

A
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DISCERNING THE LORD

Harold J. Glass

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H.J.G. The great thing on Lord’s Day morning is to discern something that the Lord Himself would impress us with when He comes. We have the Spirit to understand it, but the Lord would in some way act and impress us with what He has for us. It came to me about Boaz. He came to the reapers and he said, “Jehovah be with you! And they said to him, Jehovah bless thee!” This was in this great place, Bethlehem, the house of bread. There had been a famine. Some had left the place; they all had to go through the famine, those who went away in unbelief and those who stayed.

They all had the famine, but the word came to them “that Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread”, chap 1: 6. The mighty man of wealth is there. He has his reapers, his company of persons. It is like when we gather on Lord’s Day morning. The Lord has a company of persons and He comes in with a salutation like this, “Jehovah be with you!” and we are ready for Him. I think it is wonderful to get some impression like that on Lord’s Day morning when the Lord manifests Himself, just a touch from Himself of what He would say and how He would act amongst us and then to see this response “Jehovah bless thee!” What a company Boaz had in this place! What reviving there had been! Here is this mighty man of wealth. Everything centres on him, and he is full of blessing and the response is equal to it. I wondered if we could consider this. The other scriptures help us about Christ’s relationship with us in union in the assembly. He values that relationship. He would want us to understand a fresh touch as to it. In the Psalm He speaks of it, “in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee”. He brings the whole range of the service before us. We may say that we understand it all but I remember our brother Mr. Dickson telling us at one time that we were so familiar with this that we could go through the whole thing without the Spirit. There will not be any life in that. We have to

get this touch from the Lord to get the life in it. Maybe we could just enquire together.

P.L.J. Would the reapers bring before us that something has been gained for the Master, so to speak?

H.J.G. I think so. They are His reapers. It is not just a commercial operation. They have an interest in it.

P.L.J. That is what I think. When we come together in assembly, we should come as reapers. I was thinking that there should be a preparation, a preparedness, a gleaning of something that you have to bring.

H.J.G. I think that is good. He had His reapers. That is lovely. That is what the Lord sees when He comes to us on Lord's Day morning. He sees the reapers; He sees what persons have been gaining from Himself.

D.M.W. I suppose the thought would be that all these persons are bringing something. The reapers were all equal in that sense. We are not thinking of gift or anything like that.

P.L.J. But it involves exercise. I think we should have exercise before we come together.

H.J.G. Well, that is good. Whether we are young or old we need it. Maybe when we are old we know a lot and we can ride along on what we know, but we need this too. We need to be reaping, searching through exercise.

P.L.J. Reaping involves freshness, too, something fresh that you have gained.

H.J.G. Then it is a great encouragement for the younger ones to think that they can be on this path.

S.S. There is a difference between reaping and gleaning. I was wondering if you had anything to say as to Ruth gleaning *behind* the reapers.

H.J.G. Well, I understand that gleaning is the way you get started. In the law they were to leave some for others to pick up, to glean,

but reapers are persons that are committed and intelligent in it. Ruth had not quite got to that yet but she is on the way.

S.S. Many of our dear older brethren are a help to those who come into the truth so that we all get the benefit of their reaping.

H.J.G. Well, as has been said, they are all the same. "All ye are brethren", the Lord said (Matt 23: 8). That is the setting when we come together: all ye are brethren". Even when it comes to who is going to give thanks for the emblems – "all ye are brethren".

T.v d.H. Is eternal life in view in the reaping?

H.J.G. Yes it would be. They are Boaz, his reapers, they belong to him, they are just happy to be greeting him.

D.M.W. It says in the scriptures, "He that reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto life eternal", John 4: 36. It is, I suppose, similar to the disciples, which we had yesterday. These are persons who reapers characteristically.

H.J.G. They are. Except for the history of Naomi and her husband and her sons we do not get the sorrowful side. Things were difficult in Israel, difficult in Bethlehem, but here is this great recovery and the mighty man of wealth has his reapers. He has the persons who are glad to hail him and who have an answer for him.

