

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 24 August 2020

(i) Scripture.

I will extol Thee, my God, O king; and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.

One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts.

I will speak of the glorious honour of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works.

And men shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts ... they shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness, and shall sing of Thy righteousness.

The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.

Psalm 145. 1-9 (*King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

The Christian's Calling.

(i) High (Phil. 3. 14).

(ii) Holy (2 Tim. 1. 9).

(iii) Heavenly (Heb. 3. 1).

Things not to do in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(i) Don't 'drift away' (Heb. 2. 1).

(ii) Don't 'fall short' (Heb. 4. 1).

(iii) Don't 'be sluggish' (Heb. 6. 12).

(iv) Don't 'waver' (Heb. 10. 23).

(v) Don't 'cast away ... confidence' (Heb. 10. 35).

(vi) Don't 'shrink back' (Heb. 10. 38-39).

(vii) Don't 'grow weary or fainthearted' (Heb. 12. 3).

(viii) Don't 'be carried away' (Heb. 13. 9).

'Jesus ... for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross' (Heb. 12. 2).

Consider *the prize* ('the joy') and *the price* ('the cross').

Jesus 'postponed joy so you might share in it'.

(Joni Eareckson Tada, '*Christian Reader*', Vol. 32, No. 2.)

The cross, and faith in God.

'I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the Cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?'

(John Stott, '*The Cross of Christ*', page 326.)

God's finger(s) seen:

(i) in His creation of the heavenly bodies (Psa. 8. 3).

(ii) in His sending the plagues of Egypt (Exod. 8. 19).

(iii) in His giving the ten commandments (Exod. 31. 18; Deut. 9. 10).

(iv) in His declaration of the fall of Babylon (Dan 5. 5, 24-28).

(v) in Jesus casting out demons (Luke 11. 20).

The lost sense of the majesty and holiness of God.

1. 'The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshipping men. This she has done not deliberately, but little by little and without her knowledge; and her very unawareness only makes her situation all the more tragic. The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us. The decline of the knowledge of the holy has brought on our troubles. A rediscovery of the majesty of God will go a long way toward curing them. It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God is erroneous or inadequate. If we would bring back spiritual power to our lives, we must begin to think of God more nearly as He is'.

(A. W. Tozer, '*Knowledge of the Holy*', Preface.)

2. 'Visit a church on Sunday morning – almost any will do – and you will likely find a congregation comfortably relating to a deity who fits nicely within precise doctrinal positions ...or who conforms to individual spiritual experiences. But you will not likely find much awe or sense of mystery. ... The New Testament warns us, "offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 28-29). But reverence and awe have often been replaced by a yawn of

familiarity. The consuming fire has been domesticated into a candle flame, adding a bit of religious atmosphere, perhaps. ... When the true story gets told, whether in the partial light of historical perspective or in the perfect light of eternity, it may be revealed that the worst sin of the church ... has been the trivialization of God'.

(Donald McCullough, *'The Trivialization of God'*, page 13.)

'He will keep the feet of His saints' (1 Sam. 2. 9).

- (i) Keep them shod (Eph. 6. 15).
 - (ii) Keep them from falling (Psa. 116. 8; Jude 24).
 - (iii) Keep them clean (John 13. 5-10).
 - (iv) Guide them in the way of peace (Luke 1. 79).
 - (v) Pluck them out of the net (Psa. 25. 15).
 - (vi) Set them on a rock (Psa. 40. 2).
 - (vii) Light them upon their path (Psa. 119. 105).
 - (viii) Bring them within His gates (Psa. 122. 2).
- (D. L. Moody, *'Notes from my Bible'*.)

God's responses to prayer.

'Prayer delights God's ear, melts His heart, and opens His hand'.
(Attributed to Thomas Watson.)

Love, fear and hatred.

'Perfect love casts out fear ... if a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar' (1 John 4. 18-20).

The human love which is a response to divine love (v. 19) not only casts out fear of judgement, but it casts out hatred of others too.

