

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Ministry in London

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MEETING THE NEED

FEATURES WHICH ARE TO INCREASE

Kenneth Robinson

Luke 2: 19; Acts 16: 13-14; 1 Samuel 25: 32-33; Romans 16: 1-3

I would like to draw from these scriptures to call attention to four features that I believe should be on the increase amongst the saints. It is a right and healthy exercise to identify features amongst the people of God that are important. We have thought earlier today of the word in the parable as to the sowing of the seed and we saw the increase. It appears necessary and right in the days of recovery that certain features are on the increase and I would like to call attention to four such.

Each of these four scriptures refers to sisters, and I have drawn from them to bring out the importance of formative work and the expression of specific features amongst the saints. However, it will be recognised that every feature will relate also to the brothers. If the testimony is to be maintained and we to be maintained in it and conditions amongst the people of God according to God maintained, certain features require to increase amongst both the brothers and the sisters.

The first feature is *pondering*, a very contemplative and necessary feature. We referred to Jacob in the reading and his activity. I think pondering is necessary as well as activity. Mary pondered about the things relating to Jesus Christ. She kept them in her mind and pondered them in heart. How necessary! I am sure that the secret of the increase of substance in spiritual things amongst every age group is to ponder the things concerning Jesus Christ. We have a great privilege to have the light and knowledge of divine things. Let us not trifle with them. I trust every soul values the privilege of having light and a personal knowledge and understanding of the precious truths of God which centre in the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to *make time* to ponder and to *take time* to ponder. You say, I have a huge schedule, my day is gone before I start, my week is filled. I would suggest that we need to make time

to ponder the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. Take time to ponder the glories of the fact that God has come into manhood in Jesus; the most wonderful, deep act to be contemplated in the history of time. What Mary was pondering was the divine communication that centred in that babe that was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The voice had come to her. The sign had come to the shepherds, "for to-day a Saviour has been born to you in David's city, who is Christ the Lord", Luke 2: 11. Oh the glory and greatness, the holiness of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ! God come into manhood. John is a ponderer. John's gospel is full of substance as we would know, and John includes himself amongst those who have contemplated the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ - "we have contemplated his glory", John 1: 14. That is the way to a deeper and fuller understanding of the substance of the "truth as it is in Jesus".

In Hebrews 12, the scripture says; "looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and complete of faith: who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame ... For consider well him" (vv 2,3). The note says 'Weigh so as to judge its value'. Every impression of Christ that we have as believers is of intrinsic value. You say, Are you referring to knowledge of the truth? That is one side. You have to learn the truth, you have to learn an understanding of the outline of divine things, but is there anything so precious as having a personal impression of the glory of the One in whom everything for God has been secured, our Lord Jesus Christ. I trust every soul here has a knowledge of the One of whom we speak, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary kept these things. She was the mother of Jesus and she is a great study, but she became a treasury. We can all become treasuries of impressions of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may well ask one another, What is your personal impression of Christ? When did we last have a vital personal impression of a living Man in heaven? You say, I have come to the meetings, I am reading the Scriptures. That is precious and excellent and puts you in the way of these things, but there is more

than that. We deal with precious, living, vital matters and it is essential, that there is increase amongst the saints of precious impressions of Christ that result from pondering. You say, How do I go about it? Where would I do it? Take this exercise to the Lord, into the divine presence, and into your schedule, to use the phrase. The older brethren will just pardon this reference, but in most of the organisations commercially to which we are attached you have to have your schedule. Everything is marked out and organised. We should make sure that we make time to ponder and take time to ponder. Our spiritual progress depends on having these wealthy, formed, definite, personal, full impressions of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary pondered them, she kept them in her mind. It is an interesting verb - to contemplate. It is a 2 Timothy verb. Paul brings it before Timothy, when says "Keep, by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us, the good deposit entrusted", (2 Tim 1: 14). Mary kept these things. We should build up our treasury, build up our own experience and understanding of the truth as it centres in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. How great He is! We speak of One who is God over all, blessed forever. In everything that is said we need the help of the Holy Spirit to ensure that the glory of such a One is protected. There is no greater privilege than to have the light of the glory of God manifest in flesh. The hymn says:

