



## *Living Water*

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May — June 2007

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## **BARZILLAI**

### **2 Samuel 19:31-40**

Barzillai was a man who found it very difficult to go on; he says, ‘There are a whole lot of things I cannot do’. He could not hear properly, see properly or taste. It makes you wonder, ‘Is this the same Barzillai that we read of in chapter 17?’ There you find a man walking in freshness of life. He was able to greet David and to bring all sorts of provisions to meet the need of the moment. What has caused the change in Barzillai? Well, in those days Barzillai was thinking of David – typical of Christ. What was before him was the pleasure of the Lord and what he could do for Him. Now, sadly, Barzillai has got himself in view and he loses the enjoyment of his place with David.

I would like to challenge every heart here as to whether we do not sometimes get a little discouraged. It says of Barzillai here that he cannot discern between good and bad. What about our discernment? Perhaps we cannot discern things in the way we did, for things of the world have come in that cloud our vision. In this world there is an acceptance of good for evil and evil for good, and because this is all around us our vision can be affected by it. I would say to young persons today, sharpen your discernment in what is pleasurable to the Lord. There is a great need to be here today as those who can distinguish what is pleasing to Him. The word of God has been established and according to God’s word we can see what is there that is pleasing to Him. We need to have the discernment that results from nearness to Christ and a holy reverence for His word.

Then Barzillai says, “Can thy servant taste what I eat?” In Peter’s first letter we read, “if indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is good” (1 Peter 2:3). Is that what we have tasted? How often our taste is taken up with other things that this world provides. Have we known what it is to enter into the very presence of the Lord and to taste those things that are according to His heart? Barzillai says, ‘I cannot do that any more’. He had lost what he once knew.

Then he says, “Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?” Think of what the Psalmist says in Psalm 143 “Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning” (Psalm 143:8). How encouraging it is to take account of what Christ has done and to hear His words and learn His heart towards us: His loving-kindness in the morning. What are our ears attuned to? Barzillai’s ears had once been rightly attuned, but they were not so now.

Can we take this home to ourselves? In this chapter there is one who goes over

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with David, his name is Chimham – a name that means “Longing”. How many of us still have an earnest longing in our heart to be here for Christ, and to go in for these things? How many have an earnest longing to be in the presence of the Lord and to hear His voice calling to us to come into the very greatest of His thoughts? If He says, ‘Come into the inheritance that I have prepared’, do we find within our hearts a responsive longing to be there?

Barzillai missed out on what Chimham enjoyed. But Chimham went over and so can you. David says, ‘I will maintain you. I will look after you while you are with me. I will take account of you just as you are, whether you are young or whether you are old; whether you are Chimham or whether you are Barzillai’, he says, ‘I will look after you, I will provide everything for you. I can fill your heart’. There is blessing that flows out of coming to Christ and coming into the very place where He wants you to be with Him.

That is what made that place – that David was there. We read that Barzillai returned to his own place, but the king went on. Well, the King is going on. We may think that things are in decline but our Lord and King is going on. Will you be with the King? Is your heart set for the interests of our Lord and King? He is going on and it may be that no one else will take account of it, but will you take account of it? Will you go on with him? The Lord has got great things before Him. The pleasure of God is to prosper in His hand. Are you going to go on with Him and be for Him in the scene of His absence?

It may involve that things here have to be left behind but we go on into the enjoyment of what He provides. Oh, I would that every one of us had those longings and that as considering this scripture together our hearts might be stirred to go on with the King.

*Keith Wickens*

*Extracted from an address at Glasgow, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2006.*

### **THE HISTORY OF OBED-EDOM — 1**

**“And the ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months; and Jehovah blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.”**

2 Samuel 6:11

(John 12:1-2 and Joshua 24:15 were also read)

I want to say something about the importance of the Lord Jesus in the marriage bond. Normally three persons in a marriage is a disaster but where that third

person is the Lord Jesus it makes all the difference. There are many in this room that have been married longer than I have but they would tell you how important it is to make way for the Lord Jesus in our marriages and in our households.

Where I read we have here the ark in the house of Obed-Edom. Now, the ark of the covenant really looks on to Christ. The wood that the ark was made of speaks of His manhood and it was overlaid within and without with gold, which would speak of His divinity. When Christ was here on earth His manhood and His divinity were in perfect accord. There was divine perfection in a Man. Wonderful!

Here today we have two persons who have committed their lives to the Lord Jesus. How wonderful that is. Now, in marriage, they have committed themselves to one another and their home is to be a place where the Lord's name is honoured and where His rights are upheld.

Before the ark was taken into the house of Obed-Edom it had been in the house of Abinadab on the hill. It had been there for a great number of years, and in all those years nothing is said about blessing in Abinadab's house. I do not think the ark, and what it speaks of, was appreciated in that house at all. (See 1 Samuel 7:2). Yet it was three months in the house of Obed-Edom, and God blessed that household. The ark was given its rightful place, a place of honour in that house.

All of us today would want to see the Lord's blessing on S... and T... in their lives together and in their household and this scripture shows the way into it. The ark had its proper place in the house of Obed-Edom. For us today, that means that the Lord's rights are upheld in the house, that you begin the day with the Lord and that you finish the day with Him and that you value His word and His people and that you commit your lives to His service. Well, may T... and S..., and all of us, know something of it.

There are several examples of households that were committed to the Lord given to us in the Bible. In John 12 we have an account of a house that was for the Lord in Bethany. When the Lord Jesus was Man here there were very few places where He could resort, but Bethany was one place where He could go. There was a household there where He was truly loved and where He loved the persons that were there – Martha and Mary and Lazarus. It is wonderful to have a house where the Lord can be restful and in liberty – a

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household where He was free to come.

