

Thankfulness For God's Mercy For Sinners

I will keep My mercy for him forever, and My covenant shall stand fast with him. (Psalm 89:28)

There is no end to the inventory of God's mercies! May He who has given so much to me, and done so much for me—add the crowning mercy of a thankful heart! Though I can talk of thankfulness, I feel much insensibility and hardness of heart; but, I know that, while sin dwells in me, it will have such effects. Sin will distress—but it cannot condemn, those who believe in Jesus!

-John Newton

Religion Without Christ

What is religion without a living faith in, and a living love to the Lord Jesus Christ? How dull and dragging, how dry and heavy, what a burden to the mind, and a weariness to the flesh, is a round of forms, where the heart is not engaged and the affections not drawn forth! Reading, hearing, praying, meditation, conversation with the people of God, what cold, what heartless work where Jesus is not! But let Him appear, let His presence and grace be

felt, and His blessed Spirit move upon the heart, then there is a holy sweetness, a sacred blessedness in the worship of God and in communion with the Lord Jesus that makes, while it lasts, a little heaven on earth.

Means are to be attended to, ordinances to be prized, the Bible to be read, preaching to be heard, the throne of grace to be resorted to, the company of Christian friends to be sought. But what are all these unless we find Christ in them? It is He who puts life and blessedness into all means and ordinances, into all prayer, preaching, hearing, reading, conversing, and everything that bears the name of religion. Without Him all is dark and dead, cold and dreary, barren and bare! Wandering thoughts at the throne, unbelief at the ordinance, deadness under the word, formality and lip service in family worship, carelessness over the open Bible, carnality in conversation, and a general coldness and stupidity over the whole frame—such is the state of the soul when Jesus does not appear, and when He leaves us to prove what we are, and what we can do without Him!

-J.C Philpot

The Time Of Love?

There is a day appointed by God for the salvation of his elect, a day fixed from eternity when grace will come to the chosen sinner, an hour determined before the world began when the Good Shepherd will seek out and find his lost sheep.

There is a time fixed before time began, called “the time of love,” when the predestined child, the elect sinner, redeemed by the blood of Christ, must be saved. At that hour, salvation must and shall come to the soul loved of God with an everlasting love.

Only one thing is really important in this matter, only one question must be answered, only one issue must be settled. “Do you believe on the Son of God?”

You will know that God has saved you, that you are chosen, redeemed, and called by grace, when you find yourself believing the gospel. Do you believe? If you do, the Lord has sought you out and found you by his grace.

-Don Fortner, Pastor of Grace Baptist Church of Danville, KY USA

The Limitless Depths of Christ's Love

“And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that all of you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:19

There is no love which can be compared with the love of Christ. He is God manifest in the flesh . . . so that sinners, believing in Him, might not only escape deserved condemnation—but actually become His children!

For this great purpose, though truly God, He emptied Himself and appeared upon earth in the form of a servant; for He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!

The LAMB, once upon the *cross*, is now the Lamb upon the *throne*, possessing and exercising all power in heaven and on earth. Yet He is still mindful of those for whom He suffered; His heart is made of tenderness; His affections melt with love; He appears in the presence of God for them, as their great High Priest, Advocate and Intercessor. He promises to save them to the uttermost; to support and guide them safely through all their conflicts, temptations, and trials; to lead them safely through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and then to receive them to Himself, that they may be forever with Him to behold His glory!

Such is the love of Christ! When we attempt to consider the glory of His divine person, the depth of His humiliation, the unknown sorrows and agonies which wrung His heart in Gethsemane, and on Golgotha; and that He endured all this for His enemies, the power He exerts in reconciling them to Himself; the blessings He bestows upon them in this life, when they are renewed by His grace; and the eternal happiness He has prepared for them in the eternal state—this love of Christ to sinners is inexpressible, unsearchable and unfathomable! It is an ocean without either bottom or shore!

-John Newton

To Be With Christ Is Paradise

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be

with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

These are the recorded words that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to this dying thief moments before He died. The Lord assured him and every believer who dies in faith – they will be with the Lord forever in paradise. Where is paradise? To be with the Lord! Wherever He is that will be paradise, eternal glory and eternal rest with HIM forever and ever (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21; Rev. 14:13).

This dying, believing and repentant thief rejoiced in that day in the salvation of his soul; in the forgiveness of all his sins (Eph. 1:7) and righteousness imputed to him by free grace (Rom. 3:24; 4:6). He is right now seated in glory in the Lord Jesus Christ and still rejoicing in Him (Eph.2:4-6). He is still singing the eternal song of redemption; "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6). May God be pleased to give us faith and repentance in Christ right now that we, too, may enjoy Christ, our paradise, now and forever.

-Tom Harding, Pastor of Zebulon Grace Church, Pikeville, KY USA

Learning The Lesson That Grace Is

Grace

Until we are really humbled and brought down before God, with a view of His mercy and grace in Christ Jesus, we cannot bear to deal honestly with ourselves, or for others to deal honestly with us. It is our pride, our self-righteousness, our presumption, and our hypocrisy, our double dealing with God and our own consciences, which make us shrink from being searched by His Word and the light of His Spirit. As long as a man stands in his own strength or goodness, all the curses of God's law strike at him as a sinner; but when he falls flat, as it were, on his face, confessing his iniquity, loathing himself in his own eyes for his baseness, and looking up in faith, hope, and love to the Lord of life and glory, as putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, then all the storm is ceased, and the blessings, promises, and mercies of the Gospel fall upon his soul like the still small rain and the refreshing dew.

