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Contents

THINGS THAT ARE PROFITABLE

FINDING OUR JOY AND STRENGTH IN THE LORD

THINGS THAT ARE PROFITABLE

Philippians 4: 1, 4-9

H.J.G. The exercise is that we might inquire together in these verses and be helped to set our thoughts on the things that are profitable, not just while we are at the meeting (we are usually helped in that in good measure), but it is when we are not in the meeting that we need a lot of help. Being what we are naturally, we often have our thoughts and our communications with one another on things that do not produce profit, but the Lord would have us think of these things that are profitable, that come from Him. In the parable of the sower and the seed, which we know well and often have in the preaching, “that that fell where the thorns were, these are they who having heard go away and are choked under cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection”, Luke 8: 14. I suppose we would have a judgment about the riches and pleasures of life as interfering, but maybe the cares of life cause a good deal of occupation, and righteously so, and we need the Spirit’s help to be delivered from them in a measure, so that our thoughts and our communications with one another are for profit. We have just sung and asked the Lord:

Let no distracting thought (Hymn 254)

Interfere with what is profitable. So that would be the exercise, that we might inquire and help one another to consider these verses and to gain from them something that would be fixed in our souls so that we hold on to them and practise them. These are important things. There are two things to keep in mind when you read the epistle to the Philippians; one is what Paul says to the brethren there, he speaks of “your fellowship with the gospel” (chap 1: 5), and in another verse he speaks of “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (chap 1: 19). These two things are what help us in our souls and practically in the building up of what is in us, so that we are persons who are fruitful to God. I wondered if we could keep this in mind as we speak of these verses, especially this matter of “your fellowship with the gospel”. I think the gospel and the truth of what has come to

us in the glad tidings is the basis, the foundation that will develop all these profitable features in us. Maybe we could inquire on these lines.

L.McF. That is very helpful. I thought too we might refer a little to Acts 16. Paul came to Philippi and what material he found in Lydia and in the jailor! These persons were affected by what was positive.

H.J.G. Yes. What a wonderful find! He had to wait upon the Lord to show him all that. As you speak I was thinking of what the record is, that he spoke to the jailor, "the word of the Lord, with all that were in his house". It is really the word of the Lord that builds us up. We do not know how many there were in Philippi by the time he wrote this epistle but they were certainly brethren to be commended. We would like to be brethren that the Lord could commend, would we not?

J.A.P. I think that is a good line. Would the Lord's Supper come into this, "for the calling of me to mind", 1 Cor 11: 24?

H.J.G. Yes, we are thankful for that verse because our minds enter into the matter of remembering the Lord. I do not want to be too negative but if our minds have not been running on very good lines what are we able for when we come and sit down? That is why I think we need a building up in our minds, as he says, "think on these things". Paul say, "What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, these things do". So that it becomes a practice, does it not?

L.McF. He refers earlier to the mind which was in Christ Jesus, "let this mind be in you" (chap 2: 5). We have a model there, the lowliness of mind that marked that Person.

H.J.G. Yes, that all comes into this epistle and I think bears on whatever verse you might care to read. It says there that we are to be of that kind of mind, thinking one thing, "joined in soul, thinking one thing". These things are quite a test to us, but they do not develop just automatically. I think they develop as we have a concern to take on the features that have been shown to us.

L.D.P. I wondered if Acts 17 fits in here where it says, "And these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, receiving the word with all readiness of mind, daily searching the scriptures if these things were so" (v 11). Would that fit in with your thought?

H.J.G. Yes, it is interesting that the word is used, "noble", describing the persons. That word comes into our section, "whatsoever things are noble", things that are royal as you might say. Paul spoke of the princes of this world, if they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2: 8). That is nobility in this world, but think of the nobility of God's world to which you have called attention, those that are nobler and searched the Scriptures to see that these things are so.

J.A.P. The Lord Himself would substantiate your exercise, I think. He said to Peter "thy mind is not on the things that are of God, but on the things that are of men", Matt 16: 23. He was saying something to the Lord that was not right. What would you encourage us to do that our minds may be more right when we are not assembled?

H.J.G. Well, that is what I thought was found in these verses. If we follow them when we are *not* together they would just be there when we come together. I think they set out the things that we are to have our thoughts on and our conversations about at all times.

C.F.D. Are we to learn something from verse 3, "assist them, who have contended along with me in the glad tidings, with Clement also, and my other fellow-labourers"? I was thinking of the "contending along with me in the glad tidings". Contending is an active, productive kind of a word, is it not?

H.J.G. I do not know about you, but I feel that I need a lot of help to maintain in myself and maintain in what I might say to anyone that is in fellowship or not in fellowship, the truth of what the glad tidings has brought to us. Does that fit with what you are thinking?

