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Contents

GRACE - II

PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

GRACE - II

John 20: 15-31; 21: 1-15

R.T. I think that in the passage we have read there is a very fine demonstration of grace upon grace. We were speaking in the last reading of how grace appeared in the incarnation; there is a certain touch in the passage we have read now of the fulness in resurrection, in these words to His own, "my Father and your Father, and ... my God and your God." I think that in the forty days, as other scriptures amplify it, the Lord leaves an impression of the fulness of grace and how it is flowing. The disciples here are somewhat bewildered and into those circumstances the Lord comes with these precious words. As John records it, it is the third time - three distinct occasions of grace upon grace. There was nothing to draw it out save the fulness that was in His own heart towards them. I thought that we might look at these things briefly, that there may be some impression left on our spirits of grace operating through the dispensation. We have the first manifestation of grace operating in regard to privilege, in regard to Thomas grace operating in circumstances of unbelief, the third time grace operating in recovery. That more or less covers the features that come up in the dispensation and would reassure our hearts as to what we have said already of grace reigning, the power of it coming into these circumstances. The Lord as risen would give them this touch that His Father was their Father - what grace! He had a right to that place, you may say, but grace would give us to know the Father's name and the Father's love, and to live in that enjoyed relationship in which grace would place us. The passage itself is so rich that we need hardly say much about it, but the wealth of it may touch our hearts as to "of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace."

H.G.H. Would you go over those three things? The last two were Thomas - unbelief - and then recovery: what was the first one?

R.T. Privilege. I think that is how the Lord would encourage us. So you may say it is Lord's day. What grace we enjoy in that time of privilege! The next one was eight days after - unbelief with some, yet there is grace that meets those problems. Then we have divisive activities, grace meets them - grace upon grace flowing from the risen Man. It is always very interesting to think of the Lord continuing here forty days to reassure the disciples of what was coming in in this dispensation, founded on His death but we may say based on His resurrection. He has gone into an area where sin and death have nothing to say to Him; He is superior to it all and He is bringing the wealth of heaven and the relationships of heaven to these disciples in the circumstances in which they are.

J.A.P. Is it your thought that, in the privileged position, grace is supreme in the assembly? Would the Lord mean that? It is the vessel where it is expressed at the present time? In our experience it is grace to me first and to each one, but here it is to the company. Maybe you would open that up.

R.T. What struck me in the passage was that it is the Lord, it is grace coming from Him. He imparts it to the company and they come out in some of the features of grace. It is John who says, It is the Lord. Nobody else could show grace like this. How full it is, that it gives us a place with the Father! Our hearts, enriched with that, enable us not only to enjoy grace but to come out in grace because we have a place before the Father. The Lord said to the disciples as they came back from their service, "rejoice that your names are written in the heavens", Luke 10: 20. This is even more than that, My Father and your Father.

J.S. Grace would always draw persons to the source of it.

R.T. Beautiful. Go on.

J.S. Does it not show here that it has its source in the purpose of God?

R.T. I think that is very fine. I think that is where grace has come from; it has appeared. As we have said, it met those circumstances of bondage and sin but the great end of it was that we should enjoy

our place before the Father; "my Father and your Father". You can hardly think of greater words of grace than that, giving us a place, His place, before the Father.

E.F.C. The message was to be conveyed by Mary of Magdala out of whom He had cast seven demons. What a trophy of grace she was and yet, I suppose, she merged with the company!

R.T. That is very fine: you can see the effects of grace in her that she was able to take such a message. It seems here that they believed her. There is something substantial of grace in her, not only the message; but I think what you have said is helpful, that there had been a work of grace in her that she was such that could convey the message to Peter and John and the others.

L.McF. What is to be learned from the fact the Lord said to Mary, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father"? Just open that up please for us.

R.T. Much could be said about it, but I think, in the circumstances of which we are speaking, it would bear the application that we allow grace to have its full work. We may limit grace to our needs and to our circumstances and pressures, but I think the Lord in saying "Touch me not" would convey something to her to allow grace to have its full work, to work out into full result, that not only would she be comforted but that grace would give her a sense of her place before the Father. It is a very fine thing to be comforted, and to enjoy grace meeting our circumstances, but how much more to come into an area of things that only grace could have purposed. She could never have thought about a message like this - or any of the disciples - but, as was said, it links us with purpose. Allow grace to have its full work, allow the Lord to say it all; we may just say we have the word and we are comforted, but grace would bring us to a fulness, would it not? ·

L.McF. So He goes on to say, "but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father ...". So the brethren are in view.

R.T. What a rallying call! They had gone away in deep sorrow. In this whole section, there is a great tendency with the disciples to go back, and we know that in our hearts, but what a rallying call of grace comes in the Lord's words to bring us on to true ground, to this elevation of grace, "my Father and your Father". What an uplifting and gathering effect it had upon the disciples, this wonderful message!

C.F.D. Earlier in this gospel the Lord refers to children of God and then in chapter 15 He says, I call you no longer bondmen ... but I have called you friends (see v 15), but now in resurrection He says, "my brethren". That gets us on to a beautiful area, does it not?

