

Bread & Wine



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BREAD & WINE

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Editorial

Russ Atmore

Various issues swamp the Christian during this time of year. The drawing to a close of winter and the approach of summer speaks of new life springing forth. This year we set our clocks forward much earlier than we usually do and what a benefit it is proving to be. Easter comes suddenly and swiftly and reminds me always of how fast the last week of our Lord's life went. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday the range of emotions expressed in Scripture is vast, significant and powerful. The Resurrection has that effect on you, doesn't it? The trees are starting to show their new buds – on the whole, life is kicking up a few gears.

The world is experiencing change at a rate that you cannot imagine. Just when you think you have handle on life in the fast lane, something comes along to remind you that you don't, in fact, you find yourself far behind. We cannot keep pace with our world. Technological changes are too fast. Political changes are sweeping the world and it seems to me that just as the change from the 19th century to the 20th century brought incredible change, so too does the 21st century from the previous. History often repeats itself, you know, and we often, as

you know, don't heed the lessons it offers. This is certainly borne out by the Bible. Change and decay in all around I see is how the hymn writer described it.

It is good to know that with God there is perfect stability and peace. This is guaranteed by our Lord's Resurrection. It is the Resurrection that is the foundation for the Christian faith. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then our faith is vain and we are still in our sins. Resurrection is not only about new life. It is about future life. Change is all around us. We cannot comprehend it at times, but we know that in the future one fact is absolutely certain. We shall be like Christ – we shall see Him as He is. What a hope! Nothing changes this hope that we have because Jesus changes not – He is the same yesterday, today and forever, and He lives. I'm looking forward to that great change that Resurrection will bring about.

We have included some sermons adapted for easier reading from the Puritans, John Flavel and Jeremiah Burroughs and from the Reformer, John Calvin. Both Flavel and Burroughs were exceptional Puritan preachers and writers. They are especially known for their clear and easy writing style. John Calvin is recognized as being able to write with such brevity and with such penetrating insights at the same time. In fact it is Calvin's brevity that is the hallmark of his writing. To be able to say so much in such short sentences and so clearly is the mark of a genius greatly gifted by God. Such was the man.

We feature a new article from Kaitlin Atmore in addition to her usual puzzle section. This month's Bible Quiz focuses on Hymns and Choruses. Watch out! As usual there is further commentary in Mark's Gospel.

Soli Deo Gloria

“Our coming together in public worship should be a foretaste of heaven.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

God Wants To Use You

Russ Atmore

What a statement! God wants to use you! Sometimes we cannot imagine that God would want to use us, or that He would even consider using us, but the biblical evidence is stacked against us thinking like that. A more relevant and pertinent question might be: do I want God to use me? Why would God want to use us? He wants to use you because you are valuable to Him, and He loves you with an infinite, unchanging and perfect love. He

wants to use you because that is how God works. When Jesus called his disciples to follow Him, it was for the purpose of Him using them to accomplish the purposes of God. God wants to use you so that He can accomplish His purpose both for you and for others.

This question or issue is similar to “why pray?” If God is sovereign and controls the universe, then why pray? If all things fall under His predestination then why pray? We pray because our praying is in the predestination of God. God's purposes are accomplished through our praying. Your prayers are just a little piece of the puzzle that one day God will unfold to you and show you how it all worked out for His glory. This is how we need to live. God is working His purposes out for me (Romans 8:28, 29). The reason God is working all things out for good for those who love Him and have been called by Him, is so that we will be conformed to the image of His Son. God wants us to be like Jesus. The same passage tells us that if God is for us, who can be against us! (Rom. 8:31). We can be sure of the working of God in our lives and through our lives. If you don't allow God to work in your life, then God may take some drastic and direct steps to intervene in your life to get you to pay attention to Him. I find the Lord doing this always with me. He directs us rather painfully at times to keep us on track and in fellowship with Him.