D.M.W. He is singular in this in relation to the reapers. I was trying to relate to what we have just experienced in the Lord coming in. He eclipses everyone, but He comes in with God's blessing. They said to Boaz, "Jehovah bless thee!" He has taken his place in the midst. That is the place that Christ has in the assembly. That is a universal thought, not a local thought.

H.J.G. That is another thing we need to think of. In the wisdom of God and in the Lord's own wisdom, He has made it possible in His wondrous love to have this in each local place, and yet we would never come together without having a feeling that it is "all". The teaching would be, "all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ", 1 Cor 1: 2.

D.M.W. The breaking of bread is the meeting where we come together *in* assembly.

H.J.G. Yes, it is. These are things that have been set out by those who have taught, but have we really found them through exercise? It is not just another kind of a meeting, it is where we come together in assembly. "We being assembled to break bread", Luke says (Acts 20: 7). The teaching is all there for us.

S.S. What about this "servant that was set over the reapers"? He seems to have a place of distinction. Did you have a thought as to that?

H.J.G. Well, such a one may have more of a place when we are together in other settings, like we are in now, the temple setting, where persons are distinguished as having something special given to them perhaps, and committal to serve, but I think the two verses we read are distinctly when we come together on Lord's Day morning. It is such a simple setting of love. The Lord wants us to be engaged with Him. It says, "And they said to him, Jehovah bless thee!" They all said it. Well, do we all say it when we come together? That is an exercise.

P.L.J. This one set over would show that there is not independency. They are collectively together, "And *they* said ...". I think it is important to ensure that there is not an independent spirit in any of us when we come together.

H.J.G. So, what you raised earlier about reaping enters into it. What have we been working on since last Lord's Day? What kind of reaping have we been doing?

D.M.W. Reaping, I suppose, entails labour, exercise. What have we been working at?

H.J.G. Then, can I really say that I am a reaper? Christ finds delight in the reapers. I think that would encourage us. If we have not done so well we can get into it a bit more.

D.M.W. Do you see any progress here in the verse? Not to be fanciful, but there seems to be quick progress because the maiden is

brought in. I wondered if we think of the experience we had this morning and most Lord's Day mornings, when the Lord comes in He is singular and there is this interchange. In one sense we get no leadership, it is spontaneous as to what we do when He comes in.

We have had Him on our minds as to the remembrance, but we spontaneously respond to such a Person who comes to us with God's blessing. Then He quickly takes charge. Do you think there is something in that?

H.J.G. It is tremendous what is in the typical books. Boaz says, "Whose maiden is this?" He has his eye on her. Christ has His eye on the assembly, not only His eye but His exclusive affections. That is why I thought of reading the verses in the Song of Songs. Of course, we understand as to Boaz redeeming her, "Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all ...". That is the redeeming, he has paid the price, and then he speaks about what he has restored.

Anything that there is for God Christ has restored it. But then Boaz says, "moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife". I think these typical books help us to see what Christ's affections are set on.

D.M.W. Is there a difference between redemption and purchase?

H.J.G. Maybe you can say something.

D.M.W. Well, I think we know the teaching of this book and others is that we have to be redeemed but when we get to the thought of the bride, the wife, it is more the thought of purchase.

H.J.G. I think that would come out in what Christ says Himself. He says, "he went and sold all whatever he had and bought it", the pearl (Matt 13: 46). He "sold all whatever he had". He has given everything. It is a purchase. Redemption pertains to what was needed because of sin.

D.M.W. That has reference to our histories, but when you get to the thought of the assembly, the bride, you do not really have that thought.

H.J.G. So that is the way it is stated here. The typical books are really very helpful. They give us the detail, they give us lovely touches. So he says, “moreover” – on top of all the rest that He has done – “moreover Ruth the Moabitess ... have I purchased to be my wife”. What a matter! We know all these things and we go over them and it is right that we should, but it is wonderful to get a touch of His affection each Lord’s Day, a fresh touch of it in some way.