R.T. Beautiful. I think that is to allow grace to have its perfect work. How far grace will carry us - beyond our expectations to come into this intimacy; as you say, not only friends but "my brethren" is character. In these services of the Lord, He forms something of the character in the disciples that grace can produce.

C.F.D. Does it suggest the idea of order, one thing children, another thing friends, but this is brethren? Does it suggest that there is coming to light now here in testimony those who are of His order?

R.T. I think that is what grace would work out to, and that, as we allow grace to have its perfect work and enjoy privilege and have some sense of the great thoughts of grace, it would help us to come out in this character. We spoke in the reading of grace being formative: the Lord has seen something of that in these disciples. There were other features there but He saw something, I think, that was formed of grace in them so that He calls them "my brethren". And Mary knew to whom to go.

R.B.H. Would you say something about this title, "the Lord". Every time that one refers to Him, that is the way it is presented.

R.T. I do not think it is exactly the way in which we normally speak of it to stress His authority, but I think it is to stress His supremacy, the supremacy of love and supremacy of grace. What would you say?

R.B.H. Yes, it is what is seen in Him; "bringing word to the disciples that she had seen the Lord" and "the disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord", and then John recognised Him and he says, "It is the Lord."

R.T. As if it could not be anybody else. Who else would have spoken like this to disappointed souls? Who else would have come in like this to Thomas and to those persons who were going away in their own wills? Only the Lord. So John says, "It is the Lord." I think there has been ministry, the Lord discerned by His features. That is what we have here: they did not know it was He, they did not recognise Him, but as they saw grace upon grace, they said, it could not be anybody else, it is the Lord.

G.D.R. Would it be the working of the administration of love that she answers to that? As was said, it was her own words, she had seen the Lord. It is really full authority in love, would you say?

R.T. Yes, I think it is. I think the way it is used here it is a term of endearment. She does not need to say 'Jesus'; it is the Lord. They knew who the Lord was and here He is in resurrection; the Lord of glory, the Lord of grace, you may say.

G.R. She was to learn Him in that new way on resurrection ground. How fitting for Saul of Tarsus to say, "Who art thou, Lord?" Acts 9: 5. But then He showed Himself to Him as Jesus. Is that not wonderful?

R.T. Yes.

E.F.C. Would it suggest the thought of dominion? We need to recognise the Lord's dominical rights over us, do we not, particularly in relation to the Supper? It is the Lord's supper, not Jesus' supper; it is the Lord's supper.

R.T. Yes, it is dominical and I think the word supremacy, too, is good. It is the supreme One. It is not just emphasising authority but it is the One who is over all, and He is over all in love, over all in grace.

H.G.H. So it is really love's name; it is the name that they give Him out of love, would you think?

R.T. I think so. It is a distinguishing word, the Lord. There is only one Lord, "to us there is ... one Lord, Jesus Christ," 1 Cor 8: 6. She does not need to say any more, just "the Lord" and they would know who it was - lords many or gods many, but to us there is one Lord.

L.D.P. "They have taken away my Lord" would that emphasise affection?

R.T. Yes, it would. The place which He has won through grace means that He is supreme. It is striking, as our brother quoted, that it comes in time and time again; there is no one else to whom this authority could be attached, and He exercises it in these touches of grace to bring us into the wealth of the dispensation.

J.A.P. In this touch of grace the Lord uses a sister; the Lord would like to use the feminine side amongst us more. That is an impression I have been carrying for some time. We might not have selected this sister to give a message but the Lord did. What grace there was in that!

R.T. I think, as has been said, that she was available because she appreciated the work of grace in herself. That is what would bring out the feminine character, would it not, that we appreciate what grace has done for us? So she has no other lord, as has been said; He is my Lord. The feminine character reproduced as it was in the woman in Luke 7; she took the place at the feet of Jesus recognising what those feet would do for her. So that it produces this state that is serviceable for the message.

E.F.C. Would you say something about the inside position here, from verse 19 and on?

R.T. What would you say about it?

E.F.C. It was said that it involves others, the disciples being together and the Lord coming through closed doors, and into the midst – the dignity of 'the midst' as expressed in these humble disciples. That is just how it affected me as it was being read.

R.T. I think it is very affecting that the message should rally the brethren. The message from the ascending One, "my Father and

your Father" I think that brings us into this area of privilege that the Lord is free to speak, He showed them His hands and His side. The Lord has great liberty in the brethren being together in the sense of their privileges, do you think?

E.F.C. They were glad when they saw the Lord.

R.T. I remember being at a meeting once and a brother who had been out of fellowship was being received, and the brother giving out the notices said 'our brother has been restored to his privileges'. I thought there was a fine touch about that. The brother had been wandering, he had been away, but he came back to his privileges. And rising to our place of privilege gives the Lord wonderful opportunity to disclose the thoughts of His love, does it not? He showed them His hands and His side. What grace that He should give them this touch of peace and the Father! How much grace would unfold to us as we rise to the sense of our place in privilege.