In married life not all goes smoothly and in the household in Bethany it was not all smooth either. Great sorrow came into this house due to the sickness and death of Lazarus but the Lord is equal to the situation. I can tell you S... and T... that whatever situation the Lord may allow in your lives you will never be in a place where His grace cannot reach you. You may have to face real troubles and difficulty in your pathway. The Lord in His ways may allow that so that you might learn to love Him in a way you might never have appreciated before. Yet He will be there to support you as He was for these persons in Bethany. Think of how the Lord was affected when death came into that household; we are told that He wept at the grave of Lazarus. Yet He came into the situation. S... and T..., wait for the Lord to come into any situation that arises. He surely will do so. He loves you both and you love Him.

I would encourage every one of us here to have houses that the Lord would be free to come into, houses where there is nothing that is offensive to Him and where things are held for His service.

In the Old Testament we have the house of Joshua as an example. Joshua gives a right lead and says: “as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah” (Joshua 24:15). What a thing it would be if all of us, not only S... and T..., but all of us here committed ourselves in this way, each one of us saying, ‘I and my house will serve the Lord’. How much need there is today for persons who will freshly commit themselves to the Lord Jesus while waiting for His return.

I commend that to you. T..., for you will take a lead in this as the head of the house, and I believe you have a wife who will help you in it. I commend this word to you: “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”. The Lord will bless you on that line. The influence of Joshua went on long after his death; persons were affected by the committal that was seen in him. We all have an influence for good or for otherwise. Let us have an influence for good like Joshua had. Let us commit our lives to Christ, let our houses be places where His name is honoured. For His name’s sake.

*David McIntyre,*

*Word at a Marriage, Musselburgh, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006*

## **THE HISTORY OF OBED-EDOM — 2**

**“And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God to me? And David brought not the ark of God home unto himself...but he carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite...And Jehovah blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had.”**

1 Chronicles 13:12-14.

**“And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves upon them as Moses had commanded according to the word of Jehovah... And the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel... and Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the doorkeepers....”**

1 Chronicles 15:15-18, 25.

**“And he appointed certain of the Levites to do the service before the ark of Jehovah, and to celebrate, and to thank and praise Jehovah the God of Israel: Aspah the chief...and Obed-Edom...”**

1 Chronicles 16:4-6.

**“And he left there, before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, Asaph and his brethren, to do the service before the ark continually, as every day’s duty required; and Obed-Edom, and their brethren, sixty-eight; Obed-Edom also, the son of Jeduthan, and Hosha as doorkeepers”**

1 Chronicles 16:37- 38.

I want to follow on with a little more about the history of Obed-Edom. Obed-Edom had a remarkable experience. The ark of God was brought into his house. He did not ask for it to come. According to the scriptural record king David put it there because he was frightened to go any further. You will see from the scriptural record that they had put the ark onto a cart. There was no instruction in the Bible that the ark should be carried like that. The ark of the Lord was to be carried on the shoulder, not on a cart. David had used human expediency, to carry the testimony of God. The testimony of our Lord Jesus does not need human expediency, it needs divine direction. Now, Obed-Edom received the ark into his house and as we have just heard, he was blessed in doing so. T... and S..., as you seek to make your household available to the Lord and take care of His things and His people you will have blessing.

Obed-Edom’s story did not end there. Three months later the ark was moved



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into Jerusalem. David spread a tent and we can read the story of that. But Obed-Edom's name occurs later on in connection with door keeping. Not only was he prepared to take care of the things of God in his house but a wider responsibility was put upon him: that of protecting the testimony of God. There is a great need for that today. So many are detracting from the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. So not only do we need in our homes to make way and make room for the ark but we need to be ready to defend the things of God in a day of difficulty.

Then the next thing we read of Obed-Edom is in connection with singing; he becomes available to praise and worship God with others. We do so desire for you T... and S... that you should be with us in the service of our God as we meet together in the praise and worship of God: our holy privilege.

Obed-Edom's name is found amongst those who are continually serving God. It was not just an occasional matter. Not only was the ark of God in Obed-Edom's house three months but thereafter you find him serving God by way of support, by way of praise and worship and it went on as a daily service continually.

May all of our households be like that. Not just willing to receive the testimony of God into our house and know God's presence and blessing there but may it widen out into the praise and worship of God. As Christ has His right place amongst us there will be continuous and ongoing praise and worship to His name. That is the greatest thing that we can do. T... and S... may it be your portion with us, for His name's sake.

*Marcus Chapman*

*Word at a Marriage, Musselburgh, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006*

Note: It is sometimes suggested that because Obed-Edom is described as a "Gittite" that he was a Philistine proselyte. It is more likely, in view of his history, that he was a Levite from the Levitical city of Gath-Rimmon in Manasseh. It is similarly sometimes claimed that the Obed-Edom of 1 Chronicles 16 is a different person from that of 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13; however the reference in 1 Chronicles 26:4-5, where we read, "...for God had blessed him" would support the view that they are one and the same person. Ed.

## SEVEN LESSONS LEARNED TOO LATE!

**“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table...And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried: And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said... between us and you a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**

Luke 16:19-31

Here is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus died and was carried up to heaven — he entered into glory. Then the rich man also died. What became of him? In Hades lifting up his eyes, being in torment! Our Lord draws aside the curtain, as only He can, and allows us to look beyond the grave. He allows us to look into hell itself and shows us the pains, feelings and desires of a condemned sinner; one who is forever shut up in hell.

