

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 29 August 2022.

Greetings.

Please find below your weekly 'Musings' from me.

Happy reading

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture

I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me".

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me".

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

1 Corinthians 11. 23-26 (*The New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out' (John 12. 31).

'Satan, who by a tree overcame our first parents in Eden, was himself overcome by a tree—the tree of the cross on which Jesus died'.

(R. F. Norden, *'With Jesus Every Day'*, page 163.)

Seven good resolutions.

(i) 'I will pray' (1 Sam. 7. 5).

(ii) 'I will praise' (Psa. 9. 1).

(iii) 'I will trust' (Psa. 56. 3).

(iv) 'I will hope' (Psa. 71. 14).

(v) 'I will take' (Psa. 116. 13).

(vi) 'I will pay' (Jonah 2. 9).

(vii) 'I will go' (Acts 18. 6).

'Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband' (1 Cor. 7. 2).

'Adam's shout of greeting when he meets Eve [Gen. 2. 23] shows he is perfectly satisfied with just one wife. The rest of Genesis seems to confirm monogamy as the most desirable situation, as all the polygamous marriages it describes are marred by strife ...

'Had Adam been supplied with several wives, he could have been fruitful and multiplied even quicker! The creation of one Eve thus shows that monogamy is more important than rapid multiplication'.

(G. J. Wenham, *'Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically'*, page 31.)

'I have called you by your name' (Isa. 43. 1).

'Baron Friedrich von Hügel, the Austrian writer and theologian, was fond of saying, "There are no dittos among souls".'

'At school I learned to marvel that no two snowflakes are alike, no two oak leaves identical. How much more unique is each human being! A true hearing of the gospel always takes in the specifically personal. "I have called you by your name" has become an essential element ... in my personal life'.

(Eugene H. Peterson, foreword to *'Homage to a Broken Man'* by Peter Mommsen, 2015, pages xii-xiii.)

Two long chapters:

1. 'Prince/chief' omitted in the longest chapter in the Book of Numbers.

'Numbers 7, the longest chapter in the book ...In the lengthy description of the dedication gifts for the altar from the twelve tribal leaders, each one seems to be identical—with one exception ...

'The difference is found right near the beginning, in verse 12. Every other description of the gifts given in Numbers 7. 12-83 read as follows: "On the [second through the twelfth] day [the person's name], leader [actually the Hebrew is *na-si'* meaning "prince"] of [the name of the tribe], presented..." Thus, it reads for all the others.

'But the first tribe mentioned is Judah, the royal tribe, the tribe to which our Lord Jesus was born. For this tribe, the word *na-si'* is missing! It simply says: "the one who offered his offering on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah" (Num. 7. 12).

f course, they are collectively called "princes" in verse 2, but *it may be that God was reserving the title of Prince of Judah for His well-beloved Son* ...

'He is declared to be "Jesus Christ, who is (i) the faithful witness, and (ii) the first begotten of the dead, and (iii) the prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1. 5-6, KJV).

(i) As "the faithful witness", He is first in *the truth* He has revealed.

(ii) As "the first begotten", He is first in *the triumph* He has won.

(iii) As "the prince of the kings of the earth", He is first in *the tribute* He has earned.

Hail to the King of kings!

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, '*Missing on Purpose?*', Taste and See: Uplook Ministries', 28 July 2022.)

2. 'Affliction' in the longest chapter in the Bible (Psalm 119).

(i) *Comfort*. 'This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life' (Psa. 119. 50).

(ii) *Obedience*. 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray but now I keep your word' (Psa. 119. 67).

(iii) *Instruction*. 'It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes' (Psa. 119. 71).

(iv) *Faithfulness*. 'In faithfulness you have afflicted me' (Psa. 119. 75).

'You have tried us as silver is tried ... you laid a crushing burden on our backs ... we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance' (Psa. 66. 10-12).

'This is stunning. The psalmist thanks God for testing His people, for refining them under the pressure of some extraordinarily difficult circumstances and for sustaining them through that experience.

'This is the response of perceptive, godly faith. It is not heard on the lips of those who thank God only when they escape trial or are feeling happy'.

(D. A. Carson, '*For the Love of God*', Volume 1, 15 May.)

The Lord Jesus as 'Son of ...'.

'In [John] chapters 11 and 12, God bears witness to (the Lord Jesus):

(i) as *Son of God*, by the resurrection of Lazarus [John 11. 4, 27];

(ii) as *Son of David*, by His entry into Jerusalem [John 12. 12-15];

(iii) as *Son of man*, by the coming of the Greeks [John 12. 20-24]'.