When God uses us, He receives the glory, and all of life is to be lived for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). When God works in us, we experience growth. We experience relationship with Him. We grow closer to God. Closeness to God has the effect of rubbing off on others, because it is not selfish or self-centered. To be selfish or self-centered means that I am only concerned about me and my needs. God wants us to think of others, for it is in the thinking of others that God takes care of our needs. God uses those who are obedient to Him. If we are disobedient he chastens us, He disciplines us to bring us back to fellowship with Him. I would suggest that if we want God to use us, then we must first of all, undergo some self-examination. Deal with the hindrances, and then I would suggest some dedication, surrender or consecration of ourselves to God. I don't see this as being a once off event, but rather, an ongoing way of living before the Lord. This simply means that we will be getting close to God, and when you get close to God, you may be surprised to find Him using you for His glory.

God wanted to use Jonah, but he ran away from God. You can never run away from the Lord. You cannot go far enough away to even think that you are out of His sight. Jonah had to go through some not too pleasant experiences, for him to finally to be where God wanted him. We can avoid Jonah's problems by listening for the voice of the Good Shepherd, and when we hear it, then let us respond and do as he asks. God wants to use you!

“God watches over the scattered dust of His children, gathers it again, and will suffer none of them to perish.”

John Calvin

Keeping The Heart In Temptation

John Flavel

IX. The ninth season wherein the greatest diligence and skill are necessary to keep the heart, is the hour of temptation, when Satan besets the Christian's heart, and takes the unwary by surprise. To keep the heart at such times, is not less a mercy than a duty. Few Christians are so skillful in detecting the fallacies, and repelling the arguments by which the adversary incites them to sin, as to come off safe and whole in these encounters. Many eminent saints have smarted severely for their want of watchfulness and diligence at such times. How then may a Christian keep his heart from yielding to temptation? There are several principal ways in which the adversary insinuates temptation, and urges compliance:

1. Satan suggests that here is pleasure to be enjoyed; the temptation is presented with a smiling aspect and an enticing voice: "What, are you so dull and phlegmatic as not to feel the powerful charms of pleasure? Who can withhold himself from such delights? Reader, you may be rescued from the danger of such temptations by repelling the proposal of pleasure. It is urged that the commission of sin will afford you pleasure. Suppose this were true, will the accusing and condemning rebukes of conscience and the flames of hell be pleasant too? Is there pleasure in the scourges of conscience? If so why did Peter weep so bitterly? why did David cry out of broken bones? You hear what is said of the pleasure of sin, and have you not read what David said of the effects of it? "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore; there is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin," &c. If you yield to temptation, you must feel such inward distress on account of it, or the miseries of hell. But why should the pretended pleasure of sin allure you, when you know that unspeakably more real pleasure will arise from the mortification than can arise from the commission of sin. Will you prefer the gratification of some unhallowed passion, with the deadly poison which it will leave behind, to that sacred pleasure which arises from fearing and obeying God, complying with the dictates of conscience, and maintaining inward peace? Can sin afford any such delight as he feels who, by resisting temptation, has manifested the sincerity of his heart, and obtained evidence that he fears God, loves holiness, and hates sin?

2. The secrecy with which you may commit sin is made use of to induce compliance with temptation. The tempter insinuates that this indulgence will never disgrace you among men, for no one will know it. But recollect yourself. Does not God behold you? Is not the divine presence every where? What if you might hide your sin from the eyes of the world, you cannot hide it from God. No darkness nor shadow of death can screen you from his inspection. Besides have you no reverence for yourself? Can you do that by yourself which you dare not have others observe? Is not your conscience as a thousand witnesses? Even a heathen could say, "When thou art tempted to commit sin, fear thyself without any other witness."

3. The prospect of worldly advantage often enforces temptation. It is suggested, "Why should you be so nice and scrupulous? Give yourself a little liberty, and you may better your condition: now is your time. This is a dangerous temptation, and must be promptly resisted. Yielding to such a temptation will do your soul more injury than any temporal acquisition can possibly do you good. And what would it profit you, if you should gain the whole world and lose your own soul? What can be compared with the value of your spiritual interests? or what can at all compensate for the smallest injury of them?"