C.F.D. Yes. I think in that sense we are each to be an expression in ourselves testimonially amongst men and amongst the brethren too as to what the glad tidings mean. It is a very suggesting

thought, it is *glad tidings*. It does not say the gospel; we know that is involved, but it is glad tidings and that is to be conveyed in my person, in my contacts with men, that it is glad tidings and I am in the good of that myself.

H.J.G. I think it was always a prime thing in the apostle Paul's exercises that he should be maintained in the truth of the glad tidings. Well, I wonder whether the glad tidings are not really the basis of how we come into the good of these verses. The Lord Jesus had to give His life that we should have the good of these things.

A.S.H. Someone spoke as to the wandering mind and said get back to the Spirit, seek the Spirit's help when your mind begins to wander.

H.J.G. We are thankful for that. Else how can we do it? I might say I need to get my mind off this and get it on something else, but how is it going to work? It has to work like you say, get back to the Spirit. It is a wonderful matter the gift of the Holy Spirit, the One who keeps before us the glory of Christ and the way that He did things.

C.F.D. "Seek the things which are above, where the Christ is", Col 3: 1. It seems to me, and I need it very much, that we become persons who characteristically resort in our lives to where Christ is, and that would strengthen our links with the Spirit of God, would it not?

H.J.G. Yes, it does. So that, on the one hand we consider the way that He moved here that is recorded in the gospels for us, but our links are with Him there as the glorified One, and it is as drawing upon Him there with the Spirit's help that we understand how He set things out when He was here.

S.G. Do you think what would keep our hearts and minds focused on what is noble each day, even as we are away from one another, would be reading the Scriptures and going through them in our minds throughout the day?

H.J.G. Well, some persons have busy lives and they have to keep their minds on their work. When we are retired we have more time and maybe we do not use it as we could, but we should have an exercise to use our time to read the Scriptures and to ponder what is in them and to consider the pathway that we have been called into.

C.F.D. Consider the pathway that we have been called into; you have more in your mind about that?

H.J.G. It is a high calling, is not? It says about the man that when his eyes were opened he followed the Lord in the way (see Mark 10: 52). What is the way now? Have we really found the way – the way in testimony, the way that is here where God is glorified, the way that God is served? But we have to be persons that are in accord with His thoughts. I thought that these scriptures would help us to this.

J.A.P. The Lord helped the two going to Emmaus in private conversation. He brought them back to the company. I think we are very tested about what you are saying as to whether our conversation, manner of life, is leading others to the company. That is where we get the most exalted speaking – I trust we can say that humbly.

H.J.G. Yes, I think that is right that we look for it there, but it has to be developed in the persons. That was really my exercise that, as we consider these verses, they might help us to “rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice”. You go through the day and you have a lot of concerns, a lot of them surround yourself, and other matters that are a burden, and righteously so, but somehow we have to get through to this side of rejoicing in the Lord and finding our joy and strength in Him.

L.McF. So I think we get the secret to what you are saying in verse 6, “Be careful about nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”. I felt the need myself to be more inclined to pray in relation to every matter that concerns us. Do you think that helps?

H.J.G. You know what others have told us about going in to God, that when we come out the circumstances are the same but we are different, and that is what we should covet, is it not?

G.A. The jailor in Acts 16 met Paul and Silas. It says, “And having brought them into his house he laid the table for them, and rejoiced with all his house, having believed God”. The circumstances are the same but the jailor is different, would you say?

H.J.G. Yes, what a change, he rejoiced with his house. The word of God had brought something new to his house, and not only did he have the word but he had it demonstrated in two persons who were rejoicing even in difficult circumstances. We think about the difficult circumstances of one and another and the burdens that are carried but *there* were two persons who were rejoicing.

A.R.H. Most of Paul’s writings that we have are prison epistles, written in very difficult circumstances, and yet he could rejoice. Is that something, that he was able to be an overcomer in his circumstances?

H.J.G. Yes, he was. He could demonstrate it to the brethren and his great desire was to lift the brethren, was it not? Even in the epistles to the Corinthians where he has to speak severely about things, over and over again he speaks in a way to lift them up to the glory of what is in the hands of Christ.

S.K. I think we see that in Acts 16 that we have been discussing, where it says, “And having laid many stripes upon them they cast them into prison” (v 23), and “And at midnight Paul and Silas, in praying, were praising God with singing” (v 25). These are men who were in prison, they were beaten, but yet they were praising God and singing.

H.J.G. Yes. What overcomers they were! So we need the feature of overcoming. We are trying to inquire into how can our thoughts be on the things that are profitable and then, having got some help on that, can we help one another to think that way, and can we serve one another to lift our thoughts and concentrate them

on Christ, but you have to be an overcomer like those two men. They overcame and they were praising God with singing in the most difficult circumstances that anybody could be in.