God manifest in flesh, O wonder of His universe! (Hymn 400)

The blessed God, remaining in His own holiness and distinctiveness, yet coming into manhood in the Lord Jesus Christ, coming and bringing into expression everything that God ever desired to find in a man. Blessed glorious Man! "He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages", Luke 1: 32,33. Every type in the Old Testament looked on to the glorious antitype in Jesus. We learn about Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, Solomon, and many others, and the features that they bring out, but only one Man remains unique and that is the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is an incomparable, glorious, blessed Man! Ponder this. Ponder His glory. The Holy Spirit will help us all

in definiteness of exercise to expand in our appreciation of the glory of the Person of Christ. This feature of pondering and keeping matters in relation to the glory of the Person of Christ, the preciousness of His work must be on the increase. Do we also ponder the preciousness His work? This is the One who came down from glory's height, who thought it not an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself. Think of Him taking a bondman's form, being found in figure as a man and taking His place in the likeness of men. That same blessed One was not only prepared to empty Himself but He was prepared to humble Himself, even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Do we ponder the down-stooping of Jesus? Do we ponder the preciousness of His work on Calvary's cross? When did we last ponder the preciousness of the moral glories which shone out in Him from the third hour to the sixth hour, when He endured at the hands of men, in utter derision, as they gave evidence of the full blown character of man's assessment of the One whom they described as worthless and placed on a Roman cross. In this period from the third hour to the sixth the moral glories of the manhood of Jesus shone. As Peter says, "Who when reviled, reviled not again, when suffering threatened not, but gave Himself over into the hands of Him who judges righteously", 1 Peter 2: 23. Ponder these precious words on the cross "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do". The greatness and glory of God towards man in grace is exemplified in these words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we need to ponder the period from the sixth hour to the ninth hour and the atoning work of Jesus when He was made sin. We say, we will never understand it. But let us ponder it. It needs to be protected and we need great care when speaking of it as it is a holy matter. However, if anything should move us to adoring praise and worship to the Lord Jesus, it is to consider that "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him", 2 Cor 5: 21. No doubt there are many other matters which could be referred to, like His burial, His resurrection involving the glorious fact that there is a Man out of death. What a thrill, what a joy, what a comfort, what an encouragement it is to ponder the glory of the One

who has been marked out Son of God in power by resurrection from among the dead. The glory of the Lord Jesus ought to be before us more. The Holy Spirit will help and this will develop a foundation in our souls, so that we realise that Christ is the true Isaac and that He is great and "becoming continually greater, until He is very great", Gen 26: 13.

We may ponder this problem and that problem, or that exercise, but I commend to the brethren that we need to make time to ponder and to ponder the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be our object eternally. We sang:

Hark! ten thousand voices crying

Think of the precious release there will be as we look on that day, when redemption and the full glory of what has been secured by that precious One and His work in coming into manhood will be celebrated. Heaven will be aglow and vibrant celebrating the worthiness of the One who has accomplished it all. Precious matter!

Praise the Lamb! - the chorus waking

Think of the glory of the presentation of the Lamb. Then Mr Darby says immediately,

Praise the Lamb! - the chorus waking ...,

Rolls around the endless song.

All the Father's counsels claiming,

Equal honours to the Son (Hymn 14)

This is the language of a ponderer of the glory of the Lord Jesus! It is like gem after gem coming forth. Would you love to be able to find in yourself as you speak to the Lord Jesus something, coming through from your affections, your personal substantial impression formed by the Holy Spirit, that you can bring back to Jesus as the light of His glory comes before you?

These things are very precious, but are they on the increase? You look round your local meeting and say, There is more to that brother's part than there used to be: That brother took part to the

Lord in a way which I have never heard him do before! A young brother stands up and speaks to the Lord Jesus, and you have some sense as he is speaking to Him, that he knows who he is speaking to and that he has something to say about Him. Beloved sisters look on, and the value of what they have gathered is able to be communicated and expressed publicly through the brothers and also in private conversation. They can bring out their personal appreciation as ponderers of the glory of the Lord Jesus. This needs to be amongst the saints. Things need to be on the increase, there is always the danger that other things are on the increase: and the things that ought to be on the increase are on the decrease.