D.M.W. Have you had a thought as to why the Lord says, "Peace be to you" twice?

R.T. Maybe you have a better thought.

D.M.W. I wondered if it had something to do with the message that the Lord gave Mary, My Father: My God. That Man would now be in a condition in which God could take great pleasure. So one would be the peace of God but the other might have to do with the relationship.

R.T. I think what you say is interesting, that it is what the Lord would bring in in a confirming, consolidating way as He comes among us - the substantiality of privilege. Privilege is not something theoretical or unreal, but I think the Lord saying these words of peace, as you say, would bring in the substantiality of what our place of privilege is.

H.G.H. But it would also be setting forth grace upon grace.

R.T. I think so. I thought 'of His fulness' connects John 1 with this closing section. You may say it is unlimited, the Lord is no longer in the limitations of the condition in which He was but in the glory of His

Person He would bring them to rise above the circumstances here to know their privilege.

J.S. Would you say something more about what is characteristic, to which you referred earlier.

R.T. I think that the Lord here is forming character with them, giving them a sense that they have a place before the Father as His brethren, and then He breathed into them "Receive the Holy Spirit", I think that to form character in them, He gave the breath of the risen Man, how intimate it is. I think it is all in view of imparting to them something of the character that marks Him, grace that would give us power to be here in His features. What do you think?

J.S. I am glad of what you say. I am thinking of the quickening effect it has - to use Colossian language - into the power of His life. Do you think that is the way the power of His risen life is imparted to us? Is that the character that should mark persons who characteristically enjoy the privilege with Him where He is?

R.T. I think so, and it is coming out in grace upon grace, in varied circumstances. John says, It is already the third time, as if there is full testimony to what is going to fill the dispensation - it is the third time. Whatever comes up there is grace upon grace. But I think that we would be expanded as we have some sense of the place that grace has given us - nothing here, but everything there in Him, "my Father and your Father".

G.D.R. As the Lord makes Himself known (as we would expect at the breaking of bread), it says here that they rejoiced having seen the Lord. Could you give us a touch as to rejoicing? I think there is a need of it. Would you agree?

R.T. Yes. It connects with what we have said already, "rejoice that your names are written in heaven". Rejoicing is based on something that does not change, no one could change that name that is written in heaven nor can change this, that My Father is your Father. It is fine to think that, to every one of us, the Lord in grace has given something that cannot be changed by time or circumstances. And

what joy that produces in the soul as we are helped to enjoy it, does it not?

G.D.R. It suggests that there was immediate recognition of Himself. We should not be cloudy as to the Lord's movements as He comes in at the Supper, would you say?

R.T. Yes, and our hearts ready for the impress of fulness that He brings in with Him, because what would give character to the occasion is what He brings with Him. As we have said already, what He brings is the wealth of heaven, grace upon grace, different each time but full grace to meet whatever circumstances are there.

E.F.C. So this impression received by the disciples was such that when it came to seeing Thomas the next time they told him, We have seen the Lord. They did not lose that impression and it became the fulcrum, you might say, of Thomas' recovery, do you think?

R.T. Would that we could move towards one another in the full sense of our privileges and take something of that joy with us, as has been said. There was a man there who was a bit difficult and they do not try to go into the difficulties: they just say, We have seen the Lord. What an appeal that is going to have for every true believer, that we have seen the Lord!

E.F.C. That is not presumption with these disciples and it should not be with us either as having to do with other believers who say, We have the Lord too. But the point is have we seen the Lord and can they convictingly say, We have seen the Lord.

R.T. It brings out that there is will working; it does not recover him immediately. Then it says, eight days after. There is time for what they have left with Thomas. Maybe they visited once, but they leave what they have conveyed and it worked something in him in those intervening days, and he is there the next time.

E.F.C. I had always thought that that was the next Lord's day, but you think it is possibly the Monday?

R.T. It says eight days after. I think it is not exactly the normal character of a Lord's day.

E.F.C. It has been suggested that it is suggestive of eternity, looking at it dispensationally.

R.T. It is dispensationally, but I think it bears the application that the Lord is able to meet the dispensational matter now. We meet many believers - I was speaking to one the other day - and they say we will be all right when the Lord comes. But there is grace now to make it right. Thomas, as you say, is the dispensational side and he is really looking on to a millennial day when the Lord will put everything right, but I think what the Lord brings in is that there is grace to put it right now, and we would like to be able to convey that, having seen the Lord, as you say, and rejoicing in a sense of privilege. But there is grace to put right now the unbelief that comes in and the distance that has come in between brethren.

J.A.P. "The world to come", it says, "of which we speak" - it is a current matter. It struck me when the scripture was read that the Lord brings up the question of food - I am going a little ahead - but it seems to me that there are two things that encourage the brethren, one is the manifestation of the Lord Jesus among us and the other is that there is food. I noticed that in this divergent company they had no food.