There are seven things that he learned, but he learned them too late, he learned them in torment. I pray that no one here will learn these lessons too late. Here are the seven things:

1. Death does not end it all. If a man dies, shall he live again? Indeed we shall. We all have an immortal soul that will live on forever, after our bodies are in the grave. Will you spend eternity in the blessed glory of heaven or in the torment of the condemned in hell?
2. Hell is a real place. Hell is real. The same book and the same Person, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who tells us about heaven and the eternal blessedness

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of the redeemed, tells us about hell and the eternal misery of the lost. I cannot tell you where hell is and I cannot imagine its awfulness, but it is a real place. The rich man found out too late that hell is not a myth.

3. Hell is a place of endless torment. The rich man cried, “I am in torment in this flame”. Hell is a place of mental, moral and physical agony. A place that the Lord Jesus spoke of as “where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:46).

4. A holy God must and will punish sin. God is so just and holy that when at Calvary sin was put upon His own dear Son He poured out His infinite wrath upon Him. Such a God will certainly judge us if we remain in our sins and do not come to know forgiveness through faith in His Son.

5. Christ is the only way of salvation. The rich man’s riches, religion and works were of no value to him in hell. Missing Christ, he lost all.

6. Belief had to be followed by repentance. In hell the rich man realised that if his brothers were not to come to the place where he was they had to repent (See v. 30)

7. The great necessity is to believe the gospel. Be wise and believe the gospel. Trust in Christ now, lest you remain forever under the wrath of God.

*Joel Kyeremateng*

*Word at a burial, Kumasi, Ghana, November 2006.*

## **A PRISONER’S STORY**

I was brought up in the East End of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. My father was a long distance lorry driver and my mother is from Inverness. Violence was part of my life from an early age. Fighting in the schoolyard developed into gang fights and running battles at football matches. I took up boxing to channel my aggression but it only prepared me for the many bar fights that were to come.

I have been in Wormwood Scrubs, Durham, Brixton, Haverigg, Wandsworth, Ashford and Wayland Prisons, all for violence. My first prison sentence was for five charges of assault, three of which were on policemen. When released I was still an angry young man looking for love and acceptance in all the wrong places. Searching for truth I walked the bomb blasted streets of Belfast and went to Goulimine in South Morocco. The bright lights and the girls of London and Paris, the bars of Malaga in Spain, and the waterfront cafes of Amsterdam

## THE UPPER AND THE LOWER SPRINGS

“...the dayspring from on high has visited us..”

(Luke 1:78)

God, in mercy, Thou hast sent  
The Dayspring from on high,  
Shone in upon the darkness here  
And brought Thy kingdom nigh.

In Christ, Thy healing power and  
Was manifest below, grace  
Sent to a lost, benighted race,  
The way of peace to show.

Blest intervention, grace divine,  
Thy sovereign love we see,  
In sending Thine own Son to die,  
From sin to set us free.

Now risen, we see Him glorified  
At Thy right hand above;  
The Dayspring of eternal joy,  
Of everlasting love.

And wondrous gift, Thy Spirit dwells  
Within our hearts today;  
The Wellspring of a living tide  
Which will not pass away.

The Dayspring lighting up our hearts,  
Shining from heaven above.  
The Wellspring here, we're  
doubly blest,  
The fruit, responsive love.

*Charles Deayton*

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afforded me no lasting happiness. Guinness was my drink and I also experimented with drugs, but the buzz does not last forever. Paranoid trips and nights without sleep were wearing me down. I was alone in my sufferings and in the rat race of life I had stopped running!

The Bible says of the prodigal son in Luke 15:17, that “he came to himself”; that means that he came to his senses and was honest about the mess he was in. I made up my mind that I wanted to change, and to find God. I am eternally thankful to God for what happened next.

## THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE

Grace when the sun is shining, Lord,  
Grace when the clouds are black;  
Grace when I get an unkind word  
Grace not to answer back.

Grace when I'm cornered in a nook,  
Grace when I get my turn;  
Grace when the dinner will not cook  
Grace when the fire won't burn.

Grace when my frock is torn and  
old,

Grace when it's fresh and new;  
Grace when my purse is full of gold,  
Grace when it's empty too.

Grace when my duties go all wrong,  
Grace when they all go right!  
Grace when it's gladness, praise and  
song

Grace when I have to fight.

Grace when the midnight hours I tell,  
Grace when the morn is nigh;  
Grace when I'm happy, strong and  
well,

Grace when I come to die.

*Anonymous*

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I prayed, asking God to show me He was real and to help me. I was on bail at the time, expecting to get five years for assault charges (I actually got 18 months). Within two weeks of my prayer two girls stopped me in the street and told me about Jesus. I went to church with one of them and I gave my life to the Lord Jesus Christ on 18th February 1986.

I believed in Jesus as God and as the only Saviour. I surrendered my life to God, I swallowed my pride; I put selfishness to one side and chose to do the will of God and to be led by Him. When you walk with Jesus, you walk in the victory.

*Dougie March*

## THE POLICEMAN'S STORY

I live in the Moray Firth area of Scotland. I was brought up to believe in God and to go to church but like many people, when I reached my teens, I decided to do my own thing. In 1987, when my oldest daughter was almost 3, an event occurred that shook my complacency to the core. She was rushed to hospital in Aberdeen with suspected meningitis.

A work colleague who was a Christian had been telling me about his faith and explained the need for a personal Saviour. He told me how his faith in God had taken him through some difficult times in his life. Sitting in that hospital corridor a doctor approached and told my wife and me that we should prepare ourselves for the worst as our daughter was very ill, possibly with meningitis.