I want to refer now to Acts 16 to the feature of *attending*. There are four references in Luke's writings to attending. Lydia is brought forward here "whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul". We need to attend to divine things. In chapter 1, Luke refers to those who had previously written, and one of his complementary features about them is that they were "attendants on the Word" (v.2). That was not Luke himself, but those that were His disciples. Think of Luke, speaking simply, in his research for his gospel, speaking to those who had been attendants on the Word - a precious feature. I think it brings out the value that is placed on divine things, Luke must have researched and spoken to souls who were attendants on the Word. No doubt he spoke to Mary. Mary would be one such person, who was an attendant on the Word. It is a fine feature. Attendant implies, I think, proximity and confidence and the ability to take in everything that relates to a subject. Somebody must have told him about the woman in Luke 7, as you do not get it in any other gospel. Think of Luke listening to "an attendant on the Word" telling him about the experience in Simon the Pharisee's house. Is that not precious? He gives a whole paragraph in his gospel to this experience of a woman in Luke 7 who came and knew she was a sinner and found her place at His feet. With tears she came, and washed His feet and wiped them with her hair. Luke brings it all out in his gospel. Somebody must have told him about these gems regarding the glory and work of Jesus. Let us value the

gospels and the writings that we have in our hand, as the work of those who were attendants in relation to divine things.

Next I want to refer to an attendant in Luke 4 at the preaching in Nazareth. The Lord stood up to read and was handed the book of the prophet Esaias and he found the place where it was written "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor; he has sent me to preach to captives deliverance, and to the blind sight, to send forth the crushed delivered, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (v 18). The whole truth of the gospel coming forth, brought forth there into that Nazareth synagogue, and then it says, "having rolled up the book, when he had delivered it up to the attendant" (v 20). As we stand up to preach, do we feel like an attendant upon the divine Preacher, the anointed Preacher? What a responsibility it is, but yet what a privilege. Consider this scene and let it stir up exercise. The divine Preacher, the anointed Preacher, rolled up "Isaiah 61" and handed it to the attendant. What an exercise and responsibility! Are you able to convey the testimony of God's grace in the power of the Spirit of God sent from above? Are you able to be a true attendant? What a privilege, what a matter to be able to bring out the feelings and right representation of God in grace. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me" (v 18). An attendant is someone who is near and who understands and who sees all the eyes of the synagogue focused on the blessed Man who had spoken - "and wondered at the words of grace which were coming out of his mouth" (v 22). And the Lord Jesus says "To-day the scripture is fulfilled in your ears" (v 21). An attendant is not a careless bystander. An attendant is fully fitted to take on the responsibility of what is handed to him. There are also two references in Acts. In Acts 13, in the assembly in Antioch, the word comes as to the Holy Spirit "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (v 2). Immediately there is a comment; "And they had John also as their attendant" (v 5). Yet, later on in the chapter it says that John went away back. Early on in the opening out of the truth of Paul's ministry, this feature is highlighted but not sustained.

However, the gap, we may say, is beautifully filled by Lydia in chapter 16 as she comes through with an open heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul.

Now this feature was going to be so necessary and it still remains necessary, to be an attendant upon Paul's ministry, with an opened heart touched by the Lord. Divine light has come into her soul and Luke says of her "to attend to the things spoken by Paul" (v 14). She must have listened and taken on the truth. I think it would relate to what came out afterwards in the whole Philippian ministry, as she becomes an attendant on the things spoken by Paul. Can this be said of every one of us? Do we have the desire, do we have the appreciation of the great ministry of the apostle Paul which flows from Christ glorified? One of the first features referred to as the testimony moves westward is of *attending* - "whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul". This needs to be on the increase. It is not a careless, haphazard feature, but a real sense of the fulfilment of responsibility and a valuation of what is there.