B.K.P. Would it be right to say that in order to overcome you have to forgive those that put you in that situation, as Stephen did?

H.J.G. That is quite a word, to be ready to forgive. That has quite a bearing on your soul, to know how to be repentant and to know how to forgive; those two big things are needed in order to have joy in your soul.

J.A.P. It is a real joy to the brethren to see a brother or sister overcome in their difficulties. The Lord said, "I have besought for thee that thy faith fail not", Luke 22: 32. Faith enters into these anxieties that come into our lives; are we trusting God? If we are, it greatly encourages the brethren to see that in a brother or a sister.

H.J.G. Yes it does. So you love to see overcomers; but maybe we could learn how to help one another to be overcomers, how to trust God for things, to see that Christianity is really worthwhile. It is a system of joy.

D.McF. "Let your gentleness be known of all men" (v 5), linking it with James where it speaks of the wisdom from above (chap 3: 17), would that be a link with the Spirit, do you think?

H.J.G. That is helpful. I am glad you bring that up. I need some help on how we inquire on each one of these verses, how to get through to these things. We read the verses and we know they are good ones, but how do we get through to the gain of them? I think what you say is helpful that the Spirit of God is given to us to develop us, that we are persons that are near to God and like Him. Can you say more?

D.McF. I just thought in the verse in James it speaks of the wisdom. How we need that, do you think?

H.J.G. Yes we do. He gives it freely, it says. We need to think about that. If your thoughts are not running on very good lines think of that, He gives wisdom freely.

L.McF. In verse 8 you have the word “whatsoever” six times, then he ends by saying, “think on these things”. Whatsoever things are true, noble, just, pure, amiable, and of good report. There are a lot of negatives going around and they do not make for our building up.

H.J.G. That was my exercise. I think the six things that you refer to in verse 8 are the things that help. Are we operating on these lines, whatsoever things are true? Maybe sometimes we have got things that are proven not to be true. We need to find out what is true, what is the true report. It says, “of good report”. We need to find out the things that are true and the things that are just.

L.McF. It is righteous to do that. We do not want to be spreading anything that is not true.

H.J.G. That is right, but conversely we need to be prepared to accept what is true.

C.F.D. So that Paul puts himself forward here as the personification of these features and is an exemplification of what Christianity really is. I was thinking of verse 9, “What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, these things do”. Paul was the expression really of what Christ was. It was, in effect, Christ all over again, was it not?

H.J.G. Then he says, “Be imitators all together of me, brethren” (chap 3: 17). So you would find these things in Paul. Whatsoever things are true and noble and just, and so on, you would find these things in him.

C.F.D. That is important. So that Christianity, the way of the Lord, is not just a text on the wall, it is to be seen in reality in persons. Persons become the expression of what Christianity really is, do they not?

H.J.G. That is right, but it seems to me that we have to prove how it follows certain lines, these lines that are set out here, and we need to have a great deal of exercise, each of us, to prove these things and then, in whatever measure we prove them, I think we can

be a help to one another and communicate something. This is the answer to communicating things that are not profitable; we have got something that is profitable that we can communicate.

J.A.P. We were not able to read all the verses in the chapter, but “ye have revived your thinking of me”. It has come very strongly before me again about the importance of Paul’s ministry and Paul himself. It took me back to the ‘30s when Mr. Taylor was much helped to impress on the brethren the importance of Paul’s ministry because to him was given distinctive light of the assembly. These things we are speaking about, as I understand it, these conversations, lead to the assembly, they lead to divine Persons. Is that your thought?

H.J.G. Yes, that would be so, that is where it leads. It is built up in the personnel. Another thing that comes into this epistle is what Paul says to these brethren, “all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ” (chap 2: 21). I have often been puzzled about that verse, why he wrote that. I do not think he was saying that to the Philippians but no doubt he was seeing that it was coming about in Asia where persons were departing from what he taught. So he says, “all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ”. These things in verse 8 are the things of Jesus Christ.

A.R.H. We do not have apostles today but we have persons that this can be seen in, we have models. Is that right?

H.J.G. I think so. Most of us need plenty of help about this, but are we making some headway or do we have an exercise to make some headway? So that, when a young brother looks at me does he find anything of this that he feels gives him a bit of security? We had three-day meetings in Calgary on becoming stable persons. You have got to go this route, have you not?

A.R.H. In Hebrews it speaks about remembering your leaders and considering the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith (see Heb 13: 7), as if it is something that can definitely be seen.

