

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 8 June 2020

(i) Scripture.

Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, He takes up the isles like fine dust ... All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are accounted by Him as less than nothing and emptiness. To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with Him? ... Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because He is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

Isaiah 40. 15-18, 26 (New Revised Standard Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

The Lord: 'far above all'.

'You, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted *far above all* gods' (Psa. 97. 9).

'The working of the might of His strength, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from among the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, *far above all* principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come' (Eph. 1. 19-21).

'He who descended is the same who also ascended *far above all* heavens, that He might fill all things' (Eph. 4. 10).

Death is not the end.

'What is death? It is not a condition but a transition; not an abiding-place, but a passage; not a house, but a doorway'.

(F. B. Meyer, 'Our Daily Walk', 30 May.)

A hive of 'Be's' worth keeping.

(i) 'Be likeminded' (Rom. 15. 5).

(ii) 'Be steadfast' (1 Cor. 15. 58).

(iii) 'Be separate' (2 Cor. 6. 17).

(iv) 'Be kind' (Eph. 4. 32).

(v) 'Be strong' (Eph. 6. 10).

(vi) 'Be blameless' (Phil. 2. 15).

(vii) 'Be thankful' (Col. 3. 15).

(viii) 'Be sober' (1 Thess. 5. 6).

(ix) 'Be patient' (1 Thess. 5. 14).

(x) 'Be gentle' (2 Tim. 2. 24).

(xi) 'Be ready' (2 Tim. 4. 2).

(xii) 'Be content' (Heb. 13. 5).

(xiii) 'Be doers' (James 1. 22).

(xiv) 'Be holy' (1 Pet. 1. 16).

(xv) 'Be vigilant' (1 Pet. 5. 8).

David: unassuming and self-effacing.

(i) 'Who am I?' (1 Sam. 18. 18) – he saw himself unworthy of such a relationship.

(ii) 'Who am I?' (2 Sam. 7. 18) – he saw himself unworthy of such a blessing.

(iii) 'Who am I?' (1 Chron. 29. 14) – he saw himself unworthy of such a privilege.

Psalm 23.

When David envisaged himself in 'green pastures', he spoke of God in the third person: '*He* makes me to lie down ... leads me ... restores my soul ... leans me' (Psa. 23. 2-3).

But when David envisaged himself in 'the valley of the shadow of death', he switched to speaking of God in the second person: '*You* are with me ... *your* rod and your staff ... you prepare ... you anoint'.

The Valley of Elah.

David slew Goliath 'in the Valley of Elah' (1 Sam. 21. 9). 'How ironic that the two men who faced each other in the middle ground came from towns at either end of it. The Valley begins just east of Gath and ends near Bethlehem'.

(Wayne Stiles, 'The Valley of Elah'.)

Jonah and the sea.

Jonah told the heathen mariners that he served 'the God of heaven, *who made the sea*' (Jonah 1. 9), at the very time when he was attempting to flee from God on the sea which God had made (Jonah 1. 3)!

Grounds for rejoicing: Roman 5. 2-11.

(i) 'We rejoice in hope' (Rom. 5. 2) ... 'More than that, (ii) we rejoice in our sufferings' (Rom. 5. 3) ... 'More than that, (iii) we also rejoice in God' (Rom. 5. 11).

God's word: 'the joy and rejoicing of my heart' (Jer. 15. 16).

'We cannot venture into the Bible as tourists; we must become inhabitants of the land ... To become part of this world we must enter it, immerse ourselves in it in order to be absorbed by it'.
(M. Magrassi, 'Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina', page 68.)

The right thing in the right place for the right reason (Psalm 119. 11).

'Your word (the right thing) have I hid in my heart (the right place), that I might not sin against you (the right reason).

Dependence on God when studying His word.

'No ability, however great—no learning, however extensive—no diligence, however unwearied—can make up for that dependence upon Divine teaching which must lie at the foundation of all successful study of the Word of inspiration'.

(Henry Craik, 'Angelic Interest in the Disclosures of the Gospel', preached at Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, 1859.)

Humility when studying God's word.

'If you want to become a Christian, you must take the word of Christ, realizing that you will never be finished learning, and then with me, you will recognize that you still do not even know the ABCs. If one was to boast, then I could certainly do that about myself, because day and night I was busy studying the Bible, and yet I have remained a student. Every day I begin like someone in the primary school'.

(Martin Luther, quoted in Herman Selderhuis, 'Martin Luther: A Spiritual Biography'.)

The Triumphal Entry (Matt. 21. 1-5).

Jesus did not enter Jerusalem as a Conqueror riding on a proud stallion, come to wield a military spear and to execute God's judgment.

Jesus entered Jerusalem as a Saviour sitting on a young donkey, come to receive a thrust from a military spear and to bear God's judgment.

Above all you ask or think.

'Unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we *ask* or *think*' (Eph. 3. 20).

(i) 'Above all that we ask' ... God said to Solomon, 'I have given you a wise and an understanding heart ... And I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches, and honour' (1 Kings 3. 12-13).

(ii) 'Above all that we think' ... Jacob said to Joseph, 'I had not thought to see your face: and, lo, God has shown me also your seed' (Gen. 48. 11).

The power of prayer.

'Nothing has wrought such wonderful effects in the world, as prayer. It made the sun stand still at Joshua's request (Josh. 10. 12-13); yea, to go backwards so many degrees when Hezekiah prayed (Isa. 38. 8). It brought both rain (1 Kings 18. 42-45; James 5. 18) and fire (1 Kings 18. 38) out of heaven when Elijah prayed. It brought angels out of heaven when Elisha prayed (2 Kings 6. 17)'.

(Thomas Manton, 'An Exposition of the Epistle of James', Note 4 on James 5. 18.)