S.S. I wanted to get a little help as to the difference between redemption and purchasing. Is redemption really more on our side and purchasing more on His side? I was just thinking how redemption addresses our need to be redeemed – but is purchasing more the thought of His desire towards us? In other words, He wants something for Himself, so it is more from His side. I was thinking of the pearl of great price. It is not so much the need there, but it is the beauty and attractiveness and value of the pearl. Therefore, it is what He wants for Himself.

H.J.G. I think so. You get the wonderful skill of the apostle Paul in the epistles about these things. In Corinthians where they needed so much help, he speaks about being washed (see 1 Cor 6: 11). That is through His blood, through redemption’s mighty work. But then in another place He says, “and ye are not your own for ye have been bought with a price”, 1 Cor 6: 20. We know that it was His blood that did it, but it has a different application, bought and secured eternally, secured for the heart of Christ and secured for God eternally.

S.S. It is very helpful to bring in that verse, “ye are not your own”. In other words, we are to be for Him, so it brings in what He would have for Himself.

D.M.W. He uses the expression, “chaste virgin”, 2 Cor 11: 2. That would be connected with purchase, not redemption. You get “maiden” here and then “wife”. That would be the side of responsibility, the wifely side.

H.J.G. Well, we get at it by way of the original thought of God when He created man and when He built the woman for the man. It is the

original thought of God before sin touched anything.

D.M.W. The deep sleep comes in before sin comes in. That is the side we are speaking of, an aspect of the death of Christ that we enter into when we come to the assembly.

H.J.G. I thought the section in the Song of Songs helps us about the relationship and what Christ enjoys in His relations with the assembly. The type in Boaz is that he purchased her, "have I purchased to be my wife". You just get the impression that that was the most important thing to Boaz, to get her, do you not? He was a great mighty man of wealth. He had these reapers which we know helps us to understand the thought of brethren, but then he says, "moreover ... have I purchased to be my wife" as though that was always before him. Then these verses in the types in the Song of Songs help us to see what it means to Christ to enjoy the relationship.

T.v d.H. Boaz refers to her as a "woman of worth" in chapter 3 (v 11). Would that give us the thought as to the feelings he had for Ruth, the one who became His wife?

H.J.G. That is very helpful. Because of what we are we need a lot of help to be lifted to the glory of what is involved in it all, do we not? We look at things so naturally and we put one thing against another. We will never understand the glory of these things that way. We have to understand what it is from the divine side in purpose.

T.v d.H. Think of the bride before Him as we gather! The service of God would involve that aspect and our feelings would be commensurate with His, thinking of His great longing for the bride.

H.J.G. We want to develop in this in our private times, gaining from the Lord's Day morning in our experience, and then we would seek the help of the Spirit to be developed in it in some measure so that when we come together again we would have a more mature experience. We get here how Christ enjoys the relationship, how He enjoys His spouse. If this means everything to Him, what do we prove, what do we experience in that time?

D.M.W. I suppose it depends, to a large extent, on our exercises during the week. We seem to get back to this, “have I purchased to be my wife”. I was thinking of Proverbs 31, and would you say that what He finds when He comes into His garden, where there should be fruit, is dependent on our activities and what we work at during the week?

H.J.G. I think so. I think it is good what you say because everything around us and alas bears in on us and, unless we have very much exercise, would take us away from this glory. The “chaste virgin” you mentioned is for Christ, but we live in circumstances. I am not thinking exactly of our own household circumstances (we should seek to gain help in them to augment this and facilitate us in our understanding) but, by reason of the outward conditions in which we live, we need so much help to fill out our place righteously and with exercise so that when we come to the point when we are to enjoy the bride for Christ, then our spirits are free. They are not hampered because of something that has gone on in the week. Is that what you were thinking?

D.M.W. It is. What you referred to earlier in seeing things from the divine side would help us get hold of that. I think it would help us during the week to maintain the purity associated with the thought of the wife so that we are unfettered when we come together in assembly. We are not remembering our benefits individually. We have before us the greatness of the assembly and the greatness of the Person of Christ, a matter that we can be set free for.

P.L.J. The end of the last chapter touches on that. “Awake, north wind, and come, thou south; Blow upon my garden”. The north and south wind refer to circumstances through which we pass, adverse and pleasant, but if we go through them with the Lord the spices will flow out. The north wind is going to blow as well as the south, but if we really take it from the Lord and go through it with the Lord, that is what really prepares the garden, something there for the Lord to come into.