H.J.G. That is right. So we are very thankful for persons in whom we see it. A lot of us here are older, but we can remember

when we were younger that we saw this in persons. What do the young ones see in us? Christianity is made up of the personnel, is it not?

C.F.D. It is outstanding with one like John who could look on Jesus as He walked. He said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world", John 1: 29. You might say, where did he get that from, where did he secure the thought that He was the Lamb of God, taking on the whole issue of sin and sins? Where did he get it? It must have been from the Spirit and yet there is no indication at that point that he had the Spirit as yet.

H.J.G. They had John the Baptist's ministry: "He who comes from above is above all", John 3: 31. Do you think that was a help? John was one of John the Baptist's disciples.

C.F.D. Yes, he would have been, and he would have been a good representation too. We might point to John the Baptist's failure, but the fact of the matter was that he was a shining light in testimony.

H.J.G. He must have conveyed something because those two, Andrew and Simon, left John the Baptist and followed Jesus. They must have been true disciples of John the Baptist to do that.

C.F.D. You mean that what John the Baptist would have effected in them testimonially would have shone out when Christ came on to view. Now this is the One that John had been talking about. He is the exemplification of everything that is in the heart of God.

H.J.G. So then it works out through the word of God. Our brother has been bringing to our remembrance that we see it in persons, but what do we see in persons? Do you think it is that we can say we see something of God in that brother or sister that fits with the word of God? Do you think that is right?

A.R.H. Yes. It may just be a certain feature that they display, but there is something that is stable there and you say that that is like Christ.

H.J.G. Sadly, we had to depart from brethren a good few years ago, and for long enough after that, in spite of the sad situation you did not forget that you had seen certain things of the word of God and the work of God in them. So it is now, we are to see it livingly in someone.

C.F.D. I think that is important, because what we are inclined to do is to confine our thoughts to our own brethren, whereas the fact of the matter is that the work of God in me links on with the work of God as it appears in anyone.

H.J.G. Yes. So we have got these six things here, “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report”. Now we want to be able to see the things in someone. You take this feature of what is just. It is so good to have a communication with a brother that says this is the just way, the righteous way to do thing, and you know that he is a brother who is not going to deviate from that. So when he comes to the care meeting you can expect that feature to shine.

J.A.P. Our young brother referred to Stephen. Paul said about him “thy martyr Stephen”; he appreciated the sacrifice of another brother for Christ.

H.J.G. Yes, that is good. Suffering enters into maintaining what is good.

C.F.D. You mean that for us to be a personal representation of that is going to cost us something, and that involves the setting out of the way of the Lord. That is a great thing, the way of the Lord, “looking at Jesus as he walked”.

H.J.G. I think we could apply these six things to the way of the Lord. If we are going to find them, we do not just take them up in a natural sense even in regard to someone we are close to, we really have to learn by the Spirit that these are the features that belong to Christ and they are perfect in Him. There is not going to be any failure, they are perfect in Him, but then it is necessary that all this be worked out so that it is found, in each of us.

C.F.D. You mean that Christianity is really a way of life.

H.J.G. It is. We say all these thing but then my exercise is that we just learn how to lay hold of this and be developed in it, and I need as much help as anyone to be useful in communicating it. How are we going to get around this matter of time being spent communicating things that may not be wrong, they may not be evil, but they are not profitable? It is a big exercise; can I communicate something that is profitable?

L.McF. So the elders have quite a responsibility in their localities. Peter says, "But be models for the flock", 1 Peter 5: 3. That bears on us, we are to be models for the flock. Does that help?

H.J.G. Yes. Elders are more responsible. Elders are persons of experience; so you would look for that experience to show itself in a profitable way, but then everyone in fellowship is responsible. We have to accept that.

R.N.P. We have been speaking of Stephen and I was thinking he would be one of the best examples we could have of looking on high things. As he was being stoned he looked up and saw Jesus at the right hand of God. That would be the highest we could look at.

H.J.G. Yes, that is excellent. So that is the way of it, to think of Him there at the right hand of God. What it meant to Stephen, and he was able to say, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge", Acts 7: 60.

J.A.P. I thought lately too of the scripture in Philippians, "each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves" (chap 2: 3). There is something in someone else to look for that is more excellent than what is in oneself and you say, that brother or that sister surpasses me in that spiritual feature, whatever it is. We want to look for that.

H.J.G. That is right. So you may find it just in the way they live, but my exercise is that somehow we need to communicate that. Inwardly I am to be what I say. The two things go together, but there needs to be a communication in word to help us. If we are going to be helped in some of these six features of verse 8, somehow it is to

be communicated to one another. How is the local assembly going to be built up if we do not communicate it?