I recalled what my colleague had told me and prayed for the first time in years. I poured my heart out to God and begged Him not to take my daughter. I said that if He gave her back to me I would bring her up to serve Him. I added that if He took her to heaven I would understand, but pleaded with him to let her live. I could not claim any special faith or anything, but the doctor came back later and said that the test was clear and that there was no sign of the meningitis bug in her brain. I was so grateful and happy at the news.

I tried hard to live up to my promise to God and later enrolled both my daughters in a Sunday School but although I went to church a few times, my complacency returned and I was soon back in my old ways, not giving God or Jesus a thought. A couple of years went by, then one day I was driving through Aberdeen with my wife and family. My wife put on a tape and the pop song "Road to Hell" came on. I was suddenly convicted that I was on the road to hell. I had a strong feeling that there had to be more to life than the way I was living but I did not know what to do about it. A few months later I was transferred in the police to the Moray Firth area where another colleague who was a Christian began speaking to me about the need to give my life to Jesus.

On 1st January 1991, I finally surrendered my life to God. I asked Him to forgive me for living my life in my own way and asked Him to come into my life and give me the faith that my Christian friends had. I was suddenly filled with a strong feeling of love and compassion and knew that Jesus had touched my heart. It was as if He had actually entered my heart. I now knew what my friends meant by believing in Jesus.

*George Methven.*

## **THE RICHES AND GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE**

### **Luke 7:40-50**

I wanted to read two other passages further on in the gospel, but I may be detained by what is set out in chapter 7, so I will refrain from reading the other two passages, as this one is the most important.

My thought is to bring before you three points. The first, in relation to Luke 7, is this: God's attitude of grace toward all men in forgiveness. That is where you begin to see that the Lord is gracious — in His forgiveness; indeed this narrative that I have read shows us plainly our first introduction to Christ as the Saviour. For each one of us our first introduction to Him is when we come to know Him as our own precious Saviour. Now my thought was to read a passage later on which sets forth the riches of God's grace as seen in the story of the good Samaritan. Then, thirdly, the glory of God's grace as set forth in the story of the prodigal. These are the three presentations of the grace of God and form great landmarks in Luke's gospel.

One remark I would like to make, that when we are reading the gospels and reading about Jesus, the precious Saviour, the Son of God, we must remember that He is the same to-day as He was then. As He is in this passage, so is He now; the words He spoke have the same divine meaning and power now as then. He is a long way from this world; He is at the right hand of God, having accomplished the will of God and finished that blessed work whereby the grace of God can reach us; He is alive at the right hand of God but His words are living, and the Spirit of God is here to make the reality of His words living and efficacious in our souls.

Another thing, and please pay close attention to it, is that men are just the same morally now as they were when Jesus was here; so that when you are reading the Gospels — such a passage as this — where you get this woman and Simon, they are represented by millions today. It is not a bit of history but similar people are alive now. That is what I want you to see; it makes the Bible so interesting. This woman is alive now; there are many here in our meeting. Do you recognise that? They are persons who have taken this way, and have had this gracious reception; they have heard Christ's voice — not only read of it — but heard it in their souls livingly. I would like you to have the sense of that.

People are today morally the same. I would like to press that upon you. One of the reasons why I love the scriptures is that I am told the naked truth about myself. God never flatters me; He tells me what I am and He shows me in these

personages what I am. I thank God for it. That is why the scriptures are not liked. God never flatters man; He puts him in his right place. What for? That you may find that the good that is in God is greater than the evil in you!

You must come down to find Christ. Let us look at the incident. I did not read the whole of it. The incident you well know. I will recall the fact that over the incident is written this verse. "But wisdom is justified of all her children." That is the text that stands—if I may be allowed to put it like that—over the incident, and immediately we are introduced to this man who invites the Lord to his house. Now there is a man here named Simon, and he invites the Lord into his house. Whatever induced that man to invite Jesus to his house?

There are thousands of Simons, and, thank God there are thousands of wisdom's children still. May you be one of them. Simon invited Jesus into his house. Other guests were welcome, but not Jesus. He was sadly neglected in Simon's house; He felt it and noted it.

Whatever induced that man to invite Jesus to his house? He sought to patronise Christ. That is a principle common at the present time. Christ never came here to be patronised; He came here to be trusted and loved, the blessed Son of God. Simon thought to add something to his own dignity; he thought that Christ was a prophet, and he invited Him to his house, but there was not a single pulsation in Simon's heart towards Christ. Is there one single pulsation in your heart towards Christ? Has He endeared Himself to you? O sad and desolate is the heart that knows Him not! Christ is there in Simon's house, but He is waiting for His child. He is waiting for you. Where is His child? Making her way toward Him—a sad and weary heart, a sin-convicted soul. May you make your way towards Him as you sit here; make your way to Jesus in your sinfulness and weariness, in all that bitter past, may you come to Him. She wends her way and she entered Simon's house, drawn there by her deep need. That is where you learn the reality of Jesus, by your need.

I love to tell God in that psalm I quoted in my prayer that He numbers and names the stars; the infinitude of God is seen in that; He spangled the heavens and upholds it by the might of His power; but He heals the broken-hearted. Jesus has stooped down to my poor broken heart and has healed it, and He is greater in doing that than in creating the universe. May you be conscious of His interest in you; may the preacher be forgotten and His Master, the Lord Jesus, be before you, so shall there be blessing to your heart.