H.J.G. We need to get an impression of that, that the circumstances and the exercises and what goes on in the depth of our souls, means so much to Him because He says now, “I am come into my garden”. He has that claim and now He has persons He delights in. He knows what the circumstances have been and He knows what spices are coming out of it and He says, it is “my garden”.

P.L.J. And the circumstances are in view of there being something in that garden.

T.v d.H. They are not only formative in us throughout the weekly exercises you mentioned, but they produce that which the Lord can delight in.

D.M.W. I was wondering if we do not get a touch of that in the second expression, “I have gathered my myrrh with my spice”. I wonder if that is the result of what we have come through during the week. Christ owns it as from Himself and of Himself. In other words, there has been the suffering position and “my spice” would be the result of coming through with something formed.

H.J.G. Do you think in a way we can apply this, “I am come into *my* garden”? As you said, Lord’s Day morning is the true assembly experience. “My garden” would be that, would it not?

T.v d.H. You have the “woman of worth” both in Proverbs and in that chapter 3 of Ruth. Is there a difference? You see the “woman of worth” in activity in Proverbs 31. In Ruth you see her more objectively as viewed by Boaz as to her person. Would that be a right thought?

H.J.G. Yes, it is right. So that we say, and I trust we experience it on Lord’s Day morning, that it is privilege. The responsibility is in being the woman of Proverbs 31, but then we can leave that, it is not the time for it. It does not mean we do not have to go back to it, but for the moment we can leave it and enjoy the privileged relationship.

S.S. I was thinking of something else that I believe links on with that because Boaz said, “that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place”. That is Boaz’s

side, that is his desire, his purpose. The woman of worth in Proverbs 31: 23 is her side, the responsible side.

H.J.G. The responsibility is going to be filled out and yet Boaz says, "have I purchased to be my wife". That is the great enjoyment side, is it not? Love would be the predominant thing.

D.M.W. I think we are getting a lot of help here as to what we proceed with during the week as having the objective view of what the assembly is as the woman of worth. That would be having the divine view of the assembly in the testimony and our activity would be in view of this. I think it is very helpful to see that.

H.J.G. So the exercises of the week help us in view of Lord's Day morning and what we experience on Lord's Day morning helps us in view of the exercises of the week. It works both ways.

D.M.W. I suppose "my honeycomb with my honey" would indicate some of that activity for He has been the Lord and Teacher. We sometimes use that title in asking the Lord for help in our readings, that we might work together like bees, producing this which would result in something for Himself that He owns as "my honeycomb". Do you think there is something to that?

H.J.G. Well, all of this helps us to see what His delight is in. We have something to work at in the exercises. His delight is in the honeycomb and the honey that is produced. We get into exercises and problems in the week, a lot of them come about because we are not just working like bees; we are working a bit independently. But even if our exercises have not reached a full result the Lord knows what we go through, so that when it comes to Lord's Day morning He says, "my honeycomb with my honey".

S.S. So then the honeycomb and the honey in a sense would represent the collective side of working at the truth and what is produced.

H.J.G. I think so. Then the Lord thinks of His own. That is a lovely touch. He comes in on a Lord's Day morning and we may feel a bit

jaded one way or another, we may feel we are a bit behind what the real objective is, but He says, “my honeycomb with my honey”.

D.M.W. We had yesterday the Lord coming into their midst. That would be the local setting. Coming into their midst would be more the weekly calendar and *the* midst would be on the Lord’s Day morning when we come together in assembly. When He comes into *their* midst, He asks a question, “have you anything to eat?” (John 21: 5), and there was this honeycomb. I think this helps us in our exercises. Maybe sometimes I get a little too carried away with regard to everyone else’s state except my own and yet the reading meetings help us to work out the truth, so that what is produced He can take up as His own. Do you think that is right?

H.J.G. It is. We all have a bit of an independent side and, therefore, we need to judge it, but what is the objective? If the objective is to help one another in all this for the Lord, then we will get somewhere.