L.D.P. I was wondering about David, "And one of the young men answered and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skilled in playing, and he is a valiant man and a man of war, and skilled in speech, and of good presence, and Jehovah is with him", 1 Sam 16: 18. I wondered if he would be the kind of person who had some of these features that you are speaking of because he was skilled in playing, valiant, and it could be seen that Jehovah was with him. There was something about his way of life that made it evident.

H.J.G. That is very helpful because it brings out what I am seeking to inquire about. The young man saw it but he did not stop there. He communicated it to Saul and, no doubt, he communicated it to others. These are the things that become profitable and build us up. Saul's own system was nothing but pulling down, but here was a young man who recognised something of God in David and he communicated it.

A.S.H. I was thinking, just to go back a little, as to the rejoicing. It says the disciples rejoiced that they were beaten for the Lord's sake and for His name (see Acts 5: 40,41). We mentioned Stephen; there was no bitterness seen in Stephen or in any of the disciples when they were beaten. They continued to praise and rejoice in the Lord.

H.J.G. Yes, that is a test, but it does not always have to be as difficult as that to make way for us to rejoice. Some brethren have difficult circumstances. How are they going to get through to be able to rejoice in the Lord? I do not think I can help them unless I am rejoicing in the Lord.

A.S.H. There was help in the jailor's house.

H.J.G. Plenty of help. When he opened the door to those two men he got lots of help, did he not?

L.D.P. Would Ruth be an example of one who benefited from the way of life as she saw it in Naomi? I was just thinking that Naomi had certain experience and this would have affected Ruth. Would this fit in with your thoughts?

H.J.G. Yes, and she is able to say, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God", Ruth 1: 16. These are the kind of thing that I think we need to be strengthened in. What a cheer that would have been to Naomi to hear Ruth say that. Well, do we realise that we can be a cheer to someone by what we say?

A.R.H. Naomi went on the wrong way; she went down to Moab, but what an impression she had in the way of recovery on her way back. That was really what influenced Ruth, was it not?

H.J.G. It was. So that enters into our helping one another. It is not really good enough to say I have been in fellowship forty years and just go along in that vein. We need to prove what recovery is in our lives. It might only be in a small way, but prove it anyway. This brings up another point that I have thought a lot about lately. Every week we sit under the glad tidings but I should have an exercise that that every time I sit under the preaching I get something, something that affects *me*. It may be the feature of repentance, which is always needed, it may be the feature of recovery; I need to get *something*.

J.A.P. Naomi was in Moab, lonely there in a certain sense. It says, "she had heard in the fields of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she had been", Ruth 1: 6. That was a good report, was it not, and it caused her to move.

H.J.G. That is good. That helps us about recovery. So have we got a good report that we can pass on? Instead of talking about something that is not of any special profit say something that is a good report.

S.G. Do you think all these six items we have read would bring forth on the Lord's Day a sweet-smelling savour?

H.J.G. I am sure that is right, as has been said, these things find their place, they find their end in the assembly in praise to God.

So Paul says, "What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, these things do; and the God of peace shall be with you". This is what we need and what we look for and what we would desire, to be helpers of one another in whom these features are found. And then he says, "and the God of peace shall be with you". How much we need it! Everything around is anything but peace, but we need to prove the God of peace with us.

L.McF. The peace of God, which surpasses every understanding shall be with you. We need an object in our lives, the God of peace; that is very attractive, do you think?

H.J.G. Yes. I think you are quoting from verse 7, "peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus". He has made the provision to guard us, guard our thoughts and guard our hearts; it is by Christ Jesus He has made that provision. We need to prove it.

L.McF. What you say is very timely, this matter of peace. The Lord said, "Peace be to you" (John 20: 19), it is in resurrection, "Peace be to you", it began there.

H.J.G. What power! We belong to the One who is out of death.

C.F.D. The peace of God is a marvellous thought and it is all in a Person. The appropriation of Christ where He is, crowned with glory and honour, is really "the stability of our times" (Isa 33: 6), it is not? Maybe in these circumstances that you have been referring to, which are difficult, we need to know something about this stability of our times. I feel very much the need of this.

H.J.G. That is where our thoughts should turn, to the One who has been raised from the dead, the One who is crowned with glory and honour, the One who is Head of the assembly, the One who comes to us and manifests Himself on Lord's day morning and the One who will soon be coming for us. We do not need to go any further for stability, do we?

C.F.D. Actually what you are saying is very necessary. He is the stability of our times; it is all in Christ and appropriated by the Spirit.

H.J.G. Yes. As you speak, that makes me think of something else in this inquiry. If we are to learn how to have something that is worth communicating and then learn how to get some help how to communicate it, it really is that we count on the Spirit. If I have got anything that is worth communication to you it is really by the Spirit, and if that communication is worth anything, if it means anything to you, it will be by the Spirit that you lay hold of it, will it not?