R.T. That is all right. It is fine if the Lord goes ahead, is it not? He says the third time, "after these things Jesus manifested himself again". How grace keeps at it - that is what impresses you. Whatever comes into the circumstances, grace keeps at it. And the Lord does not give up, He shows grace upon grace. The way He meets the thing is a beautiful education for us; He meets it with some fresh touch of Himself.

H.G.H. Would it not need grace on the part of the disciples to say nothing more than, We have seen the Lord, and then grace on the part of the Lord to take up the matter?

R.T. And He says the same to Thomas, Peace to you, does He not? He still comes in peace. It is fine to be able to bring some wealth

into the difficulties. We get overburdened and overwhelmed with the difficulties. But the Lord brings the wealth of grace to them, and His first word is "Peace". Again in the next instance He does not take up the difficulties; as our brother said He brings in food, He brings something positive into the circumstances to bring in the adjustments.

L.McF. Would you say something about the inbreathing. Is that the Spirit of the ascended Man?

R.T. I think so. The time of privilege is not that He just gives us a touch and we go away again, but I think the in-breathing forms something in character. We spoke about grace forming; I think the in-breathing has a great deal to do with character because they keep breathing like this. That breath fills their lungs with a sense of the privilege we have, that His Father is our Father. So when it comes to dealing with Thomas they do not speak down to him, but they just say, We have seen the Lord. What volume there is in those words!

C.F.D. It says, "The disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord." That rejoicing would not be left, they would carry it with them, would they not? And before they come together, eight days later, the Spirit is brought in so that, when Thomas assembles with the brethren, he sees those that are rejoicing and the effect of the Spirit in them. This is going to bring out something that would be very substantial. Do you think that anything from this dispensation will be carried over in that way into the coming dispensation, when Israel is recovered?

R.T. I think Israel will learn from the assembly, indeed the angels will learn from it. As the chapter goes on, I think the Lord is forming administrators in view of the world to come, He is forming them in the grace of the dispensation. I think the rejoicing is maintained through the breathing; He gives them a touch and it is maintained as He breathed into them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit". There is power to maintain the joy at its true level.

C.F.D. That would come into the matter of administration? The idea of remission comes in and then that of retaining, but it would all be in

the sense of the continuity of rejoicing and the power of the Spirit of God that would set them up in administrative power, do you think?

R.T. So you have to be a wealthy person to remit, have you not? You have to be satisfied yourself. That is what the Lord would have us to be, satisfied. Think of Naphtali, Satisfied with favour, it says, full of blessing (Deut 33: 23), a man who was content with his portion. It is a man like that that can remit. If we are not satisfied and full of favour we will be demanding. But here are persons who are satisfied with favour, and as you say, the first thing is, Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted. That is the first character, the first thought, that comes up.

A.S.H. The spirit of unbelief that Thomas had was broken when the Lord spoke to him. Then he said, "Thomas answered and said to him, My Lord and my God", not only my Lord but my God. Is that on a higher level than the others? It was said that each one spoke of the Lord as 'my Lord', but Thomas here says, My Lord and my God.

R.T. I think recovery always has the full thing in view, and Thomas comes on to the true ground. I think the others had perhaps more than Thomas, but I think in the application of it, taking it out of its dispensational side, it would be that recovery brings us on to full ground, that we come not only to know, as we said in the last reading, the grace of God, but we come to know the God of grace. We come to know His Person and His Deity, that grace resides there in all its fulness.

D.M.W. Do you think his name had anything to do with his absence? The disciples had the doors shut, they were providing conditions so that the Lord could be free to come, but I wonder if sometimes we are not like Thomas; while we may be with the brethren, morally we are really not. We take on the character of what is natural and are not abstracting ourselves from that, so we are not enjoying or rejoicing as others might be. It would affect us when they say, Did we not have a wonderful time this morning, and you sometimes have to say, Well, I missed something. The Lord

would come in then with His own touch, perhaps during the week, to ready us up for the next time.

R.T. Yes. The place that privilege gives us is far more than the twin. Thomas had just missed the idea of privilege and he fell back on something that was near to him. There is, throughout this whole section, a danger of falling back. And that was Galatia, they fell from grace. I think Thomas missed the idea of the message that My Father is your Father. What could be higher than that? As you say, I think something just pulled him away from the enjoyment of the fulness of privilege that is enjoyed among the brethren. Privilege is enjoyed among the saints.

G.D.R. Would you say that the Lord would have the moral state rise to what is privilege? There is often disparity, but the Lord's mind is that they should not only enjoy it for the moment but be continually enjoying it, and that is the result of the Spirit.

R.T. I think the in-breathing gives us the power to be maintained in the rejoicing, so that what we have in privilege is a real thing to us. The Spirit would help us, as Mr Darby says, Here we walk as sons through grace (Hymn 88). That is how we walk, as sons. I think the in-breathing is character here to maintain the joy of privilege. It is beautiful then the way the Lord comes to Thomas, He says, "see my hands; and bring thy hand and put it into my side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." The Lord for the moment, we may say, goes back a bit. He knows how to touch us, does He not? If we have wandered He knows just how to touch the heartstrings that bring us back to My Lord and My God.