4. Perhaps the smallness of the sin is urged as a reason why you may commit it; thus: "It is but a little one, a small matter, a trifle; who would stand upon such niceties? But is the Majesty of heaven little too? If you commit this sin you will offend a great God. Is there any little hell to torment little sinners in? No; the least sinners in hell are full of misery. There is great wrath treasured up for those whom the world regard as little sinners. But the less the sin, the less the inducement to commit it. Will you provoke God for a trifle? will you destroy your peace, wound your conscience, and grieve the Spirit, all for nothing? What madness is this!"

5. An argument to enforce temptation is sometimes drawn from the mercy of God and the hope of pardon — God is merciful, he will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be severe to mark it. But stay: where do you find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners? Involuntary reprisals and lamented infirmities may be pardoned, "but the soul that doth aught presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off

from among his people.” If God is a being of so much mercy, how can you affront him? How can you make so glorious an attribute as the divine mercy an occasion of sin? Will you wrong him because he is good? Rather let his goodness lead you to repentance, and keep you from transgression.

6. Sometimes Satan encourages to the commission of sin, from the examples of holy men. Thus and thus they sinned, and were restored; therefore you may commit this sin, and yet be a saint and be saved. Such suggestions must be instantly repelled. If good men have committed sins similar to that with which you are beset, did any good man ever sin upon such ground and from such encouragement as is here presented? Did God cause their examples to be recorded for your imitation, or for your warning? Are they not set up as beacons that you may avoid the rocks upon which they split? Are you willing to feel what they felt for sin? Dare you follow them in sin, and plunge yourself into such distress and danger as they incurred?—Reader, in these ways learn to keep your heart in the hour of temptation.

“When a flood of troubles, sickness or death comes, Christ is our Ark; if we are in Him, we are safe. Therefore, when He calls, let us flee to Him who is our Refuge and Strength.”

Matthew Henry

Drawing Nigh Unto God

Jeremiah Burroughs

“Then Moses said unto Aaron, It is what the Lord spake saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace” - Leviticus 10:3

These words are the speech of Moses to Aaron, his brother, endeavoring to quiet and comfort his heart, which was (no question) exceedingly troubled by that great and sore affliction that was upon him in the strange death of his two sons, Nadab and Abihu. The story is this: after Aaron's sons were consecrated to the priestly office, coming to attend their office the very first day after their consecration to offer incense to God, they ventured to offer incense with strange fire, with other fire than God had appointed. Upon that, the fire of God's wrath broke out upon them and slew them both presently in that very sanctuary before all the people. It was a solemn time, being the begin-ning of the solemn consecration of the priesthood. Upon this, the spirit of Aaron could not but be exceed-ingly troubled to see his two sons thus struck. Now Moses comes to him and says, “This is what the Lord spoke, I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified” And upon this, Aaron held his peace.

We read that once fire came down from heaven in a way of mercy to consume the sacrifices, but now fire comes down from heaven in a way of judgment to consume the sacrificers, Nadab and Abihu. They were Aaron's sons, the sons of a godly man, the sons of the High-Priest. They were his eldest sons, for Aaron had other sons besides Nadab and Abihu. He also had Eleazer and Ithamar, but these were his eldest sons. They were two young men. They were struck in the very prime of their age. They were two that were newly consecrated in the priest's office, for so you find in the 9th chapter. They were two men of renown in the country and before all the people of Israel, two men that God had greatly honored theretofore, as you shall find in the beginning of the 24th chapter of Exodus.