L.D.P. We are, I think, concerned about being able to help one another, and I am just wondering if Abigail would be an example in 1 Samuel 25. David was on wrong lines, he wanted to slay all the males, and she came forward and spoke to him. She bowed herself to the ground and said, "Upon me, my lord, upon me let the iniquity be; but let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and hear the words of thy handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, Nabal; for as his name, is so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (v 25). She presents to him what she had brought, explaining that he should not come with bloodshed but with restraint. Would that fit in with your thought - she was able to help even though he was the king?

H.J.G. That is very helpful. At this point David was not in a very good state, but Abigail appealed to the very best in David. She said in a humble way, "forgive the transgression of thy handmaid". And then she went on to say, "And if a man is risen up to pursue thee and to seek thy life, the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with Jehovah thy God; ... and shall appoint thee ruler over Israel, ... And when Jehovah shall deal well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid". She appealed to the very best in David. These are the things that we need help about in communication of these features, to appeal to the best in one another, to be able to build up one another. There is a great need of this. Mostly the brethren are in small conditions, especially the week-night meetings are small and we feel rather weak sometimes, but we need to somehow be able to convey and to bring out the best in one another.

I trust we might get through to this matter of rejoicing in the Lord and the God of peace shall be with you. We need to find that there is an area where we can be restful. We can trust God and we can rejoice in the Lord.

C.F.D. “The God of peace shall be with you”, is preceded by this appeal in verse 9, “What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, these things do”.

H.J.G. We have to take it on. You cannot just leave it there in the scriptures. It is a faithful word and it is an appealing word, but we have to learn how to take it on. I trust we can encourage one another in these things.

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Key to initials

G. Ashby, New York; C.F. Dadd, Plainfield; S. Gibbs, New York; H.J. Glass, Toronto; A.S. Hinkson, New York; A.R. Henry, Glasgow; S. Khan, New York; D. McFarlane, New York; L. McFarlane, New York; J.A. Petersen, Plainfield; L.D. Phillips, New York; B.K. Pye, New York; R.N. Pye, New York

FINDING OUR JOY AND STRENGTH IN THE LORD

Harold Glass

Mark 5: 1-3, 8, 15, 18-20; Psalm 40: 1-4, 16

I wondered if we might consider in these scriptures the way that the Lord deals with us to bring us to find our joy and our strength in Him. It seems the Lord went across the sea, I suppose the Sea of Galilee, to the other side to deal with this man and his difficulty and then He went back across the sea. He took that journey just to deliver this one man to bring him into the joy of things – just one man. Some of the older brethren here will know what is said in one of the books of ministry about the Lord Jesus going into a movie house once. He does not normally go there, He would not have us go there, but He can go to places that we cannot go or should not go. He went into a movie house to save one man and then He went out. Well, I wondered if that is what He does here. He goes across that sea, all night across the sea, and He comes to this one man who was in a terrible plight. Maybe some of us do not think much about what transpired in our souls when we came to know the Lord; others think a good deal about it, but this man would never forget it and we are not to forget it. We would do well to go over things; not just the wonderful transaction that it was, for it was a wonderful transaction, but maybe if we took account of it in the light of what we see in this man we might realise how great it is, how great it is to have what this man got. What a state he was in. It says he was possessed by an unclean spirit, he was dwelling in tombs, and no one was able to bind him, not even with chains. Think of it! The enemy had such a clutch on that man. Well, this is where every one of us has been without Christ, without the knowledge of salvation. But the Lord took him in hand; He had power over unclean spirits. He is the only One who has that power and He took this man in hand and He cleared him of all that held him. Whether we have really had what you might call a very outstanding kind of conversion, or whatever we have had, we might do well to think about this, that what the Lord did for this man was to take him out of the clutches of Satan.