P.L.J. What would you say in regard to the way it speaks of these various persons like “my sister, my spouse” and then “O friends” and “beloved ones”? It is remarkable the different expressions that are used. I was just thinking of how we think of the saints. There are different ways we can view them in relation to the Lord. We are His brethren as well as His assembly, the bride, and we can view the saints as those who are beloved ones. What do you say?

H.J.G. It is the same persons, the same ones. We belong to Him. He has secured us and really given us these relationships, but we do need help at the time of response on Lord’s Day morning to view each relationship intelligently.

P.L.J. That is what I was thinking. We can take them up and enter into them.

H.J.G. They are all there. It is the same persons, but we need help to be intelligent in each relationship.

D.M.W. Would there be a suggestion of persons who have shared things and persons who He can share things with? I noted in your giving thanks for the emblems that there was something of that

impression as to His friends, that He laid down His life for His friends, persons that He is comfortable with, and we can be comfortable with one another. Think of the way He regards such persons, the personnel of the assembly, as beloved ones. That would really stimulate our affections.

S.S. You referred to the intelligence that is needed in these relationships and I was wondering if our relationships with Him depend on the setting that we find ourselves in, the way that we find ourselves together.

H.J.G. Yes, it involves that, but I was thinking more of our response to Christ, especially to Christ Himself, and to each of the divine Persons, of course. Most of us need a lot of help as to whether we know what the relationship is with Him and as to whether we can speak using intelligent expressions towards Him. We are His brethren, we are His friends. He laid down His life for His friends. I do not suppose you could not bring the expression “friends” in at any other time but certainly it is an appropriate time. Then we get a distinct impression that we are His brethren, those that enjoy Him and have affection for Him in that setting. We also enjoy the assembly and then, of course, as the service goes on we experience the relationship of sons, sons of the Father. We use these expressions but are we really in the intimate experience of the relationships properly so that the expressions become intelligent?

S.S. I think that it is very helpful because there is a difference in the way we respond based on the relationship that we are currently enjoying at the time. For example, as you said, there is a difference in the way that we respond as brethren and as the bride.

H.J.G. That is right, and we are thankful for the teaching and we are thankful that in some measure we have been able to take it in, but we do need very much to be in the Lord’s hands, you might say, to really enjoy what the relationship is. I think if we truly enjoy it, the expression will be intelligent.

Now, a word on Psalm 22, “In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee”. I do not know that that is exactly the Father, because

David has been saying, “my God”, but I think we could take up the understanding of it that it is praise to the Father. The Lord’s own words are, “the Father seeks such as his worshippers”, John 4: 23. I was just thinking of what He says here, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren,” “in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.” In Hebrews 2 verse 12, Christ has the assembly for this very purpose, for the praise of God, the praise of His Father.

D.M.W. That helps in how we regard the assembly in its various aspects because it is a vessel of praise where these relationships are known and there is intelligent response according to those relationships. That is all in the vessel.

H.J.G. It is. Well, we are glad to have these times together when we can help one another to get some better understanding. I think too this begins with, “from the horns of the buffaloes hast thou answered me.” His work is finished. I wonder how much we enjoy that, that His work is finished. The whole end that He had in view was this praise, a vessel of praise. It is a tremendous matter if we can get hold of that.

P.L.J. Even though it does here refer to God, “my God”, do you not think “I will declare thy name unto my brethren” involves the Father? In other words, God is now known as Father.

H.J.G. I think so and, as I said before, the Father seeks worshippers.

P.L.J. To us God is Father.

H.J.G. I think we have been taught that the Father has never left His place and therefore the Father represents God in the full thought of deity. Christ has come into manhood – not that He is not God, and the Spirit is God too, though having taken a place of service – whereas the Father has remained as He ever was.

P.L.J. So the Lord has declared the name of God as Father.

H.J.G. That is helpful you bring that in because again this is a side of things that we need to prove and learn by experience so that we are intelligent in the relationship.