She made her way to Him and stooped down. Not a word escaped her lips. She feels safe there in His presence. She stands behind Him and anoints His feet and



## A Voice from the Past

wipes them with her hair. “How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings”. His feet were beautified by the grace of God. He is God’s Son and He brought the grace of God down here to poor wretched humanity. She stands behind Him and she weeps. Yes, that is the place to weep. Have you not read in the scripture, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made. . . saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.” I will look on such, says the Lord. You cannot do anything for God. It is no good people trying to patronise Christ. He does not want that; He wants you — your love. You cannot do anything for Him; He wants to do all for you. She stood there behind Him. She washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

Simon looked on with a dark frown. He had no appreciation of Christ. Simon is really saying, ‘I am rich, I am religious, I am respectable, I am clever, I am this, that, and the other’. That is Simon. But she says, ‘I am nothing’ — but she found Christ there. I found Him there too, and you will find Him there. I am nothing. That is where you find Christ. Do you say, ‘I am religious’, or ‘I am respectable’? All that keeps you at a distance, but the moment you come down to ‘I am nothing’ — ‘on this man will I look’, says the Lord, ‘I will look on him that is of a contrite heart’.

Simon sits there frowning, wrapped up in all the pride of what he was; he had no appreciation of the mercy that was there. He says, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him”. The Lord read his thoughts, even as He read the dark history of that woman; every dark blot was under His eye. He read the darkening thoughts of that man. If the woman had said anything — nothing is related as to what she said, she is silent there — but if she had said anything she would have said, ‘Please speak for me, Lord. I cannot meet this man’. She knew her dark history, her troubled past; she could not meet a man like Simon. The Lord said, ‘I will speak for you!’ If you are wisdom’s child He will justify you. If you take your true place before Him He will justify you. “Wisdom is justified of all her children.” He justifies His child. How simple it all is. Let me tell you, the way of salvation is put simply; it is for simple people.

The Lord said, “Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee”. He says, ‘Master, say on’. Then briefly, pointedly, powerfully the Lord puts before us the situation. “A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”

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See in these words the mind of God — the situation that has for its moral foundation the precious blood of Christ. If grace is to reach down to us it has its righteous foundation in the precious blood of Christ. He who uttered these words was going to the cross to make it good and efficacious by His death. He was wending His way to Calvary's bitter cross to lay the righteous foundation of that which is underlying these words. "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both". That is, He graciously forgave them both.

It gives me the greatest possible joy to say that. In these words you may learn the attitude of God in grace toward all. He has no judgment in His mind; this is the day of grace, it is not the day of judgment, but if you refuse the grace you force the hand of God to judgment. This is the day of grace because before God there lives One of whom it says in scripture, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world". It is open to all — God's attitude of grace is toward all, and the only thing that will keep you out will be this, that you do not acknowledge your liability. There must be the acknowledgment of liability before there can be the relief. You must acknowledge it; this is all that God asks you to do.

I am liable to God and I cannot pay. No tears, nor prayers, none of these things can make atonement; the only thing that can make atonement is the precious blood of Christ. "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both". That is God's attitude towards them both, whether the five hundred pence debtor or the fifty. They were both alike; they could not meet their liability. What is to be done now? Own the liability — own it! "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"

I do not know which is the greatest point in the passage, but there are two grand points: God's attitude of grace towards all men, and the way in which Christ endears Himself to those who know the grace that is in Him; and let me tell you, that is the way to love Christ, much forgiveness, much love.

He justifies His child; He draws a striking contrast between His child and Simon. He dismisses Simon. The forgiveness is available to them both — it is open to all — but you must recognise your liability. It is wisdom to own your liability and also to own that you cannot meet it yourself, and then you will learn how blessedly He has met it through Christ's precious blood, which is the witness of the righteousness of God. He dismisses Simon and turns to His child.

Now sad and weary heart, you know you are not right with God, you are afraid of Him. You cannot meet Him on the ground of your responsibility, you are

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away from Him and you want to come under the blessedness of His grace, I am sure. Just look, He turns to His child, and His words have the same deep and blessed meaning tonight to all such. He turns even to you and looks on you with divine love.

May you know it as you sit there in the sense of your sinfulness and the weariness of your soul. You can trust in Christ, can come to Him by faith, His words are for you as they were for her, for she represents the whole company of wisdom's children. "Thy sins are forgiven. . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

The mighty power of the Spirit of God is here to make good those blessed words which fell from His lips, of which you have the record; they have their own true, deep, personal meaning for you now — mark it well. "Thy sins are forgiven. . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

I was preaching some years ago in Essex in a little hamlet — well I remember it. It was in a little cottage; I stood in the passage and on either side was a room full of listeners. On my right hand there was a middle-aged woman, and during the preaching she wept; she was greatly affected by the preaching. I said to her afterwards, "What is it; why do you sorrow so?"

"Oh," she said, "I do not know whether I have been sorry enough." She was making her sorrow — her repentance—her saviour. I said to her, "He had the sorrow, the Lord Jesus; the Saviour had the sorrow when He was the sin-bearer." I had to leave the place and had no opportunity to say more to her.

On the next Thursday I was lodged in a farmhouse at another village, and after breakfast the Lord said to me, 'You go to that village.' I cannot explain it, I would like to know it better, but He said, 'You go to that village,' and to that village I went. The first house I came to — though I did not know it — was the house where that woman lived.

A young woman opened the door in answer to my knock, and when she saw me she burst into tears. I said, 'What has happened?' She said, 'Mother was sitting at breakfast when she fell off her chair and was paralysed down one side.' Thank God, her tongue was not paralysed. When she fell on the floor she cried, 'Lord, send the preacher to me with words.' The daughter added, 'We have sent for the doctor and we were going to send for you, but you have come.'