'I come quickly' (Rev. 2. 7, 12, 20)

'Behold, I am coming *en taxe*;', says the exalted Jesus. This Greek phrase (from which we get the English word taxi, which literally means quick) ... while it can sometimes be translated 'soon', if the context supports such a reading, its basic meaning is 'with speed' or quickly or with dispatch.

'It tells how He will come, not when He will come ... Jesus Himself said even He didn't know when the Son of man would be coming (Mark 13. 32). That should have *put an end to theological weather forecasting* that involves date setting'.

(Ben Witherington III, *'Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not'*.)

'One thing'.

- (i) Desired (Psa. 27. 40).
- (ii) Lacking (Mark 10. 21).
- (iii) Needed (Luke 10. 42).
- (iv) Known (John 9. 25).
- (v) Done (Phil. 3. 13).

It is no sacrifice.

'If a *commission by an earthly king* is considered an honour, how can a *commission by a Heavenly King* be considered a sacrifice?'

(Attributed to David Livingstone.)

God's work not mine.

I have had to bow to the fact that God reserves the right to use people who disagree with me.

The relationship between God and sin.

'The great problem is this: if God does govern and control everything, then what is His relationship to sin?

All I can do, in answer, is to lay down a number of propositions that are clearly taught in the Scriptures.

The first is that sinful acts are under divine control, and occur only by God's permission and according to His ultimate purpose. If you want proof of that you will find it in the case of Joseph and his brethren.

'It was not you that sent me hither,' said Joseph, 'but God' (Gen. 45. 8). God permitted their sinful act and controlled it. You will find the same teaching about the death of our Lord as it is expounded by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

The second is that God restrains and controls sin. In Psalm 76. 10 we read, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.'

The third is that God overrules sin for good. Genesis 50. 20 puts it like this: 'But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.' God overruled the sin, and He did exactly the same in the case of the death of our Lord.

My last proposition is that God never causes sin, nor approves of it; He only permits, directs, restrains, limits and overrules it. People alone are responsible for their sin. The first chapter of James gives that particular teaching clearly'.

(Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Father, God the Son*, one of a series of sermons preached at Westminster Chapel, London, from 1952 to 1955 and published in 1996.)

The stewardship of money.

'It was Luther, so I am told, who said that everyone needs three conversions:

(i) conversion of the mind to gospel truth;

(ii) conversion of the heart to embrace the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Master; and

(iii) conversion of the purse, wallet, or pocketbook, the laying of one's money at Christ's feet.

The saying is worthy of Luther, who sees to the heart of just about every issue, even if, as I suspect, Luther did not actually craft it. He certainly knew that getting sin out of the driver's seat in relation to our money is one of the most difficult dimensions of the sinner's repentance'.

(J. I. Packer, *Weakness is the Way*, page 59. A reference to the {likely erroneous} quotation from Martin Luther appears towards the close of the attached Word document.)

Detailed notes. [See the attached Word document, '2 Corinthians 8'.](#)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Several years ago, when on holiday in Syria, Gwilym Davies from Swansea took a guided tour through the ancient Crusader fortress of Krak des Chevaliers.

'This place', the tour guide assured the party, 'is over 700 years old. In all those years, not a stone in it has been touched, nothing has been altered, nothing has been replaced'.

'What a coincidence!' exclaimed Mr Davies, *'they must have the same landlord I do'*.

Gilbert Coggins went for his breakfast to a rather posh restaurant near his home. The head waiter came over and greeted him with a smile.

'Good morning sir, may I take your order?' he asked politely.

'You can indeed', replied Gilbert, 'I'd like two boiled eggs, one of them so undercooked that it's still runny and slimy, and the other so over-cooked that it's like rock and almost impossible to eat. Then I'll have a cooked breakfast which has been left out somewhere so long that it has gone cold before I get it, some burnt toast which shatters as soon as it's touched with a knife, some margarine straight from the deep freeze so that it's impossible to spread, and a pot of lukewarm, very weak coffee'.

'That is a very odd and I have to say a rather difficult order, sir', said the bewildered waiter. 'But, if that is really what you want, I'll see what the chef can do'.

'I don't understand the problem', Gilbert replied, *'that's exactly what I was brought yesterday!'*