Another attendant in the Old Testament was Joshua. Joshua is described as an attendant at a critical point, at a point where the people had gone into idolatry in Exodus 32, where Moses is pitching the tent apart from idolatry. At that point it is said that Joshua his attendant never departed from the tent of meeting (see Exod 33: 11). That is a committal in 2 Timothy 2 days to maintain what is according to divine principle and to divine commandment. When he is referred to later in Numbers 27, it is "take Joshua" (v 18), not now described as Moses attendant but as a man in whom is the Spirit and he is one who is ready to cause the people to inherit. How precious these things are! We see in a good number of our localities elder brethren being taken. Their part in the testimony is over and they have the blessed privilege of being with Christ, which is very much better. However, the onus now is for us younger brethren to come forward and take up responsibility. This needs to be on the increase. While one detail of it is attending meetings, it is important to see what your attendance is related to. It is not exactly to the maintenance of a

position, but it is attending to the things which relate to the gospel, things which relate to a glorified Christ, things which relate to the truth now of the Spirit indwelling the assembly, and things which relate to the saints inheriting God's purpose for them. It is suggestive that as the attendant in John in Acts 13 goes back, what comes through in Lydia is the same feature maintained as the testimony moves westward. Let it be on the increase.

In 1 Samuel it is *discernment*. This is very exercising, but a very necessary feature amongst the people of God. Abigail was, as we understand from the teaching, one of the full types of the assembly in the Old Testament. Mr Taylor has a fine set of readings on the truth of the assembly as brought out in types in the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 25, Abigail's discernment shines. Her discernment shines as she preserves the glory of David and to preserve life. She maintains and operates "with the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ". Discernment is necessary in the things of God. To both Timothy and Titus, Paul says "be sober". The need for sobriety is linked with discernment. I do not think sobriety is a long face and a glum approach to life. I think it is having a sober and clear judgment and assessment of all that is going on. That is needed. I do not think inexperience, rashness, and a lack of understanding of the principles of the house of God ought to be evident among the saints. There needs to be clear understanding of the truth and principles which govern the house of God. Discernment flows from this.

One man who prayed for it was Solomon. He prayed for discernment, and God granted it to him. How valuable therefore to everyone of us is his book of Proverbs. He wrote three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five! Thirty-one chapters full of discernment and guidance. I remember a touch of Mr Brian Deck's: A chapter for every day in the month. A good habit would be to read one chapter from the book of Proverbs on each day of the month!

Hebrews 5 tells us "solid food belongs to full-grown men, who, on account of habit, have their senses exercised for distinguishing

both good and evil" (v 14). Discernment is needed in every local meeting, by parents, in household and family matters, by individuals in every exercise. It is the ability to assess and decide what is right and fit and appropriate for the testimony, whether it be in a believer's life or the believer's house, or behaviour among the people of God.

Another source of help in this feature can be found in the letters of the brothers who served in the recovery. These letters are of value and indicate in many occasions careful assessment and then guidance and comment. They are well worth reading. It may relate to a person's state or health, or an exercise that may be proceeding in a household, or an exercise that relates to a locality, or even an area or feature of doctrine. Abigail preserved life. She brought forward food, and the other beautiful feature often referred to in relation to her in 1 Samuel 25 is that of going down. One company went down from one side of the hill, and another went down from the other side of the hill. We do not live in a day for personal or self justification; we can leave that with the Lord Jesus in His own time. In the meantime we want the feature of Abigail to develop in every local meeting.

Finally Romans 16 refers to *helping*. Paul writes the whole Roman letter, it brings out the truth of the gospel and in the last chapter says; "I commend to you Phoebe, our sister", and she was a helper. She was a patron and she did what was necessary, and how Paul appreciated the fact. He does not describe her for her knowledge; he commends her as being a helper. We can all increase in this feature and we can help one another in practical matters, in conversation, in way of life, in influence, and in many other ways.

I want to commend these four features which I believe need to be on the increase amongst us. May we not be saying that worldly features are on the increase. May some of the features that are on the increase amongst the saints relate to pondering, attending, discerning and helping for God's glory.

