to the men of Israel. The nation is appealed to, and on what ground? The lame man who had been sitting at the gate of the temple asking alms was there, walking and leaping and praising God. There is the illustrious power of God for good! There is the evidence of it and it cannot be denied.

God takes up every kind of person. Peter addresses the elders of Israel. These latter were Sadducees. They were opposed to God. They were infidels, but God speaks to them through Peter. Yet the groundwork of each sermon was the power of God. Note how he speaks to the elders:

Christ was the Nazarene. He was of no account in their estimation, they had crucified Him, but God had raised Him from the dead and made Him head of the corner. The elders might say, 'Peter, How do you know?' Well, there was a man who was lame from his mother's womb, walking, leaping, and praising God, and they could not say a word. Their mouths were closed. There was the evidence of the power of God.

Now, "Salvation is in none other". I think you can understand that a Man who would save people down here, who spent all His time (and His pleasure was in it) while down here in doing good, would not change His style or occupation when he went to the place of power. He did not change His occupation! Christ has the power of God in His hand and He is using it for salvation. He is not using it to destroy men's lives. He will use that power to destroy the world power. He will clothe Himself with salvation and He will come out in power and destroy everything that opposes or exalts itself against God, but He is not doing that now.

If only you knew the Lord, you would say, 'He is the only Man for the office'. He would do the very best for you and I would encourage every person in the room tonight, not only from what I see in the Scriptures, but from my own knowledge of Christ, to commit themselves into His hands. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"

*James Taylor*

*Shortened version of a preaching of the gospel, New York 1903*