Then what I wish to speak about is what He made the man into. It says in verse 15, "And they come to Jesus, and they see the possessed of demons sitting and clothed and sensible". Here is a man who is different from what he was before. I think he has come into what we were speaking about in the reading. He came to know the God of peace; he came to know what it was to be in a restful state before God. Before, he was just so full of all that the enemy has in his power in this world, but here he is now, sitting, clothed and sensible; he is with Jesus. What a place to be! I wonder if we think about that enough. I wonder if we think about it every day, what it is to be with Jesus, to be in His presence, to be in His company. A brother locally said in a reading recently, You know what the Lord Jesus wants most of all: He wants to have our company. He had the company of this man. The man is restful there and we need to learn how to be like that. We have a lot of burdens, a lot of things to think about, and we have our responsibilities. Some of us here still go to work even though a lot of us do not, and we all have responsibilities. Those who have young children have a lot of responsibilities. You wonder how some of them manage all they have to do, but to be clothed and sensible and with Jesus, we need to learn something of that every day. As I said, it looks like He came on this great journey just to save one man. He was prepared to do that. (We are often reminded He has paid the same price for each one of us, but I wonder if we realise the price that He has paid). Here is this man and Jesus is going to leave and the man asks to go with Him. It says, "the man that had been possessed by demons besought him that he might be with him". Well, why not? He had such a wonderful transaction; he found everything in Jesus. Have we really found that? Are we sure that we have found everything in Jesus? Most of us have a very strong independent streak. I know what it is like anyway. You know, Just leave me, I will get on all right. Well, we will not be all right without Him. So the man wants to be with Him. We should want to be with Him. But what does the Lord say to him? "He suffered him not, but says to him, God to thine home to thine own people, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee, and has had mercy on thee". You see he has become a

trustworthy person. This is what the Lord is looking for in each one of us. Have we really found what it is to love Him so much, to know how much He has done for us that we want to be in His company, so that He can dismiss us and set us on our way and find that we are trustworthy persons in the pathway, that we can be for Him as He wants us to be? This is a wonderful matter and this is what He says to this man, "Go to thine home to thine own people, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee". This is the kind of person that is reliable here, reliable in the testimony, reliable in the local assembly, the kind of person that the Lord can trust. Paul says that it is whom the Lord commends that really matters (see 2 Cor 10: 18). Can He commend each of us? I think He commended this man. You might say He commended this man to the local position in the place. This man had quite an influence; he went throughout the Decapolis. (I understand that means ten cities). We do not know what proceeded in the course of the testimony but we know that the testimony spread out; there were thousands added every day. Here was a man who because of the Lord's great work and influence on him was there and reliable. You can see him there in one of those places filling out a responsible position.

That is one side of it, but what I really wanted to draw attention to was that he began to proclaim "how great things Jesus had done for him". Have you ever thought enough about the great things that Jesus has done for you, have you really thought enough about it so that you do like this man? He is set free; he is taken completely out of the clutches of Satan. Through death Jesus overcame who had the power of death that is the devil (see Heb 2: 14). The Lord has done it, He has gone into death to do that. We often repeat these words, I know, but how much of an effect has it really had on them that through death He has overcome the power of death. It is to have an effect on me as it did on this man. He went and proclaimed the great things that Jesus had done for him. What testimony that is! A brother like that comes into the meeting, he may not go on about the details of his personal life, but the power of it comes out in that he is full of joy because Jesus has done great

things for him. That is really what I wanted to speak about. This man was full of joy in what Jesus had done for him. He is set up in a responsible position, yes, but he is set up in a position of joy where he can go on. What we need perhaps as much as anything is to have brethren to sit down with who are full of joy because of what Jesus has done for them. You know it is a very great matter to have brethren that we can walk with. How we need to give thanks that there are persons we can walk with in this world of darkness, in this world of contrariety, it is a great matter that God's provision is that we have brethren to walk with. It is another great matter that God in His wondrous love, has given us the light of the truth, the truth surrounding His beloved Son, the truth surrounding what has been established here in the circle of the saints. These are wonderful things. But one thing that you need along with that is to know this joy of what the Lord has done for you. It says he proclaimed it everywhere, he proclaimed what Jesus had done for him. I just think we need something of that in our souls at the present time in the midst of all the pressures, in the midst of all the sorrows that there are. We have to carry them, but in the midst of it all how is this matter of the peace of God and the joy of things going to be known? I think it is known that our hearts and our souls are filled with what Jesus has done for us.

In the Psalm we have David. What a history David had! Our brother referred to it – a young man saw something in David; he could play well and Jehovah was with him (see 1 Sam 16 :18). It is a great matter to look at someone and say God is with him. That was David, Jehovah was with him. Jehovah chose David. Have you found out that God has chosen you, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (see Eph 1: 4)? These are wondrous matters. Think about that, just as you sit here in your seat today. You are not out having some great place in the world, you are not out finding your joy in the entertainments of the world, but God has chosen you to have a part in these great things. He chose David and we get the words of David here. David goes into the matter of the depths of things in his soul in this Psalm, and in others. This is