The Lord had sent me. She said, 'She is lying on the bed and must hear your voice, so go up and see her.' As I went up those stairs — and I did not go very quickly because I did not know what the Lord would have me say to her — I said, 'Lord, give me words for this dear soul'. As I stepped into the bedroom a

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pair of anxious eyes looked at me and she said, ‘Have you words for me?’ I stood there and said, ‘The Lord Jesus, the precious Saviour, who died and rose again, if you will but trust Him, His words to you are, “woman, thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace”’. I said no more and stood quite still. She turned away from me — how gladly I saw it — she turned her head away and I heard her say adoringly and gratefully, ‘I thank Thee, Lord, beautiful words, Lord, and I do thank Thee.’

Let them be beautiful words to you! and let your heart thank Him as you are sitting there in the sense of your need, and look up into His face and say, ‘Lord, here I am, Thou knowest all about me’. He will speak to you by the Spirit these words — again I repeat, for so much depends upon it, His words are as efficacious for you tonight as for that woman — “Thy sins are forgiven ... thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace”. May God grant it!

Are you doubting what I am saying? Do you say ‘This cannot be known until some future day’? How dare you say so? God says, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psalm 32: 1,2.). Do you think that God would tantalise us in presenting impossibilities to us? ‘

Never mind theology, never mind what men say; here is a description by God Himself. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven... unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” That is God’s description of a happy man.

Unattainable, you say? How dare you say so? Not to be known? How dare you say so in the presence of the word of God? This momentous thing — and how momentous it is — our individual relationship with God. Meet that woman outside Simon’s house — many a time have I put the question to her in my mind, Are your sins forgiven? Oh, yes, she would say. Have you got peace, what is the ground of it? He said so. That is it. He said so. Never mind what Simon said or anybody else. He said it. What did He say? “Woman, thy sins are forgiven. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace”.

Now that is the first introduction to Christ, and that is the way in which Christ endears Himself to us. That is what I call the first step in the apprehension of the grace of God. It is forgiveness.

I will proceed now and read further on in Luke 10:33-37. Here we have a deeper thing, a further apprehension — the “riches of His grace”. We have had before

us the grace of God in forgiveness; here we have this poor wretched man lying there. It is not a question of sins, but of condition. We are introduced to the story by the man who was not wisdom's child asking the Lord, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the Lord said, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself."

Jesus said, "Go, and do thou likewise." You go and do it, and you shall live. The blessing does not lie in the reading but in the doing it. Now if he had been upright and one of wisdom's children he would have said, 'I cannot do it, I cannot love my neighbour as myself.' He was wounded by the deadly wound of self-love. You do not love God or your neighbour. We love ourselves too well, and the deadly wound of self-love is there.

The good Samaritan came down from where love was to where love was not and He brought it down. He brought love here — self-sacrificing love. The good Samaritan was Jesus, who brought love down to the spot where love was not. All our misery lies in self-love. Have you not been bitten by that deadly wound of self-love?

How does it work? 'They do not think as much of me as they should'. Would you not like to get clear of it? I was down in Wiltshire during the late war, and met an old man there. He was deploring the war as we all did, and I said to him, 'If everybody commenced to love God with all their heart and their neighbours as themselves, the war would end at once'. We want to see the moral reason of things. How could there be a war if man loved God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself?

I pity the politicians — I pray for them every day — but I pity them. They think by altering people's circumstances they will make people happier — never one bit. What is needed is the alteration in you. That is it. I often think of it and pity them — I do not say it disrespectfully, but I think of authorities when I am on the beach and see the children putting up their castles, and by and by the waves come up and wash them away.

The government must be carried on, but people are not happier; they are growing more unhappy. What is the meaning of it? They want to be changed inside, not their circumstances outside. You want the mighty love of God to be in your heart; that will make a difference, and then you love God and love your neighbour. So will it be by and by. I thank God from the bottom of my heart. I do not know where I should have been during the late war if I had not known that there is a

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time coming when from pole to pole everyone will love God and his neighbour as himself; one great amen from pole to pole; God's will be done!

When your heart is in the love of God your will is silenced; it is God's will. From pole to pole 'Amen' shall be uttered, and there shall be great peace. One amen — one will. I will tell you why. Because the one love will produce the one will.

I must proceed very rapidly. One thing I should like to say, and if I speak of it naturally you will understand. My beloved mother, when I was a poor little weakling in the cradle, morning, noon and night she was there; week after week, month after month, she was by my side. What made her do it? She couldn't help herself. She loved me into loving her back again. She has gone to be with Christ long since, but if she stood outside the door tonight and called my name I should know her voice from any other. She put love into my heart and she loved me into loving her back again. God loves us into loving Him back again.

Now He poured in the oil and the wine. The deadly wound of self-love was there, but the Samaritan poured in the oil and the wine. He poured in the love of God. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us". I cannot help loving God any more than I can help breathing. How so? He has shed abroad that love in my heart by the Holy Ghost. That is the "riches of His grace".

My last point is the prodigal. There we get the full "glory of His grace". Mark it well; we reach the climax of grace in Luke. There was departure; there was distance; oh, what distance! He took all that he had from his father and went off into a far country. There he had destitution — he was hungry. There he had degradation — he fed on the husks that the swine did eat. He was sent into the fields to take care of swine — degradation, departure, and distance — what a distance, "a great way off". He got into a place where all was take and no give — a sad place. That is the world—take everything from you and give you nothing. He thought of his father's house, all the plenty of it, never a tramp turned away with nothing; he thought of that and the goodness of his father brought him to repentance and he resolved: "I will arise and go to my father".