D.M.W. In John 1 it is, “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,” – that which He came into in manhood – “*he* hath declared [him], (Mr Darby puts in the brackets), John 1: 18. That would be God. He hath declared God, but the relationship is set out there, and I think this relates to what you referred to in Hebrews, “I will declare thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises”, Heb 2: 12. The Father is pre-eminent in the economy of grace but when Christ comes in, we do not have the Father before us, we have Him before us, the Lord Jesus. Then He takes a place, perhaps in a new way, as Head, in order to lead us in the praises that this vessel is to be engaged with, this intelligent vessel, which reaches, you might say, the pinnacle when we are at the thought of the Father as associated with Him, which would be impossible unless we go through the experience of union. Would that be right?

H.J.G. I understand that to be right. I need a good deal of help about it myself, but I think we should accept that as being right. The Spirit would help us to understand that, but this is plain speaking, “in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises”. It is as though if you want to find the way, this is the way you have to find it.

P.L.J. Would that lead on to God? We have the expression in scripture, “the assembly of God”, but I am not aware of ‘the assembly of the Father’, so I think that, “in the midst of the assembly”, it is leading the praises to God. Assembly praise is to God.

D.M.W. Do you think that is a wider thought – it is not necessarily a higher thought – because the Father occupies an unchanged place in deity? I think in the light of the New Testament and the revelation and the fulness coming out in Christ, that is what would lead us to the Father. The verse in John 1 is, “*he* hath declared him” so the “him” there is God and that would include the fulness of God which we reach at the end of the service.

H.J.G. I think that is helpful. I think we should have exercise when we come together on Lord’s Day morning. As I said before, these

things work both ways. We should be concerned about this through the week in the privacy of our relationship with divine Persons that we are proving something, getting to know Them better. The time of experience is Lord's Day morning, and we need to have the concern, did I learn maybe a little bit more to-day than I did last week or have a little livelier kind of experience of relationship? These things are very great. I think these scriptures we have read show the Lord's delight in the persons that prove this.

Denton

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PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Harold J.Glass

Luke 2: 8– 6; 5: 17–25

The epistle to the Romans tells us – it is a great book about the teaching of the glad tidings – that men gave up God in their thoughts. God in His word would turn persons, turn you and me, even though we may have known what it is to believe for a long time in His word, His glad tidings, He would turn our thoughts to Him. He came in for the need of men, He brought in His own way to meet it.

Romans teaches us that the righteousness of God is, “towards all, and upon all those who believe”, chap. 3: 22. So it is a time to believe, it is a time to reach out for faith to believe in God and have God in your thoughts.

The verses we read first in chapter 2 bring out the wondrous way that God has moved. He brought in the Saviour. It says that in the angel’s word, “for to-day a Saviour has been born to you in David’s city, who is Christ the Lord.” What a matter! You know what goes on in this world, the pace seems to get faster and faster and it makes it hard to live in. This world has its heroes, heroes in a military sense, a religious sense, in a business sense and heroes in computers. It takes all this to keep the world going. But God brought in His Man, He brought in His beloved Son. He brought Him in as a babe: “ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger.” This is the way that God does things. He takes up the things of no account in this world and so He would appeal to our hearts to see the way He does things to bring in His Man, to bring in His Saviour, to bring in His beloved Son, to see that He approaches us through One who is so lowly and One who brought in His love for men, appealing to men to turn to Him, to have Him in their thoughts. So in the preaching today, He would do that afresh for us, to appeal to us to have Him in our thoughts in the way that He does things.

These persons in Luke 2 were greatly favoured, and men under the sound of God’s word are greatly favoured to be helped to

come to what He has in mind, to come to know Him and to come into salvation. The apostle Paul speaks of that at the beginning of Galatians, what Christ has done in the giving of Himself. This is the Saviour that God brought into the world. He “gave himself for our sins”. That is what He did. This is the One, as we follow His lifetime and see where it ended on the cross, “who gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal 1: 4,5). Oh what God has in mind in bringing persons to know the Saviour, to know what it is to find glad tidings, to find something that brings in joy as over against all that goes on in the world of violence, the world of sin, where men follow trespasses, follow what is against God! This is what happens when men elect not to have God in their thoughts. They get into everything that is against God. Thanks be to God, the teaching of Romans would bring us through to see what it is to be someone who is retrieved from that, who has been saved from that, who has been delivered from it, to be here as a satisfactory person before God.