DORKING

2 May 1998

Ministry in London

(i) David J.Hutson

Matthew 28: 20 (from "And behold"); 18: 20; 2 Timothy 2: 19 (from "let everyone")

These scriptures came to mind following our brother's prayer, as to the experience of the Lord's presence. Matthew 28 is general; the Lord will not fail His testimony here for the Holy Spirit is here to maintain the rights of the Lord Jesus in the assembly and as our brother has said, the gifts - and indeed the Holy Spirit Himself have come from Christ in glory, and He Himself is concerned and active in relation to the maintenance of the testimony and what is due to His Name here on earth at the present time. Although no doubt there is a dispensational bearing of this reference in Matthew, He would say "I am with you all the days until the completion of the age". Paul could say to the Philippians that "the Lord is near" (Phil 4: 5). Although He is ascended up far above all heavens we do not feel at a distance because of His support and help in view of the continuation of the testimony in which, through grace, we have our part.

That is general and the question is as to what degree we prove His presence. It says in Matthew 18 "For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them". It is not automatic. It is not just coming to a round of meetings, if I may speak plainly, it does not say 'when two or three or more come together to read the Bible, I am in the midst', or for any other purpose, but "where two or three are gathered together unto my name". So that I feel searched as to it myself, as to our motives when we come together, when we come to a meeting like this; is it another Tuesday night and the brethren will expect to see us there? Or can it be said in an active way that we are gathered unto His Name? Our brother has referred to the fact that we do, through grace, prove something of His presence. Do we all feel it? It has been said that we can be in the company where there are those who

experience His presence and maybe we do not feel it ourselves. The secret of it, surely is what He says here, "where two or three are gathered together unto my name".

I read in 2 Timothy that if we name His Name we must be departing from iniquity, so that there is a moral basis for our gathering together as having departed from that which is not according to His Name, especially in the ecclesiastical area of profession. All that would enter into our being gathered together unto His Name. I believe it would also relate to what our beloved brother has said .as to being ready and available as we are gathered to His Name, which implies His absence, and yet in the assurance of what He says - not a promise exactly that I will come, but that I am in the midst. It would be our concern not simply to come together for our own enjoyment and our own experience of fellowship and these holy links together (thank God for them, and thank God for the experience of them), but I believe it would also involve that as He would come in there would be something for Himself - something that we have together, something which we are sharing, something which is suitable for Himself. Again that challenges us as to what we have and what we share together, not only what we say together, but our experiences together, our relations together, whether our relations together are such that as He comes in among us He can find pleasure in the way that we are set together as gathered to His Name.

I felt that we should stimulate one another in relation to it so that we might have these experiences to which our brother referred in prayer and that we might all be in them and that above all there might be, as we are together, something which there is for the satisfaction of His own heart. He has secured it at such cost and His service continues, the washing of water by the word, in view of that time of presentation, but does He find something which is in accord with it at the present time? Something which is for the delight of His own heart as we come together. Thank God for what we experience, what comes in as He comes in, His word that comes in among us, but then the great end would be that there would be

something for Himself, and not only for Himself but something which He can take on in view of what should be for the enrichment of the service of His God and Father. I just bring these suggestions forward, as I felt it would help us in such occasions as this that there might be as we gather to His Name, greater liberty among us, and that there might be more for Himself, and surely if we were concerned as to this there would be a blessing for us.

May it be so for His Name's sake.

(ii) Eric C.Burr

Psalm 27: 4; 90: 16-17

The hymn that we sang brought to my mind the other hymn that is rather like it, which begins: We're waiting for thee Lord, thy beauty to see. I was thinking about beauty and what our beloved brother has just said runs with the thought that was in my mind as to Psalm 27, because he has asked us what our objective is when we come together. The objective in verse 4 of Psalm 27 is to see the beauty of the Lord. Our brother used the word 'motive'. There is a very powerful motive for coming together, that in the company of the saints you can see the beauty of the Lord. I find that very attractive. We may look on one another and we know a good deal about each other, sometimes you are inclined to feel we know too much about each other, nevertheless, we do know each other. I was talking to another brother last week and we were saying that amongst us in the city there is a general attitude of regard and respect for one another. In that you see the beauty of the Lord. The blessedness of that is very attractive. We generally speak of some manifestation of Jesus in the breaking of bread and we continue that meeting in the light of the impression He makes upon us as we come together. We are often a bit doctrinal about it. We have been taught what proceeds in that meeting and we go from one thing to another, a bit according to the book, but the beauty of the Lord has been there. What impression has that made? The beauty of the Lord is a fresh thought, because when He was here, the people to whom He came said He has no beauty that we should desire Him. In a quick reflection on the gospels, I do not think there are references to beauty in regard to Jesus at all. In fact He was despised and left alone of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, One from whom men hide their faces (see Isa 53: 3). People do not hide their face from one in whom they see beauty. But the beauty of the Lord is in the company of His people as they come together. I venture to give the expression, "the house of Jehovah" a wider bearing, because the house of God in the New Testament has a wider