This Nadab and Abihu were men of great reputation and great renown whom God honored in former times. When God called Moses and Aaron to come up to Him with the elders, He singled out Nadab and Abihu among the rest and named them. He said, “Come up unto the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and 70 of the elders of Israel.” Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu alone are named, and then 70 of the elders in general, but

Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, as if these were the four eminent men of renown among all the people of Israel. He named none of the 70 elders but these two, besides Moses and Aaron. Therefore, these two that were consumed by strange fire were renowned men and newly consecrated into their office.

What was their sin?

Their sin was offering strange fire, for the text says that they offered strange fire which God had not commanded them. But had God ever forbidden it? Where do we find that God had ever forbidden them to offer strange fire or appointed that they should offer only one kind of fire? There is no text of Scripture that you can find from the beginning of Genesis to this place where God had said in so many words expressly, "You shall offer no fire but one kind of fire." And yet here they are consumed by fire from God for offering strange fire.

I find in Exodus 30:9 that they were forbidden to offer strange incense, but I do not find that they were forbidden to offer strange fire. In Lev.6:13, and divers verses in that chapter, we find that God had appointed that they should constantly keep the fire on the altar burning and never let it go out. It seems that it was God's intention that they should make use of that fire and that fire only. God would have them to pick out His meaning. God sent fire down from heaven upon the altar. In the latter end of the 9th chapter, God sent down fire from heaven and gave them a charge to keep that fire on the altar constantly and never to let it go out. So that it seems that God would have them to pick out His meaning that because He had sent down fire from heaven upon the altar and gave them power to keep it constantly, God would have them understand, therefore, that what incense or sacrifice He would have the use of should be only that fire and no other. It should be noted, though, that God never did say to them directly in these words, "You shall make use of this fire and no other," but God would have them to understand this. That's their sin, therefore, in offering strange fire.

Now fire comes from the Lord and consumes them. Some think this fire came from the altar, but surely it could not be any ordinary fire that consumed Nadab and Abihu at this time, for you shall find in the next verse that the bodies of Nadab and Abihu were not consumed by the fire. No, not their clothes, either. They were killed by the fire, and yet their clothes were whole. Therefore it was not an ordinary fire. It was some celestial fire that struck them and slayed them, for so the text says in verse 4, "Come near, carry away our brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp, and so they went and carried them in their coats out of the camp." So that their clothes and bodies were not consumed, only they were killed by the fire. They were struck with a sudden death, and that in the presence of the Lord, such a death as God had never threatened in the Word before.

God had never threatened the priests and said, "If you offer strange fire, you shall be consumed by fire," but yet God smites them with death by fire. They did not have time to seek God, no, not so much (as we used to say) as to say, "Lord, have mercy on me." They had no time to promise amendment at all.

Now upon this heavy judgment, the heart of Aaron could not possibly be anything but very troubled. Yea, and the spirit of Moses, too, for Moses was their uncle. They could not but be exceedingly grieved. But Moses, being the brother of Aaron, and seeing his spirit (no question) exceedingly troubled, being under such a sad affliction, and that such a godly man as Aaron was should have such a sad judgment befall his children, Moses comes and speaks comfortably to him and labors to support his spirit.

How does he do it? He did not come as you ordinarily used to visit your brethren, "Oh! You must be content with this!" No, but he comes and applies the Word of God, and shows how God must be sanctified. And by that, he comes to quiet the heart of his brother, Aaron. "This is that which the Lord has spoken," Moses said. He seeks to stay the heart of his brother with that which God spoke.

But where do we find that God spoke this?