(J. N. Darby, '*On the Gospel of John*', Collected Writings, Volume 33, page 128.)

Christ, the Firstborn.

1. 'The expression "firstborn" has at least three different meanings in Scripture.

(i) 'In Luke 2. 7, it is used in *a literal sense*, where Mary brought forth her firstborn Son. There it means that the Lord Jesus was the first Child to whom she gave birth.

(ii) 'In Exodus 4. 22, on the other hand, it is used in *a figurative sense*. "Israel is my son, even my firstborn". In that verse there is no thought of an actual birth having taken place, but the Lord is using this word to describe the distinctive place which the nation of Israel had in His plans and purposes.

(iii) 'Finally, in Psalm 89. 27, the word "firstborn" is used *to designate a place of superiority, of supremacy, of uniqueness*. There God says that He will make David His firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. David was actually the last-born son of Jesse according to the flesh. But God determined to give him a place of unique supremacy, primacy, and sovereignty'.

(William MacDonald, '*Bible Believer's Commentary*', page 1993.)

2. The title is used several times *in that last sense* ('of superiority, of supremacy, of uniqueness') *concerning the Lord Jesus*.

(i) '*The first* has to do with *His work as Creator* ['who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation' (Col. 1. 15)] ...

'Christ, as the Firstborn, is distinct from and prior to all created beings, and the phrase marks His superiority over them as their Creator' ...

(ii) and (iii) *'The second and third* have reference to *His death and resurrection* [*'who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence'* (Col. 1. 18) and *'who is the faithful witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth'* (Rev. 1. 5).] ...

'Unlike others previously raised, He has been raised to die no more ... The distinction between the two passages is this, that the phrase in Revelation 1. 5 lays special stress upon the fact that Christ was dead (compare verse 18), while Colossians 1. 18 lays stress upon the fact that He rose from the midst of the dead ... the fact that the saints are to be raised from the dead is due to His resurrection' ...

(iv) *'The fourth* is associated with *His position among His saints in their future glorified state* [*'whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren'* (Rom. 8. 29)] ...

'This points to the consummation of the divine counsels in Christ, when, with bodies conformed to His body of glory, the saints will be in His complete likeness ... That Christ is spoken of as "the Firstborn among many brethren" indicates that He is the pattern, or type, to which they are to be conformed in a relationship in which, since He is the only begotten Son, He stands in priority and superiority to them, and, being the Firstborn, He stands in His glorified position as preeminent over them' ...

(v) *'The fifth* is associated with the manifestation of *His Person and glory at His Second Advent* [*'when He again bringeth in the Firstborn into the world He saith, "And let all the angels of God worship Him"'* (Heb. 1. 6)] ...

'It points to the future event, when God will again bring His Firstborn into the world, that is to say, at the Second Advent. The time referred to is marked by the divine decree: "And let all the angels of God worship Him". At His birth there was "a multitude of the Heavenly host praising God" (Luke 2. 13), but upon His return to the earth in His manifested glory, all the angels will worship Him'.

(W. E. Vine, *'The Significance of the Title "The Firstborn"'*, Collected Writings, Volume 4, pages 208-212.)

'Testifying ... repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 20. 21).

'Any genuine gospel proclamation must include an invitation to make a conscious decision to forsake one's sins and come to Christ in faith, asking Christ for forgiveness of sins. If either the need to repent of sins or the need to trust in Christ for forgiveness is neglected, there is not a full and true proclamation of the gospel'.

(Wayne Grudem, *'Systematic Theology'*, page 695.)

'Let every man take heed how he builds' (1 Cor. 3. 10).

'It is possible to be a good workman that needs not to be ashamed, building things that will abide into life and character. On the contrary, it is sadly possible to be poor workmen building with material that will produce nothing but a heap of ashes in that day (1 Cor. 3. 12-15). Later, the apostle speaks of a bad workman who defiles, corrupts, or destroys the temple. Him, we are told, God will destroy (1 Cor. 3. 17).

(J. M. Davies, *'Christ's Second Advent'*, The Faith, Pickering and Inglis, page 275.)

'He who prophesies speaks to men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort' (1 Cor. 14. 3).

Prophecy could be said (i) to build up, (ii) to stir up, and (iii) to cheer up.

It performed (i) a strengthening ministry, (ii) a stirring ministry, and (iii) a soothing ministry.