H.J.G. Another time with His disciples He said, "It is I myself", Luke 24: 39. Is that really what He is doing to Thomas?

R.T. Very good. Yes it is. On that occasion as well, it is Himself, no one else - the substantiality of what He would do. Maybe the Lord has to go back upstream in our histories at times to revive us and bring us back into the depths of His love that is expressed in His hands and His side.

G.D.P. Is there something on the privilege side in being among those who have not seen but have believed? Is that some special privilege or am I wrong about that?

R.T. No, tell us more about it.

G.D.P. Well, is it not wonderful, as you say, the way the Lord recovers Thomas, but think of being called blessed because we believe and have not seen. Is that right?

R.T. Yes. It is emphasising the assembly. Thomas represents the Jews, as we speak of the dispensational side of things, and they will come into things eventually; Paul says, "What their reception but life from among the dead?" Rom 11: 15. They will come into it. But in the meantime another family has come in that has come into the blessedness of believing through grace and they have come into this wonderful privilege and favour; "My Father and your Father, ... my God and your God."

J.S. The Lord speaks earlier as to My peace and My joy. Do you think that is the level of things? Should we settle for less than that?

R.T. Should we?

J.S. I do not think so.

R.T. There is what our brother said about the twin - that is settling for something less, something that is below the level of where the Lord has placed us. He has placed us beyond any privilege of nature, He has given us the position as His brethren in those highest courts and now He has given us the in-breathing to maintain the joy of all that grace has given us in privilege. So it is very fine then how He acts in this third appearing - recovery, and perhaps that is the day we are in. The Lord manifests Himself. The chapter does not begin by the failure it begins by the manifestation. It says, "After these things Jesus manifested himself" as if that is what is to be left with us, the way the Lord has acted in recovering grace to bring us into this true position in which grace would place us.

H.G.H. The last two verses of the previous chapter would set forth grace to make believers out of believers and this chapter, being an

addition to the gospel, would be another grace, would it not?

R.T. I think it is a very particular application to the present time. As you say, the thing was complete in a sense. And then John, being the last of the writers as we believe, adds this other one, as if to say that this is what is going on through the dispensation, grace acting in recovery that nothing is lost. Indeed there is a great haul of fishes, a hundred and fifty-three fishes - grace upon grace.

L.D.P. Grace should help us in our relations with one another so that we would be an expression of the features of Christ.

R.T. It is very gracious the way the Lord handles them, is it not? He knew they were cold, He knew they were hungry, but He just says, "Have ye anything to eat? They answered him, No. The Lord would act to recover us as we are true and acknowledge our true state; it makes way for the wealth of grace. How often we cover up, to try perhaps to support the position we have got into, but it is fine just to be simple and make room for what the Lord would do to bring us back.

J.S. Would this involve the teaching of grace, do you think? These sections of which we have spoken, beginning with Mary and Thomas, and then the disciples, involved adjustment but it was through grace. I was carrying forward the thought of Rabboni, my Teacher. The Lord views us individually on this principle, does He not?

R.T. Very good, to bring us to be at home collectively, is it not? So they went away following someone else, their eye off Christ. It is very fine how grace handles the situation, not through getting involved and immersed in difficulty - why did you do this and why did you do that, but He just asks, Have ye anything to eat? He exposed the whole thing in those few words, did He not, and they just say, No.

P.E.M. Grace embodied in an invitation, Come and dine." Is the Lord still saying, Come, do you think?

R.T. It is an experience, I think, that most of us have had, that while we have been doing our own will and have lost our way, the Lord has

been maintaining things for us to come back to. So that is what has happened, that is what recovery is, we come back to the position that the Lord and the Spirit have maintained. So they come to dine, as you say.

L.McF. He says, "Children, have ye anything to eat?" The note says, 'little children.' That is very fine, the Lord is not perturbed or angry with them despite their waywardness. That is the spirit He intends that should carry on at the present time.

R T. Yes, I think so. That superiority of grace we are brought to, the Lord acting in that way. So He would bring us back under control. We may get out of control a bit - in our thoughts and ways - but as soon as they say, No, He says, "Cast the net at the right side of the ship". As we come under His touch there is a great haul, great wealth, brought in. So the dispensation has been maintained by Christ and by the Spirit in spite of our waywardness.

J.A.P. It would be grace and truth now, would it? They prospered when the Lord said that.

R.T. That is very good. They come under control. They had been out of control, Peter and Thomas. We have known some of these things; "I go to fish. You say, Well, Peter is doing it, it is all right for to do it. But they were out of control. So He brings them back under His touch and they come into the wealth, and fulness of grace, do they not?

G.D.R. When we take our eyes off the Lord, persons become out of character. It is Simon Peter here, the responsible man, but he is out of character. Then the responsibility in the others as to following. Do we not need to test matters as to whether they have their source in the Lord Himself?

R.T. Yes. But it is very fine, the Lord does not leave them there and He has not left us in the circumstances that we may have been in. But in His grace He would bring us back, under the influence of His love to come into this position where there is plenty. The younger son was referred to in the previous reading and he comes into this in a sense, into the place where there is wealth and joy.