bearing than just a meeting. The house of God has in view that whole area in which the Spirit of God acts, the habitation of God in the Spirit, and therefore as part of the house of God in that sense, we may all be contemplating the beauty of the Lord at any time, and you might even say all the time.

It reminds one of 2 Corinthians 3, "we all looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are changed according to the same image from glory to glory". That is the beauty of the Lord. It was the motive of David in going there. We can recall from the books of Samuel and Chronicles, David's desire in relation to the building of a house. When the chronicler is going over that history in those two books, he does not refer to the beauty of the Lord. But David's motive was to go in and see the beauty of the Lord.

These things are very attractive. We do not see Jesus, as Mr Darby says, with mortal eye, but by the Spirit we are given already some impression of what He will be like when we are with Him, and it will be beauty, the beauty of the Lord. We may reflect on what it is. In one sense the idea of beauty can be applied in environments which are not positive or attractive. It is attributed to the king of Tyre in Ezekiel, it is attributed to Absalom, but an impression of the reality of what the beauty of Jesus is is enough to make us have a judgment of things whose beauty is not according to Himself. These things are very attractive, very simple. If the Lord came in what would we do? It has been said that if the Lord came in we would be at His feet. But the impression that He would make on us is the beauty of a Man whom God has glorified. He would come in and make Himself known to us. I refer to Psalm 90 because of Moses' desire there that the beauty of God might be upon us - "the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us". We do not often think about beauty in relation to God. No doubt since every attribute of what is right and positive and gracious is there, we would see beauty in God. We see Him in Jesus, and the beauty of God ministered to us and upon us, the people of God. Think of the desire of Moses. The reason I read the previous verse is that the objective of service is to be that the beauty of Jehovah might be upon us. It says "Let thy work appear

unto thy servants, and thy majesty unto their sons", but the effect of that work is that "the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us".

These things are very simple. You do not have to worry too much about whether you can define beauty. I do not think anybody can define beauty, but you know it when you see it. The motive in coming together is to see the beauty of Jehovah. It would apply at the breaking of bread, it would apply in a reading - the verse goes on to speaking of enquiring in His temple - it would certainly apply in the preaching of the gospel, that those who are present, would have some fresh impression of the beauty of the Man that was here, the Man that was crucified, the Man that was raised, and the, Man who is now glorified. Even in the care meeting; the beauty of Jehovah might be there. I remain with the word that our brother used, our motive to come together is to see the beauty of Jehovah. If that is our motive, we would be careful not to do anything that marred it, not to do anything that spoilt it, not to do anything that distracted the brethren from some fresh apprehension of seeing the beauty of Jehovah even as we enquire of Him in His temple.

If we went on with the thought, we would apprehend that there is a beautiful city (Ps 48: 9) "beautiful in elevation as the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion", no doubt prefiguring in some sense the church, and there is a land of beauty (Dan 11: 41), God's inheritance in the saints.

I just draw attention to these things because they are very positive and very attractive and what has been said connected with the thought that I had in mind when thinking of a different hymn from what was given out, that we are waiting "thy beauty to see". I just add that you do not have to wait until you are with Him, you can see it now.

(iii) Andrew Burr

Mark 5: 22-24 (to: “And he went with him”); 35- 36; John 11: 3-4

The thought before us of beauty in the Lord Jesus is associated in the scripture with his feet. We tend to look for beauty in faces, but "how beautiful are the feet of Him that announces glad tidings?" (see Isa 52: 7). I just observe that because it links with what our brothers have said, that there is a beauty about the Lord's movements, especially movements towards us. John the Baptist in John's gospel took account of Jesus as He walked. It seems as if His walk, the way He walked, marked Him out.