I want you all to take this in. Here is a dark background, but there shines resplendent over against the dark background of the poor prodigal the "glory of God's grace" — the glory of it. If the boy was hungry for his father and his father's house — let it touch your heart — the father's house was hungry for the boy. That is God, dear friends. Now, the boy was hungry, but the father was

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looking out for him. God is like that. Jesus came to deliver us. “When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and ran”. God is like that, may it touch your heart — He was on the outlook for that poor degraded boy. He says, ‘I will let him know the kind of father he has turned his back on’. “He ran and fell on his neck and kissed him”. God is like that. That is the reception.

There arose from his contrite heart — doubly contrite now because of the father’s welcome — there arose from his heart and his lips, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son”. He stops there; he had meant to say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants”, but he cannot say it now. His father’s kisses checked it. What does he say? Do just what you like with me. I begin to see you are going to bless me, not according to my need, but according to what you are yourself. What a grand thought that is. Look: “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him”. That is it. ‘I will have you near me so that I can look upon you with pleasure’. That is the story of the glory of His grace. “And they began to be merry”. Did it ever end? No, never!

Do you say, ‘I want to get away from my mother’s house so that I can see life?’ What folly! That is a way that leads to nothing but death. My dear mother looked through her tears at me and said, ‘I will never let you go’ and her prayers were answered when I was eighteen. I came to Christ, and I never knew happiness till I came to Christ.

Look at me; do you think I am unhappy? Do you think that what I am speaking about makes me unhappy? If I could only put the one hundredth part of the music of it in your heart that is in my heart through grace, I would do it.

Would you not like to have the music in your heart? Let me tell you, my dear young people, I yearn over you, that in all my earthly joys — and I have had a good many — I have always had the sense that some day I should lose it. That is the point, it will come to an end. But in this spiritual joy that has come to my heart I know I shall never lose it.

What a magnificent thing it is to be a christian. It is open to you all. The very first step in it is that you go as the woman did to taste it in forgiveness, and then to have Christ endear Himself to your heart, and then you will learn the riches of His grace and the glory of His grace in deepening joy. God grant it. Amen.

*William Johnston*

## A NEW VIEW OF FORGIVENESS

**“...in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences...”**  
Ephesians 1:7

I want to speak about forgiveness. I am not thinking so much of the doctrine of it, or the preaching of it, but the possession of it. As it says, “In whom”—that is “in the beloved”—“we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins”. How have we got it? How has this most precious, joyful possession come to us? It has come to us through His blood! So that one would apprehend that the very beginning of joy as God would communicate it to men is on the basis of Christ’s blood. If we have forgiveness of sins, it is through His blood.

In this way the death of the Lord comes before us in the most attractive way as the means, the basis, the groundwork of every joy that we can hold for eternity. You may love someone according to nature and there may be very real joy connected with it; but you cannot hold it for eternity. It is but for a time, and always intermingled with the joy of that affection is the dread that the object of it may be taken from you. But every feature of joy that is known now and will be held for eternity is on the basis of the death of Christ: it is through His blood!

I love to speak of the joy of forgiveness. We may enjoy the highest aspects of the truth that come out in the epistle to the Ephesians but as enjoying what is at the top we do not lose the joy of what is at the bottom! If we apprehend the great goal of all the activities of grace as reaching up to the pleasure of God according to His will, we still treasure and ever will treasure in our hearts the joy of forgiveness. It has come to us through His blood.

I believe that forgiveness is understood much more fully than redemption. Forgiveness is the removal of the consciousness of guilt: that is how it operates. An unforgiven person has on their conscience the burden of guilt uncanceled but a forgiven man has no sense of guilt on his conscience—it has been removed. Redemption is spoken of in the same terms of possession, that is, “In whom we have redemption through his blood...” There is a certain joy in redemption. What does it mean? It means that you belong to God. Does not every creature belong to God? Yes, that is so; it must be so, for God has rights of creation and He has never given them up. But He has brought forward other rights, gloriously blessed rights that have yielded joy to His heart and joy to the



hearts of His people—the rights of redemption! How did God assert these rights? How did He establish them? He established them through the blood of Christ!

God has a people; they have been redeemed to Himself. They are His by purchase through the blood of Jesus. So that the death of Jesus—for the blood is the witness of death—shows us that God Himself has taken His people up, not simply on the ground of creation, but on the glorious and eternal basis of the blood. Nothing can break up redemption; nothing can interfere with it, no happening in the universe can ever set it aside; what is established on the basis of the blood is eternal. God has this holy pleasure, and we have this holy joy before Him on this ground—we are redeemed through the precious blood of Christ.

*A. E. Myles (1936)*

## **GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY**

Without a body man could not be here. In the garden of Eden, while there was innocence, the body was undying and uncovered; when sin entered, then came death on the body. God clothed with skins the body thus doomed and man was driven out of the garden. Now where there was faith, as divine power worked in anyone, there was an action of the body expressive of that faith. “By faith Abel offered...”. He did a certain act; his body was the agent by which he expressed the faith which governed him. Where there was not faith man used his body to gratify his own desires and tastes. Where there was faith there were works, deeds done in the body because of faith; otherwise faith would be dead, as the apostle James shows.