C.F.D. The power of discernment seems to be with love. First of all it says here that the disciples did not know it was Jesus. but then the disciple whom Jesus loved said, It is the Lord. Do you think that shows that affection gives us that affinity which would relate all of us to Christ?

R.T. Yes. It says, "it is good that the heart be confirmed with grace, not meats;" Heb 13: 9. I think there is a touch of that with John, that his heart there was confirmed that it could not be anybody else - it was the Lord. As we go on our own way, we become insensitive to what is suit able to the Lord. The bride in the Canticles did not discern him at first, she got into circumstances where she did not really recognise him. We have known something of that. But the Lord in His grace is ever the same, and as you say, it touches a chord eventually in their heart and one says. It is the Lord. How quickly Peter comes into that too, does he not? So we have been thankful for one and another in our histories who have been able to see where the Lord was. The Lord does not leave them until they have been fully nourished. They come into something that grace had provided when they were on their fruitless mission. It is very affecting to think that in times when we have been away the Lord has been working on His own at this fire of coals and fish laid on it and bread. You are impressed with the warmth and substantiality of what grace is doing, are you not?

C.F.D. The net does not break. Everything is secured It is a suggestion of a marvellous side of recovery which I suppose will be publicly seen in a coming day, but goes on now in the hearts of His own.

R.T. I think that is beautiful, the power of grace that the net does not break. The wealth that it has secured is all brought in, it is all housed, as you may say, there is nothing lost but it is all gathered in. And then we come to what we need, warmth and food. It is fine to think of the warmth and the food that grace provides.

J.S. The Lord is also thinking of food for the household; to follow a little further where you read, He is bringing out the thought of what is

to come, the coming generations going right through to the completion of the age, do you think?

R.T. Yes. In this experience He is putting them on firm ground in view of their place of service. Peter boasted a bit when he said, If all forsake you I will not, but the Lord brings him to see, I think, that we stand in grace, we stand not in any strength that we have but as of the strength which grace supplies I think there is a certain substantiality about a fire of coals, it lasts and is a very penetrating heat; you can imagine them being warmed and fed and revived. It is a wonderful thing that grace serves to revive us, is it not.

C.F.D. And the Lord is doing it all. The disciples are being helped into the flow; there are the coals as you say, but when it comes to the bread and the fish He gives it to them, He is feeding them and setting them up, as they should be set up, in resurrection?

R.T. So this appendix is very fine. The Lord would not leave them without their being established in grace. That is what grace is, what He has done. What we have done led one way but grace brings us on to solid ground, to the enjoyment of the warmth and the food that He provides.

G.D.R. There is no reproach in His beautiful language - such delicacy, Come and dine. You can hardly think of anything more attractive. Is it something of a lesson book for us as we learn from Him as we speak to one another: a lovely touch, Come and dine.

R.T. I think there is a certain dignity about grace. It acts in a very dignified way. As you say about the crown, they speak of her gracious Majesty. It requires majesty to set out grace. As we said already, a pauper or a beggar could never set out grace exactly, it requires great resource and wealth. Here you have the resources of grace acting to set us up in the dignity and the proper height of our calling. So then He takes Peter and He says, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Here the probing comes in, but He feeds them first. We would have gone the other way about but this is grace and truth; He feeds them, He warms them and now He says to Peter, Well, what about this, Peter? He does not say, You boasted, or You said this or

that, He just says, "Lovest thou me more than these?" What could Peter say?

C.F.D. What the Lord brings out is the secret of attachment. It is love, but what the Lord is going to get through to is attachment. Peter will get through to it eventually and is that what the Lord is working at with ourselves? Attachment goes a long way: it is almost, I should not say inconceivable, but it suggests that the person is firmly attached in the power of the Spirit to Christ.

R.T. And it is beautiful the way the Lord would have us attached. It is already the third time, he says, as if once was not enough, it is already the third time. It is as if the Lord would show us and leave us some impression of the fulness of grace that is in the dispensation. And I think as I said earlier here the Lord is forming administrators in view of His kingdom in the world to come. He is forming persons in the grace that is needed to convey the wealth of heaven to the nations and other families. So we are in a time of these manifestations of grace.

R.B.H. Is it as a result of this that Peter I say, "I will use diligence, that after my departure ye should have also, at any time," 2 Peter 1: 5. He had the strong desire to leave something for their support.

R.T. That is very good. He wanted to give them the benefit of his experience, that they may stand. You can see the benefits Peter had from this experience, that he was a person trustworthy of the grace of God and able, as you say, to speak to these persons who were suffering in God's governmental ways, to convey something of this grace to them that they may stand and be supported in grace - he says It is not cleverly imagined fables, but something that has been proved as a reality in the way the Lord has acted and the way that He is acting through this whole dispensation. This is already the third time, as if the thing was continuing through the dispensation, the manifestations of grace to support us at the true height of our heavenly calling.