I have only very simple thoughts as to these two passages. They are linked by the deaths of which they speak. In the first one the ruler comes with this urgent need as to his daughter. Jesus does not say anything, according to the scripture, but He went with him. I think that is something we might look for. We are so anxious to have immediate answers to questions, things that arise among us or in our lives. Perhaps there is a measure of unbelief in that craving, but that Jesus went would have been enough for faith. Jesus would not have moved without there being a certainty for faith that the child would live. As we often remark, we could not envisage the Lord Jesus being in the presence of death without exercising His power over it; therefore no question appeared to those in the ruler's household that the Lord would be on a fruitless mission. He was going to bring life out of death into this household. For any who had faith, simply to see Him walking would have conveyed that here was the One who could bring life out of death. There would have been a purpose, a certainty, about His walk.

We read the corresponding passage in Luke, at home, and I saw a fresh beauty in it, that the consent of the Lord to walk with this man in his need was enough for faith as to the outcome. So that when doubts are raised, the Lord says immediately, according to Mark, "only believe". How wonderful that is. We have before us, as we have in our occasion this evening, a coming One. Let us be

occupied with His movements and not with our doubts and with our fears.

I read this passage in John's gospel because here, by contrast, the Lord does not immediately go with the messengers. This is a greater test for faith. Here we have the beauty of the Lord's word, which I think has been among us this evening. There is an appeal to faith and an appeal to love in this household. The faith and simplicity of the sisters has often been remarked on; for them it was enough that the Teacher should know that he whom He loved was sick. They knew where to find Him, and they had someone who was ready to go and take this message that Lazarus was sick. I suppose the messengers came and delivered their message and then returned. The sisters would have looked out for Him; they would have expected, no doubt, to see the Lord with the messengers. The Lord was not there. They might have said; Where is He? They would have been told that He stayed where He was. Well, did He say anything? Yes, He said it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.

Again I think that for faith there would have been a certainty in that message. At some point in this matter He would arrive. I do not think that the Lord intended that He should be glorified without these two beloved sisters seeing it, as we have had before us this evening. His glory and His beauty is something that He seeks to display to those that love Him. They are full of doubts, and they thought He should have come earlier. If they had perhaps meditated and transferred their affections to the message He actually gave them, they would have seen its sufficiency - "the Son of God glorified". They might have said, if faith had been active more than perhaps it is with us, if He is going to be glorified, surely we will see it; and if we see it, then He must have come. I believe that that is something that we can count on in any matter that arises in our lives, or in our fellowship together. As we work out links together that we have referred to, and if anything arises, we might wonder as to how and when the Lord will come into it, but let us carry the certainty that the One whose beauty we look for will manifest His glory in relation to

the matter. It will not be unto death, but that the Son of Man should be glorified by it. How else could He be glorified except as entering into it in life giving power?

As has been remarked, there was a beauty in Jesus which passed the casual observer by. There was no beauty, they said; "that we should desire him" (Isa 53: 2), but, beloved, let us take account of His movements and let us take account of His voice and His word. These are just two very easy-to-hand examples - but let us take account of them, and let us look for - and I do not doubt find - the beauty that is in them.

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MEETING THE NEED

James A. Petersen

Psalm 40: 6-8; Malachi 3: 14-17

These two scriptures speak of someone answering to the great need of the moment. We have to know the need of the moment and to see if we are in the answer to it. Psalm 40 refers to the Lord Jesus: speaking reverently, it says in verse 7, "Then said I, Behold, I come". He saw and met the need. In the reference to Malachi 3 the godly overcomers saw the need. "Then they that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another"; and such were pleasurable to God. Some might call these persons the remnant, but to those of us who are part of the assembly period and as having the Spirit, we are in the assembly; and hades gates shall not prevail against it Matt 16: 18. There were all kinds of unbelief current, but faith marked some, "Then they ... spoke often one to another".