And as these mercies enter into his heart, they bring forth in him every Gospel fruit spring up and grow in the heart which is truly brought down by grace (Galatians 5:22-24).

But I would say to you and to all my friends in the Lord, be not afraid of sinking too low in your own eyes. But covet above all things – covet earnestly precious manifestations of the Lord to your soul, sweet glimpses of His Person and work, and breakings in of the light of His countenance, and of what He is in Himself as the Son of God, and as the Mediator between God and men, the risen and glorified Intercessor, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

The Lord means to teach us that grace is grace, and that we can be saved in no other way. When then we are being led down into these depths, there seems to be little before the soul but ruin and despair. It does not see that this sight and sense of sin is a needful preparation, to know what grace is and what grace can do; but when grace is manifested in its fullness and its super-aboundings, then the wonder is that grace so rich and free should ever be extended unto, or should ever reach, a soul so vile. . . .

-J.C Philpot

Why Would We Fear?

“So do not be afraid for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand!” Isaiah 41:10

God has arranged all our concerns with consummate wisdom, in the very best possible manner.

He overrules all events by His omnipotent power.

He directs all things by His paternal love.

If infinite wisdom, omnipotent power, and paternal love, are engaged for our

present and eternal welfare – then our fears must be groundless, and our anxiety folly. Our fears only . . . dishonor God, distress the mind, please Satan, and grieve the godly.

-James Smith

How Does Our God Provides the Means of Knowing His Truth?

Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. (Proverbs 12:1)

When we begin to know ourselves, and to feel the uncertainty and darkness which are inseparable from our fallen nature, how comfortable and encouraging is it to reflect, that God has given us his infallible Word, and promised us his infallible Spirit, to guide us into all necessary truth; and that in the study of the one, and in dependence upon the other, none can miss the way of peace and salvation, who are sincerely desirous to find it. But we are cautioned to keep our eye upon both; and the caution is necessary, for we are too prone to separate what God has joined together (Isaiah 8:20, 1 Cor. 2:10-11).

What strange mistakes have been made by some who have thought themselves able

to interpret Scripture by their own abilities as scholars and critics, though they have studied with much diligence! Unless our dependence upon *divine* teaching bears some proportion to our diligence, we may take much pains to little purpose. On the other hand, we are directed to expect the teaching and assistance of the Holy Spirit only within the limits, and by the medium of the written Word. For he has not promised to reveal *new* truths—but to enable us to understand what we read in the Bible—and if we venture beyond the pale of Scripture, we are upon enchanted ground, and exposed to all the illusions of our imagination. But an attention to the Word of God, joined to humble supplications for his Spirit, will lead us to new advances in true knowledge.

The exercises of our minds, and the observations we shall make upon the conduct of others, and the dispensations of God's providence, will all concur to throw light upon the Scripture, and to confirm to us what we there read concerning ourselves, the world, and the true happiness revealed to sinners in and through Jesus Christ. The more sensible we are of the disease, the more we shall admire the great Physician; the more we are convinced that the creature is vanity, the more we shall be stirred up to seek our rest in God. And this will endear the gospel to us; as in Christ, and in him only, we can hope to find that righteousness and strength, of which we are utterly destitute ourselves.

-John Newton

A “Personal and Progressive Holiness”?

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” John 3:6

There is no promise made that we shall be set free in this life from the in-being and the in-working of sin. Many think that they are to become progressively holier and holier, that sin after sin is to be removed gradually out of the heart, until at last they are almost made perfect in the flesh. But this is an idle dream, and one which, sooner or later in the case of God’s people, will be rudely and roughly broken to pieces.

Nature will ever remain the same; and we shall ever find that the flesh will lust against the spirit. Our Adam nature is corrupt to the very core. It cannot be mended, it cannot be sanctified, it is at the last what it was at the first, inherently evil, and as such will never cease to be corrupt till we put off mortality, and with it the body of sin and death.

All we can hope for, long after; expect and pray for, is, that this evil nature may be subdued, kept down, mortified, crucified, and held in subjection under the power of grace; but as to any such change passing upon it or taking place in it as to make it holy, it is but a pharisaic delusion, which, promising a holiness in the flesh, leaves us still under the power of sin, whilst it opposes with deadly enmity that true sanctification of the new man of grace, which is wrought by a divine power, and is utterly distinct from any fancied holiness in the flesh, or any vain dream of its progressive sanctification.

-J.C Philpot

All True Religion

Jesus is . . .
our sun, and without Him all is darkness;
our life, and without Him all is death;
the beginner and finisher of our faith;
the substance of our hope;
the object of our love.

It is the Spirit who quickens us . . .
to feel our need of Christ;
to seek all our supplies in Him and from Him;
to believe in Him unto everlasting life,
and thus live a life of faith upon Him.

By His . . .
secret teachings,
inward touches,
gracious smiles,
soft whispers,
sweet promises,
manifestations of Christ's glorious Person and work,
Christ's agonizing sufferings and dying love, the

Holy Spirit draws the heart up to Christ.

He thus wins our affections and setting Christ before our eyes as "the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One," draws out that love and affection towards Jesus which puts the world under our feet.

All true religion flows from the Spirit's grace, presence and power.

-J.C Philpot