These are very great things that God proposes in the glad tidings, to bring persons into salvation, saved from their sins, saved from themselves. You say, that is a funny expression, but it is a needful one to understand, to be saved from yourself and all that is in yourself. We know what it is to give ourselves over to the way of sin here. Christ died for our sins, our own sins, our individual sins, but He also died to put an end to the matter of sin. He did that in those three hours on the cross. Sin was condemned. Everything was put upon Him. He was forsaken there. Everything was put upon Him in order that men might find glad tidings and deliverance from that system that entangles them. It speaks about it in Hebrews, “who through fear of death through the whole of their life were subject to bondage”, chap 2: 15. That is what it is. Sin has brought in death and bondage. Men are in fear of death. Everyone without Christ is in fear of death. But God has brought in the Saviour: “for to-day a Saviour has been born to you ... who is Christ the Lord”. One who can do everything. Well, this is what God wants us to come to

know, that in this little babe He had everything. In time Christ would come into service for Him and come into service for men.

Well, I thought we might see the way that Christ serves the men in chapter 5. Persons got to know about Jesus. Persons get to know about Him today through the preaching and these persons got to know about Him. There were persons there, religious persons, who had other ideas and questioned Him. Think of the religious element there is in this world, questioning everything, questioning God's ways, questioning His grace and mercy, questioning His righteousness, questioning what belongs to Him, His rights in love.

All of that is questioned because they want things to go according to their thinking, but God has His own way of presenting His matters, His own way of presenting His Saviour, and so Christ came among men and it says here, His "power was there to heal them." His power always there, always there in the Saviour, always there when the glad tidings are preached, His power is there to heal, to deliver you, to bring in what is needed for salvation and deliverance from your sins and from the whole sin system. It is there because He has died to meet it all. So the glad tidings are preached. God presents His righteousness in such a One, someone who is able to meet the need, able to glorify God in the scene where everything was against God. He had one Man, His beloved Son, who glorified Him in what He did. He bore everything in order to glorify God and to make a way through for you and me to come into salvation.

This is an unusual matter, to let a man down through the roof. I wonder what the children would think of that, a hole down through your roof to bring a man to Jesus. Quite a matter! But this is what they did. This is the kind of faith they had. Do we have this much faith when we pray for the glad tidings each time? Do we have this kind of faith, to pray that persons will come to know Him, will come in touch with the power that is in Him? All of this anticipates the power that is available now because Christ has laid down His life. This is all in the light of Him laying down His life. It took His life, it took His death, in order that the glad tidings can be preached that salvation is available. He is the One who says, "But that ye may know that the

Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins.” He has been the way of suffering and death, a way of sacrifice, a way of giving up everything, in order that you and I might have this wonderful gift, the gift of salvation.

So here is this man in the presence of Christ and He says, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”. What a word! No-one else is able to say that. It was challenged but the Lord shows in what comes out that it cannot be challenged. That is the word in Romans: “that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved”, chap 10: 9. It cannot be challenged because Christ has gone the way of death. He has met everything for God. He has met everything for the sinner. He has glorified God in the way that He went because He was a perfect sacrifice and so it cannot be challenged. He says, “Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?” Which is the easier? He challenged them. They were challenging what He did and what He said, but there is no challenge to it. There is a witness to the power that can be found in Christ, there is a witness to Christ having been raised from the dead; there is a witness to the power that is available. You do not have to put your trust in some theory, in some idea. You put your trust in the Person that has been raised from the dead.