I was thinking firstly of Psalm 40 and what the Lord Jesus saw: "Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire". Wonderful to think of divine Persons speaking to each other, the Lord Jesus speaking here, as we believe, as knowing the heart of God. Sacrifices in this world are not what God is looking for. "Ears hast thou prepared me", there was one here who would listen to God. "He wakeneth mine ear", Isa 50: 4; Christ as Man listened to God, how pleasurable He was to Him. God looks down, as it were, on men and women here in the Plainfield area, and who has He got here with an opened ear in the morning? Satan has managed in the homes of the world to have means to turn on and hear other voices, but the speaking from heaven may be shut out. How many has God got to hear Him and His beloved Son and the voice of the Spirit? The Lord Jesus was here as hearing and it was delightful to heaven - the day beginning, as it were, in His sojourn here and He was here as hearing. The day beginning with Christ giving delight to heaven in this way on earth; "This is my beloved son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 3: 17. "Ears hast thou prepared me", then He says as answering to the

need of God, "Then said I ... in the volume of the book it is written of me - To do thy good pleasure, my God". Wonderful to think of the pleasure of divine Persons; not whether we are happy, that will come too, but to seek the pleasure of God is a great matter; that is what the Lord Jesus secured for God. God had delight in Jesus and our delight is in Him, too. We think of that Man as He began each day in dependence on God.

In Malachi it says of the overcomers "they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure"; that is what the saints are. Such were refusing the statements of the then religious element: "It is vain to serve God"; and also saying 'we have been righteous yet God brings tribulation on us'. We have heard people say these things and perhaps we have thought the same. God may bring in suffering and distress now, for we are in the time of His governmental operations publicly on Christendom, and unbelief was saying, "what profit is it that we keep his charge" (v 14). Our outlook is "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us", Rom 8: 18. Let us make up our mind as to suffering for Christ, "suffered for a little while" (1 Peter 5: 10), and Christ says, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?", Luke 24: 26. The Lord Jesus went that way, He did the Father's will, He went to the cross. Peter began to rebuke the Lord, saying, "God be favourable to thee", Matt 16: 22. God's name was brought in in that sentimental way by Peter. The Lord said, "Behold, I come, in the volume of the book it is written to me to do thy good pleasure." We are to be acquainted with "the volume of the book" that the Scriptures have in mind. "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?". The Lord was saying this to the two going to Emmaus. It is a suffering time - they had to turn around and go back not to do their own will but to the company in Jerusalem - what recovery! Many of us have had to turn around, like Mary in John 20 she turned around and heard the most wonderful communication from the Lord: "I ascend to my Father and your Father", John 20: 17. That is the thing we may have to do, to turn around. "He that has suffered in the flesh has

done with sin", 1 Peter 4: 1. It costs something, the flesh being practically annulled in us by the Spirit's presence and work. The Lord suffered, He took on the whole matter according to Psalm 40. He said sacrifices and oblation was not the thing before God and He saw what was needed. Then He committed Himself, "thy law is within my heart", and God's mind was that He should suffer here below, and those that suffer with Him now will reign with Him. Our fears at times are related to sufferings from which we may shrink. God does not take away the sufferings of the Christian but He gives grace; "My grace suffices thee", He said to Paul (see 2 Cor. 12: 9). "Burnt-offering and sinoffering has thou not demanded"; there was the need, and He said, "Then said I, ... To do thy good pleasure". What an answer to the need of God in that Man. What an answer in Malachi 3 to the need of God, "Then they that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another ... and that thought upon his name". They did not abandon the gatherings of their brethren. Many may not be gathering at the present time as they should and we pray for recovery, but there are a few going on like those that feared Jehovah and spoken often one to another. They are not overwhelmed in unbelief as Asaph in Psalm 73, but then he went into the sanctuary of God and was adjusted and came out in victory as an overcomer with God's mind about His ways, and he said, "and after the glory, thou wilt receive me", Ps 73: 24.

Beloved, be not weary of well doing among those who speak often one to another and think upon His name - our faith is strengthened although tried. God observed this devotedness in some. He says, "I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him". "A peculiar treasure", that is what the saints are to God; and Christ is His beloved and ours also. For His Name's sake.

PLAINFIELD NJ

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