It is evident that faith produced works and the body was thus the display and the evidence of the faith, as James says, “Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works”. The faith was proved by the work which it produced, and thus Abraham was justified when he offered up his son, though forty years before he had the faith for which he was accounted righteous (Genesis 15) and on which Paul insists in Romans 4. The body was safe in innocence; but when sin entered, it was not only subject to death, but led away by various lusts and passions. Yet where faith worked

and so far as faith ruled, the body became the evidence of faith, and this proved its power; otherwise faith was dead. Hence, though the body was, after the fall, the theatre of all the desires of the flesh and of the mind, yet when there was faith, there was proof that the body was under a greater power than the will of the flesh, and that very thing on which sin had brought death, was made to express the efficacy of divine control.

In innocence the body was according to God's will but after sin came in the will of man became the rule, and it was only as there was faith that the body, in which sin dwelt, and which was under the penalty of death, became the expression of the divine power working in it according to the requirement of faith. Thus the body was, like one on horseback, borne along by a power outside itself to a given point; but when again on foot—when the power ceased to act—occupying itself with its own pleasure. A certain thing had been done, a great deed performed in faith which proved the power that carried it, but the body generally remained unaltered in all its tastes and habits; for the Spirit did not yet dwell in it to control or order it in everything; the body was not yet the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Now under the law, action in the body was also required also. The body was required to express the demands of the law, but as there was no new power conferred, the demand only disclosed that there was no power in a body of sin to meet God's law. The law was added because of transgression to expose how entirely incompetent man was to meet what was righteously required. It was as if one were to sow garden seed in the wild sand in order to show that it could not grow there. The law was holy, just and good; but there was no power in man to meet the requirements of it. It was not sufficient to accept the terms of it, and to admit they were all right. Man under the law was called to express in his walk and ways the demands of it. It conferred nothing on him. It only required of him, and thus disclosed the weakness that was in him, as if one were required to walk a mile when not able to move one step.

Now all is different, the body is the Lord's, and it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is neither as it was in innocence, nor as under law, nor is it merely led and controlled by some particular or special faith; but now in every thing it is empowered by the Spirit of God, who dwells in it, to act according to the word of God which is for the guidance of faith in everything.

While saints universally admit that their conduct and walk should be exemplary,

they are confused in their minds as to the scope of their responsibility; instead of adopting the new order they are apt to adopt and pursue a mixture of faith and law. They own and rejoice that faith leads them to do a certain thing, but then they fall back into the mere demands of the law. If one may use a metaphor, they ride part of the way, and try to walk another part, and this leads to weariness, and lameness, and an imperfect testimony. It is a compound of the definite action of faith, and of the inability of mere nature. It is this mixture of faith and law which has produced and tolerated so much worldliness in real believers. The conscience is quieted because grace is known through faith, but for the rest of their course and ways the law is the standard, and the idea is that one must seek only to do the best one can and with as little reproach as possible.

Our blessed Lord set forth in His own body, for the first time on this earth, a man suited to and answering to the divine mind in every movement. There had been seen previously man under the control of faith, the action of faith giving him a distinct line in keeping with that faith; and there had also been seen man under the law, which only exposed his inability; but now in the Person of the Lord Jesus there was a Man in His own body, expressing in every detail of life what was well pleasing unto God. He always did the things that pleased Him; and hence the Lord in Luke 11 announces the new order, where He says, "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light". It is not merely that one has bright thoughts or happy feelings, which are quite right in themselves, but that this body, which was doomed to death, is now through grace to be light. The whole is to be light, having no part dark, as when the bright shining of a candle gives light. The thing doomed because of man's sin, is now—through grace—to be an expression of Christ, as the apostle says, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body".

While the Lord spoke (see Luke 11:37) a Pharisee asked Him to dine with him, evidently connecting the Lord's remarks with the doctrine of the Pharisees. The Lord takes a place at his table in order to explain the error of the Pharisees' doctrine. They were occupied with the outside, and with the effort to obtain something for the body, instead of first receiving the light and then showing it forth. Now in chapter 12, He sets forth to us how the body

would express the light, and this expression of the light is comprised in two marks, namely, that there is no fear from without, and no care within. If it were thus with them, their loins would be girded, there would be an activity in their manner, and their lights would be burning. The body would be brilliant with light, waiting in the dark night for the morning star.

We hardly estimate the privilege conferred upon us, with its consequent responsibility—even that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit as well as a member of Christ. If the gravity and greatness of this privilege were before us, everything we did, every appearance we presented would be judged. A manner or an attitude would not be regarded as too small a matter to attend to or to correct; even one’s dress would be determined by its suitability for Christ’s member, or whether it became the temple of the Holy Spirit.

In our desire and effort to maintain the doctrine, so long unknown or unseen, that the believer is perfect in Christ, we have overlooked too much the place which the body of the believer holds, or is required to hold on earth. It is necessary, first, that his heart should enjoy Christ; but besides this, his body is to be the channel or medium of his walk on earth, and hence we see in 1 Corinthians 11: 30-32 that if a man did not judge himself the Lord touched his body. When once we admit the Lord’s claim over the body, and see that we are called to the privilege of glorifying God in it, we then begin to grow in intelligence as to how everything connected with the body must be done according to His will; whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God. And there will be a sense of our responsibility which will not only order us in the care of the body, deprecating all neglect of it, but will also refuse to make it too much an object, while seeking to make it in dress, in manner and action an expression worthy of Christ. If the truth that the body of the believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit, as well as a member of Christ, laid hold of the heart, the exhortation to “glorify God in your body” would deeply exercise us. The Lord grant that it may, for His own glory.

*J. B. Stoney*

*From “A Voice to the Faithful”*

*“Thoughts for this Day”*

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