'That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us' (2 Cor. 4. 7).

'If all you ever attempt is what you know you can do yourself, if all your needs seem to be met through someone or something other than God, if you never have any difficulties that are greater than you can bear—how will you know the awesome greatness ... of His infinite power?

'It's when the Red Sea is before you, the mountains are on one side of you, the desert is on the other side, and you feel the Egyptian army closing in from behind that you experience His power to open up an escape route.

'He has power to do the supernatural, the unthinkable, the impossible'.

(Anne Graham Lotz, *'Just Give Me Jesus'*, page 14.)

'Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, even righteousness and sanctification and redemption' (1 Cor. 1. 30).

'God's true wisdom is expressed in the gospel ("the word of the cross", 1 Cor. 1. 18) and is personified in the Lord Jesus (who makes known to us the counsels and the purpose of God).

'This wisdom introduces us to a wide range of blessings; namely, to (i) righteousness, (ii) sanctification and (iii) redemption.

'Each of these terms would have been readily understood at Corinth. For Corinth was the centre of the provincial government and residence of the proconsul, and as such had its courtroom. Corinth

also boasted the temple of the Greek goddess, Aphrodite, and possessed its own much-used slave market.

‘Paul assures us that, “in Christ Jesus”, we have:

- (i) “*righteousness*”; in the language of the *courtroom*, we have been cleared of the guilt of our sin;
- (ii) “*sanctification*”; in the language of the *temple*, we have been set apart for God, have been given access to Him and have been cleansed from the defilement of our sin; and
- (iii) “*redemption*”; in the language of the *slave market*, we have been liberated from the bondage and tyranny of our sin.

‘And so, Paul concludes (with an eye, no doubt, to Jer. 9. 23-24), “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1. 31).

‘Two verses before this, the apostle had asserted that God has stripped us of any cause for boasting in ourselves; “that no flesh should glory in His presence (literally, ‘before Him’)”. Now, Paul ends by saying, in effect, “*Although we are not to boast ‘before’ Him, we are most certainly to boast ‘in’ Him!*”

(Extracts from a message given on 1 Cor. 1. 17-25 in May 2002.)

The response of the second-century church to persecution.

‘We who were filled with war, and mutual slaughter, and every wickedness, have each through the whole earth changed our warlike weapons—our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into implements of tillage—and we cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith, and hope, which we have from the Father Himself through Him who was crucified...

‘It is plain that, though beheaded, and crucified, and thrown to wild beasts, and chains, and fire, and all other kinds of torture, we do not give up our confession; but the more such things happen, the more do others and in larger numbers become faithful, and worshippers of God through the name of Jesus’.

(Justin Martyr, ‘*The Dialogue with Trypho*’ {written A.D. 155-160}, translated by George Reith, Chapter CX.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Two golf smiles.

1. Trevor is 90 years old. He has played golf every day since his retirement 25 years ago.

One day, he arrives home looking very downcast.

‘Sadly, that’s it’, he tells his wife Ann. I have to give up my golfing. My eyesight has become so bad that, when I’ve hit the ball, for the life of me, I can’t see where it went’.

‘I have an idea’, Ann responds. ‘Why don’t you take my brother Gilbert with you to the golf course’.

‘Don’t talk nonsense’, sighs Trevor. ‘Your brother’s a hundred and three. He’ll be no help’.

‘Look’, Ann says, ‘Gilbert may be a hundred and three but, remarkably for his age, his eyesight is near perfect. At least, give it a try’.

So, the next day, Trevor heads off to the golf course with his brother-in-law Gilbert.

Trevor places his first ball on the tee, lines himself up, takes one mammoth swing and whacks the ball down the fairway. He stands for a moment squinting, but to no effect.

Turning to his brother-in-law, he asks, ‘Gilbert, did you see where the ball went?’

‘Of course, I did!’ replies Gilbert. ‘My eyesight is excellent’.

‘Well, where did it go?’ Trevor asks hopefully.

‘Oh dear’, Gilbert responds, ‘*I can’t remember*’.

2. John arrived late for his weekly round of golf with Mark.

Mark greeted him with the predictable, ‘You’re late today, John’.

‘I’m sorry, Mark’, John responded, ‘but I was delayed. I had to toss a coin to decide whether I should take Mabel shopping or come and play golf with you’.

‘I don’t get it’, Mark queried, ‘how does that explain why you are all of 15 minutes late?’

John answered, ‘*I had to toss it 18 times!*’