The aim and object of prayer.

'You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures' (James 4. 3).

It has been said that 'the number one prayer of many people is about number one'!

'It is strange that, while praying, we seldom ask for change of character, but always a change in circumstance'.

(Attributed to 'The Baptist Challenge', December 1981.)

Detailed notes. [See the attached Word document, 'The Intercession of Abraham'](#).

(iii) Go on, smile.

Scientific research has shown that women who are overweight live considerably longer than *men who mention it!*

The old person's prayer: 'God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the blessing to run into the ones that I do like, and *the eyesight to tell the difference*'.

A man asked his Irish friend, 'Tell me, Paddy, why is it that whenever you ask an Irishman a question, he answers with another question?'

'Who told you that?' replied Paddy.

A man went into a pet shop to buy a parrot.

On one perch, there was a brightly coloured parrot with a red string tied to its left leg and a green string tied to its right leg.

The man asked the shop owner what the strings were for.

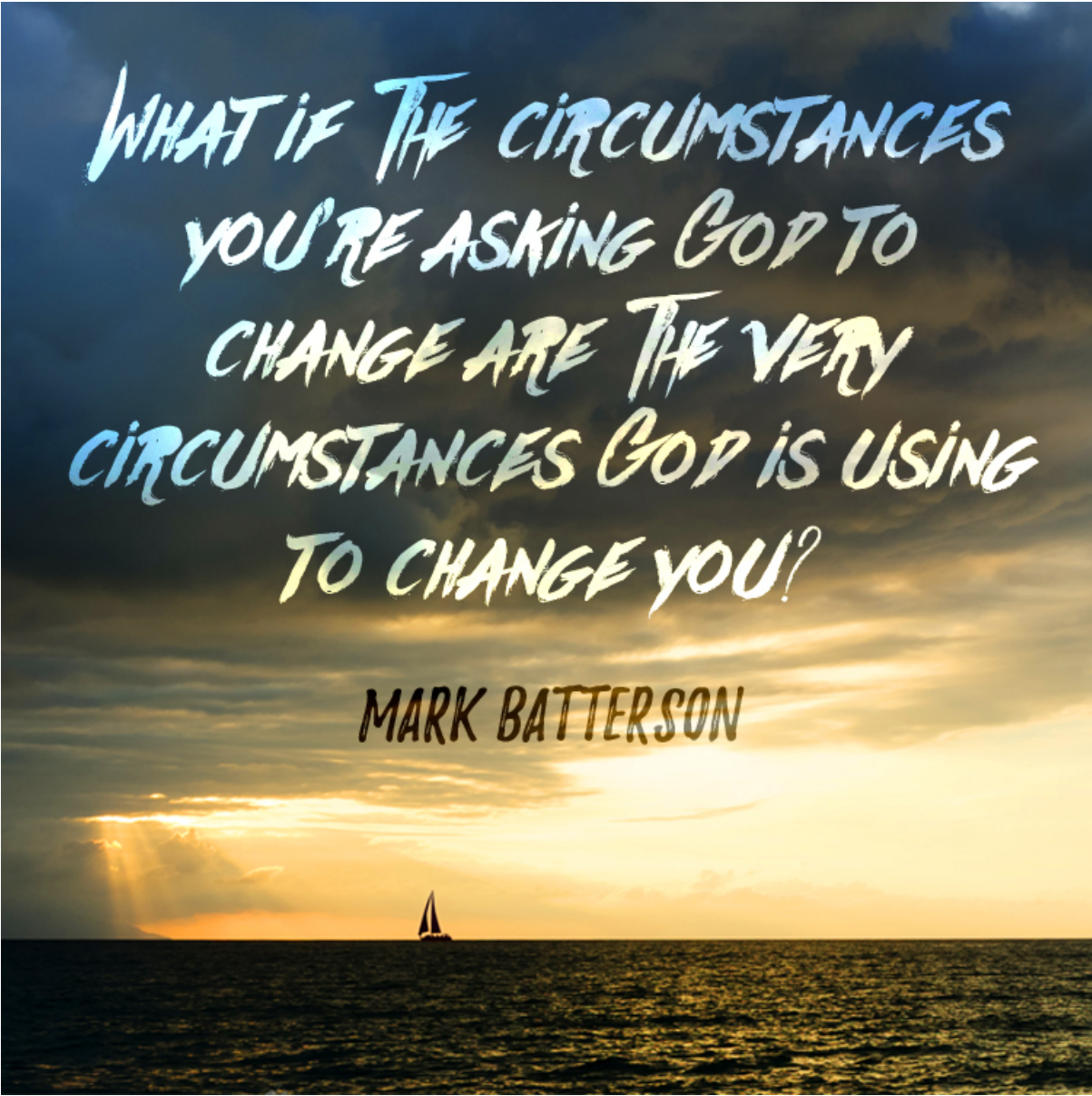
'Ah', answered the owner, 'I can tell you that this is a very well trained parrot. If you pull the red string, he speaks in Welsh, and if you pull the green string, he speaks in French'.

'But what happens if I pull both the strings?' the curious shopper asked.

'I fall off my perch, you dope!!' squawked the parrot.

'Laugh and the world laughs with you; *snore and you sleep alone*'.

('The shipmaster came to him, and said to him, "*Why are you snoring?*"' (Jonah 1. 6 in the Greek Old Testament).

A sunset over the ocean with a small sailboat on the horizon. The sky is dark blue at the top, transitioning to a bright orange and yellow glow near the horizon. The ocean is dark with some whitecaps. A small sailboat is visible on the horizon line.

WHAT IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
YOU'RE ASKING GOD TO
CHANGE ARE THE VERY
CIRCUMSTANCES GOD IS USING
TO CHANGE YOU?

MARK BATTERSON