So, what does He say to this man? He says, “I say to thee, Arise, and take up thy little couch and go to thine house”. This is what is in mind in the glad tidings, that persons should be so affected by the truth as believing on the glad tidings that they are set up here for God. It says He died “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”, 1 Pet 3: 18. It says also at the beginning of Hebrews, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings.” Heb 2: 10. God wanted to bring persons to honour Him, to be like His Son, but it required that the Sacrifice was made perfect through sufferings. All of this was needed and so when we speak about the Saviour, we must needs

speaking about the way that He suffered. He suffered from men, being spit upon, being stricken and having a crown of thorns. He suffered all that at the hands of men. But oh what He suffered as going to the cross to bear our sins! Peter says that, “who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree”, 1 Pet 2: 24. These are very real matters, the way that Christ has gone to be a sacrifice for sins. He has borne our sins. Then He bore that time of being forsaken: “Why hast thou forsaken me?” Matt 27: 46. He said to His God, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” It was to finish the matter of the power of sin upon man – that is what it was for – and to glorify God so that we are to come into the good of that, into the appreciation that God has condemned sin, condemned the whole thing and put it on Christ. What a suffering that was for Him to bear! To go through death was no small thing for Him, to bear all that was needed to deliver man from the power of sin, from the power of Satan.

So I think we get it here in this man. He says to the man, “Arise, and take up thy little couch and go to thine house”. What does all that mean? You say, that is very nice that he can walk now. Well, think of what it means morally. You have a man who was paralysed, not able to do anything, not able to do anything satisfactorily here in a practical sense in righteousness in this world, but now you have a man who can take up his couch. He is able to do things and then he is able to go to his house. He is able to operate in his house and come under the regulation of Christ. These are great things in the glad tidings that persons come under Christ, the regulation of Christ. They are here in a different life – it is a different kind of life.

Romans teaches us that too, that we “walk in newness of life”, Romans 6: 4. So you come into the gain of the glad tidings and you can walk in “newness of life”. You are not someone here paralysed by Satan’s load upon you and the load of sin upon you. You are no longer in that. You are delivered from the power of sin to enjoy what it is to be here for God’s pleasure, to enjoy the Saviour. Think of it! – “for to-day a Saviour has been born to you” so you are to enjoy Him.

It says, "And immediately standing up before them, having taken up that whereon he was laid, he departed to his house, glorifying God." I think we can read a lot into that. He is a man who became a subject man. Subject persons are given the Holy Spirit.

They are given God's gift of the Holy Spirit and they have power to live for God. This is a wonderful thing. This is what God has in mind in the glad tidings, to save us from our sins and make us live to God. I think we find it in this man, "having taken up that whereon he was laid, he departed to his house, glorifying God." I think he is a man now who is in liberty. He is not under the bondage of sin any more.

He is in liberty. He has the Holy Spirit so that he has power here to live for God. These are wonderful things that the glad tidings present to us. We have a Saviour who fills our hearts, One so great who has met everything, been to the cross, been there to bear our sins, been there to meet everything, to glorify God. So we have our trust in someone who has been that way and who has been raised.

We have someone to put our trust in, someone to enjoy, someone in whom we know we are justified. God can assure our hearts that we are justified as believing in such a One that He has raised from the dead. So we can be like this man was, set up in our houses, set up in our circumstances, set up in the way we live in this world so that we go on here in righteousness and we go on under the regulation of Christ and find our part here in what is for God's pleasure.

These are great things that are presented to us in the glad tidings and we find them in the Person of Christ. We find them in the way He has done it, but then you have to find the Person for yourself, find out that there is such a One. That is what the shepherds did. They went and found there was such a Person.

Well, the glad tidings would bring Him before you, bring Him before us all so that we might find such a Person, find what He can do for us, find who He is and what He is and find the gift of the Holy Spirit, to be set up here in what we call Christianity, what there is here that honours God, what there is that is for God's pleasure and what there is for our blessing. We were reading about the man that came in, Boaz. He came in with blessing. Well, here is the Lord Jesus, He

comes in with blessing. He comes into your heart with blessing when you receive Him. He comes into your circumstances to help you to find blessing and to find what it is to live here in joy and to live in the love of God and to live as a person who can please God. That is what this man did. It says, "he departed to his house, glorifying God." He did not just go back thankful to be able to walk. He went back with His heart filled with all that Christ had done for him and to glorify God for it.

Well, this is what God has in mind for us in the glad tidings. May it be our blessing for His Name's sake!

Denton

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