D.M.W. Is the thought of the Lord's priesthood connected with this portion in your mind, supporting us in things relating to God?

R.T. Yes, I thought of that passage in Hebrews (chap 4: 16), that we may draw near to the throne of grace, in the time of need find support. There is mercy but we find grace in the circumstances that we may be maintained in the joy of our heavenly calling.

L.McF. The Supper is essential - "Come and dine" - if we are to be maintained on the line on which you are speaking.

R.T. Yes, it is fine to get a touch in the meeting of something the Lord provides, is it not? As we come to the meeting we should have something, but what is formative is what the Lord brings in, what He has prepared. Think of His grace. While they were away on their own mission here He is, a fire of coals. The coals had to be gathered. It is more difficult to light a fire of coals than a fire Of wood, but He had it lit, it was blazing there when they arrived, the fish was laid on it. Think of the Lord's preparations in His grace that we may come into what He sets on, and that is formative what He sets on.

NEW YORK

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PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Alastair McBride

Matthew 27: 45-54; Genesis 27: 34; Luke 18: 35-43; Romans 8: 14-15

These Scriptures refer to persons who cry. The two cries in Matthew 27 are cries like no others; they are the cries of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. The first was a cry of anguish, when He was conscious of being forsaken by His God. The second was a cry of power, when He yielded up His Spirit. The cry in Genesis was a cry of remorse, an exceeding bitter cry. Then Luke tells us about a man who cried in faith, what a cry that was, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me". I trust everyone here knows what it is to have made that cry from the bottom of their heart, or if you have not already done so, that you may do so tonight. You need the Saviour. The last cry is a cry of liberty. What God has in mind in the glad tidings is to bring persons into liberty - delivered from the bondage of sin, tear or self-centredness, into the blessed liberty of the knowledge of sins forgiven and possession of the Holy Spirit. That is God's thought in the glad tidings, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The blessings of the gospel, how wonderful they are! God is presenting them tonight from the glory where Christ is, a Man at the right hand of God. From there the light of God is beaming out on mankind, full of blessing, not imputing trespasses. That is the wonder of this present time, God is not imputing trespasses. In Christ, He is reconciling all to Himself. God has a heart, a heart that longs for you; for your presence; for your company; for your satisfaction and eternal blessing. God's thought is that people should come now into the blessedness of knowing His Son as their Saviour.

For that blessing to come to you and me, Jesus went to the cross at Calvary. It meant these two cries, of which we read in Matthew 27. They became necessary in view of God's rights and His holiness being met by One who only was able to take the

judgement for sin on Himself. Personally, He was not guilty. There was not one thing in Jesus personally that merited the forsaking of God. Oh the perfection of the life of Jesus; what a sight for God as He looked down on His own Son, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" (Matthew 3: 17)! Think of His delight in saying that, and His delight in the undisturbed communion, day and night, with His own Son. Yet on the cross, there came a moment when the consciousness of that relationship was lost, for these three awful hours, because of the weight of sin that He took upon Himself. Think of God having to visit, on His own Son, the full weight of his wrath against sin and sins as the perfect Offering took our place. To meet the full claims of God in respect of sin involved His going into the distance of being forsaken by God. What would it mean to the heart of God that He should give his own Son on the cross, and there turn His face away from Him because He was bearing sin. Mr Darby says something about it - "Never was love like the gift of the Son of God for sinners; never justice ... that which did not spare even the Son Himself when He bore sin on Him; never majesty like that, which held the Son of God Himself responsible for the full extent of its exigencies; never truth like that which did not yield before the necessity of the death of Jesus". He had to be forsaken.

It is that cry as He felt the distance. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why ha thou forsaken me?" That should have been our portion, forsaken of God forever because of our sins, but Jesus took our place. The Son of God took my place. Someone quoted in our meeting this morning, "The Son of God who has loved me and given Himself for me" (Gal 2: 20). Paul was looking right back to the cross when he said that. What a Saviour Jesus is! He exhausted the judgment of God on the cross but He Himself was not exhausted. This second cry was also with a loud voice, "having again cried with a loud voice gave up the ghost." He dismissed His spirit, and in dying, He removed forever from before God, the whole order of man that sinned. Man was so lost in sin that there was nothing that God could do but terminate that order of man in the death of Christ and bring in a new order in Jesus. He died and has risen again and is now in glory, the Head of a new race for God. The

veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. His blood was shed to meet the claims of a holy God and to effect redemption, the "redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth a mercy-seat through faith in his blood" (Romans 3: 24,25).