what I would like to encourage each of us in, that we might find the depths of things in our souls. He says, "I waited patiently for Jehovah; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry". You might say, I went through this before I came into fellowship, I went through it forty years ago or something like that. I think David was in the joy of it when he wrote it. If you had to write something down today, could you write something like this and could you write it as being in the joy of it, that you waited on God and He inclined unto you and He heard your cry? Could say something like that if you had to write it down today? Then he says, "And he brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay". That is the same thing as the man in Mark 5, is it not? He proclaimed in the Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him. So David says He brought me up from that, He brought me up out of the pit. How often David speaks about that in his Psalms. He brought me up out of the pit. Do we think enough about that, the pit of this world? The god of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving so that the glory of Christ might not shine forth for men (see 2 Cor 4: 4), but is it not a great thing to be delivered from that, from the god of this world and to be brought out of the pit of destruction and out of the miry clay? Then what does he say? "He set my feet upon a rock; he hath established my goings". I wonder if we have found that, and I wonder if we are being sustained in it? It is a great matter to be sustained in the joy of this. David was. When he wrote this he was in the joy of it. What I would like for each one of us, and I need it as much as any, is to find this, that He has set my feet upon a rock and established my goings, and not only do I know that in a somewhat historical sense but I know it now, I know the joy of it now. I am living in the joy of this that my feet are on the rock and He has established my going. These are great matters that each one of us needs to know. If we are going to go on here with what is for God's pleasure we have to have the joy of it in our souls and have it today. Not that we can say I knew that whenever, but to have the joy of this in my soul today. He says, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth". These are great things, to have a new song in your mouth, to be able to say something about Christ. It will come out, it will come out among the brethren, it will

come out everywhere you turn if you have got a new song in your mouth. A lot of us have to say rather humbly we have not really been as great in testimony as we might have been, but I would like to be like this, I would like to be in the joy of having that new song in my mouth.

Well, I think the Lord is prepared to help us. He helped that man in Mark 5 so that he was able to stand on his own feet, he was able to go there in the midst of all those persons that wanted to get rid of the Lord, and he was able to speak of Christ and the great things Jesus had done for him. So here David uses the same language, "he hath put a new song in my mouth, praise unto our God". What a matter! "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall confide in Jehovah". We have been speaking about communication. I think there is communication with David and I think there is communication with the man in Mark 5. They had a new song in their mouths. I wonder how much I have got a new song in my mouth? It is really quite a concern whether I am in the joy of things so that it can be called a new song, something that is not usual in this world. It is something that is full of joy, full of the Person who has done everything, full of the One who has given Himself for me. So David says, "he hath put a new song in my mouth, praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and fear, and shall confide in Jehovah". What a pathway we have been brought into! "Blessed is the man that hath made Jehovah his confidence, and turneth not to the proud, and to such as turn aside to lies". These are quire serious matters to be kept in; to be kept in satisfaction, to be kept in the stability of having confidence in God, to be just sure that we rest everything there no matter what comes around us to unsettle us. We have been reading about that, that if we go a certain route that we will prove the peace of God, we will prove the God of peace. This is the way that David went and he is able to say these wonderful words, "Blessed is the man that hath made Jehovah his confidence, and turneth not to the proud, and to such as turn aside to lies". "Blessed is the man", we need to know something of blessing. When you are affected by the sad features of this world

and men so involved in them, you feel for them as deprived of blessing when the Blessor is there all the time ready to bless. So David has quite a bit to say. We read verse 16, "let all those that seek thee be glad and rejoice in thee; let such as love thy salvation say continually, Jehovah be magnified!" What a word! That would be a word to us today, "Let all those that seek thee be glad and rejoice in thee". Think of it being available! Think of the Lord Jesus able to give us a sense of it today, give us a sense of all that He has done, give us a sense of all that He is.

If we are to enjoy our place in the local assembly we enjoy it from Him. He is Head of the assembly, directions come from Him. It is a great matter to have all the privileges of the fellowship, to have the teaching, to have the knowledge of the principles that are to operate in the path of the truth. These are very great matters, but we need also the matter of being glad and rejoicing in Christ, the One who is Head of the assembly, the One from whom directions come, the One who is ready and able to fill our hearts, each one of us. We should not be discouraged but find our way and find that there is a pathway of joy. It may look otherwise. There are so many burdens and so many illnesses among the brethren but the Lord has called us into a pathway of joy, and he says, "Let all those that seek thee be glad and rejoice in thee". What a matter that we have a way that we can rejoice! There is a way and we find it in Him; "such as love thy salvation say continually, Jehovah be magnified!" That is the man in Mark 5. The Lord would affect each one of us. Think of Him being available, think of Him being able to touch the heart of everyone of us here. He has the ability to touch the heart of everyone in this great city and to bring every person that belongs to Him into the joy of this. But we are here in this great privilege of being under the sound of His word, and may this go deeply into our souls that such as love thy salvation say continually, Jehovah be magnified! May our hearts be filled with this, may we think of the great things that Jesus has done for us, may we think of Him where He is and may He touch us and fill our hearts with joy, and give us to

find satisfaction in the path that we have been called into. For His name's sake.

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