There was a man here in Matthew 27 who said "Truly this man was Son of God". What light he had. Have you had light as to Jesus? It is shining now on you in the gospel. Who is Jesus? He is the Son of God. Let the testimony of His Person into your heart. There was someone earlier (v 19), Pilate 's wife, who testified to her husband that Jesus was a righteous man. She recognised that in that One standing before Pilate, there as the essence of justice and goodness; and poor Pilate was there in His very presence but rejected the testimony. He missed the blessing and lost it forever. Which brings me to Esau, because he lost it too. He is called to Hebrews a profane person (ch 12: 16) because he sold his birthright. You have a birthright, you young people. You have been born into a Christian household, into Christian families. That is a great and wondrous privilege, and God would say to you, "That is your birthright". Hold on to it. Do not give it up. Do not be like Esau. Do not sell it for anything else. The world would make great claims upon you, present its attractions to you and so make it easy for you to give up your inheritance. Esau could not see any future in it at all so he gave it up for what he thought was more desirable ... "the red thing there" (Genesis 25: 20). He gave up his birthright and lost it for ever. That great and exceeding bitter cry of which we read was when he realised what he had given up. It was a cry of remorse, but remorse I need not tell you, is not repentance. Repentance is that you cry to God as convicted of sin but Esau did not cry in time. He had time to repent, but the epistle to the Hebrews (ch 12: 17) tells us that he found no space for repentance. When he sought to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, though he sought it earnestly with tears. Do not be like that. There will many loud and bitter cries, when the day of grace closes, when souls realise that they are eternally lost. That is the sober side of the gospel; it will happen. God does not want that to happen anyone here. There is time for

repentance today. Now is the time, not yet for a cry of remorse, but for a cry of faith. Is that not a beautiful scripture in Luke 18? The blind man heard the crowd passing and he inquired what this might be. The man was blind. They told him Jesus the Nazarene was passing by. He knew the only person to help him was Jesus. He needed blessing and called out in faith. Part of the gospel is to open our eyes (Acts 26: 18). He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Those that were going on before rebuked him that he might be silent. Think of that! They were not with Jesus, you know. A real lover of Jesus does not go before Him: a real lover of Jesus follows Him. There were followers of Jesus there as well, but there were some who were going on before and they said "be silent". That is like the modernists, those who think they can reason things out for themselves, they can dispense with the great truths of Christianity, they can dispense with Christ, they cast aspersions as to his virgin birth, as to His finished work, and His resurrection. They would tell you that you do not need Jesus as your Saviour. But this man was not put off. He says "I need Him". It says "*he* cried out so much the more". O friend, do not be silenced! Let your voice be heard in the presence of Jesus. I do not mean to shout out in this meeting, you can cry in your heart. If you cry with faith in your heart to the Saviour He will hear you. It says that Jesus stood still. Think of that! He was going to the cross. It was the last time he was to be in this neighbourhood as He moved to Calvary. He stood still for one person! He will stand still for you tonight! He would call you to Him, would speak with you. He says "What wilt thou that I shall do to thee?" (v 41). He would say that to you in simplicity tonight. If you are worried about your sins, (and I trust you are), if you are unconverted, I trust you are burdened by your sins, because they will take you to hell if you do not have them forgiven. O come to Jesus and be healed! He said "Lord, that I may see." Is that not beautiful. He said Lord to Jesus. What blessing there is in owning Jesus as your own Lord. He had cried in faith and Jesus says "see: thy faith has t1ealed thee." He found his place as a follower of Jesus; he did not join those who were going on before. He joined with those who were following the Saviour. And that path leads to wondrous

blessing, because consequent on the forgiveness of sins, comes the gift of the Holy Spirit.

There was another cry we might have read about. In John 7: 37 it says "In the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink." What a wonderful invitation! Are you thirsting after some thing tonight? Some unsatisfied need in your soul? The Lord Jesus will meet it. He says, "He that believes on me, ..." That is like the man in Luke, He believed on Jesus. The cry of faith made him a believer on Jesus. "He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were about to receive ..." The gift of the living water, the Holy Spirit of God, is to satisfy and permeate the believer's life and flow out in testimony for Him. He will satisfy you With Christ, He will fill you with the love of God (Rom 5: 5) and give you power too, to overcome the things in yourself which are against His own blessed work. He is power, too, to follow Him in the Christian pathway. He is the power to enjoy the new relationships into which faith brings us. Faith brings us into new relationships, into the family of God. We become children of God (John 1: 12). We become sons of God (Gal 3: 25) and this man in Romans 8, says we cry "Abba, Father". That is a cry of liberty. He is no longer in bondage. What bondage he was in in chapter 7. He says "Who shall deliver me out of this body of death" (v.24). He was so burdened by what was in himself, his flesh. He was captive to it. He wanted to do right but could not until he cried to the Lord. He is the great Deliverer who by His death has condemned sin in the flesh so that by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus we should walk now according to spirit. He is a Spirit of adoption, that is, of sonship, so we have the liberty to cry "Abba, Father" which simply means "Father, Father". Now is not that beautiful? That is what the gospel blessing is. How full it is. Dear friend, it is for you. Then there is Christian company. God would not have you alone. Paul has the Christian company in mind when he changes the word in verse 15 of chapter 8 from "ye" and "these" of verses 13 and 14. He says "whereby we

cry, Abba, Father. This opens up immense privilege. You need be no longer alone. The Christian circle is composed of lovers of Jesus who know their sins forgiven and who have the blessed assurance that His Father is their Father. May you be among them, for His Name's sake.

GLASGOW

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