It's hard to find in any Scripture these words before this time, and therefore Augustine thinks it was only the word God had spoken, but not written. And so they had it from hand to hand by tradition as they did many other things, like the prophecy of Enoch that the Apostle Jude speaks of. You do not find it written in the Book of God, and yet the Apostle speaks of it, so that indeed it was from hand to hand. Yes, and we find it in the New Testament also. Paul speaks of a thing that Christ was to have said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

You do not find it recorded in the gospels that Christ said so. So this is that which the Lord said, though it was not written from the begin-ning of Genesis to this very place. Otherwise, though it is not recorded in expressed terms, yet something is recorded to the same purpose and effect. And so it may seem to have a reference to that Scripture in Exodus 29:43. There we have a Scripture which comes as near to it as any I know of, "...there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sancti-fied by My glory." That's as much as saying, "I will be sanctified by those that come near Me." In those that come to worship Me in My tabernacle, I will be sanctified in all things that concern My worship. I will be sure to be sanctified there. "I will be sanctified." I will be hallowed. It is the very same word that you have in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name," only that's the Greek word and this is the Hebrew. But if you would translate this word into Greek, you must translate it by the same word that Christ spoke when He taught His disciples to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name." Hallowed and sanctified are all one. "Lord, let They name appear to be holy."

"I will be sanctified," that is, I will have My name appear to be holy. I will be made known unto My people, and to all the world, that I am a holy God. That's the meaning of "I will be sanctified." I will be known to all the world as a holy God. "And before all the people I will be glorified." So it is in the latter part of the verse. It is as if God should say, "I account it to be My glory that I should be manifested to be holy before all the world."

"I will be sanctified." That is, I will have My people to demean and carry themselves so as to hold forth their acknowledgment of My holiness so that by their carriage I may appear to be a holy God. I will be sanctified by them, or otherwise, if they shall not in an active way sanctify My name, that is, if they shall not demean themselves so as to hold forth the glory of My holiness, then I will be sanctified upon them. I will demean and carry Myself towards them so that by My actions upon them I will make it appear what a holy God I am.

So God is sanctified is by the holiness of His people in their carriage towards Him, holding forth the glory of God's holiness. So you have it in 1 Pet. 3:15, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." The saints sanctify God in their hearts when they fear God as a holy God and reverence Him and love Him as a holy God. They sanctify Him in their lives when their lives hold forth the glory of God's holiness. Then God is sanctified.

Thus now you see the meaning of the Scripture, and the scope of it. Now in this Scripture you have these three special and notable points:

1. That in worshipping God, there is a drawing nigh unto Him.
2. That when we do draw nigh to God, we should take our heed to ourselves that we sanctify God's name.
3. If we do not sanctify God's name in our drawing nigh to Him, then certainly God will sanctify His own name upon us.

He Appeared

John Calvin

A Sermon delivered Easter Day - Matthew 28:1-10

One may find it strange at first glance that our Lord Jesus wishing to give proof of His resurrection, appeared rather to women than to His disciples. But in that we have to consider that He wished to prove the humility of our faith. For we must not be grounded in human wisdom, but we must receive in absolute obedience what we know to proceed from Him. On the other hand, there is no doubt that He wished to punish the disciples, when He sent them women to instruct them, because the instruction which they had received from His mouth had been of no profit to them when it came to the test.

For look how they are scattered. They desert their Master; they are confused by fear. And what good has it done them to be for more than three years in the school of the Son of God? Such cowardice, then, deserved great punishment, even that they might be entirely deprived of the knowledge which they had received before, inasmuch as they had, so to speak, trampled it under foot and buried it. Now our Lord Jesus did not wish to punish them severely, but to show them their fault by gentle correction He appointed women to be their teachers. They had been chosen beforehand to publish the Gospel to the whole world (they are really the first teachers of the Church), but since they were so cowardly as to be found thus bewildered, so much so that their faith was, as it were, deadened, it is entirely proper that they should know that they are not worthy to hear any teaching from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice, then, why they are sent back to women until they have better recognized their faults, and Jesus Christ has restored them to their position and privilege, but by grace. Besides (as I have said), all of us in general are urged to receive the testimony which is sent to us by God, even if the persons who speak are of little importance or if they have no credit or reputation in the eyes of the world. As in fact, when a man is elected or appointed to be a notary public or a public officer what he does will be received as authentic. One would not say this or that to contradict him. For the office gives him respect among men. And will God have less preeminence than earthly princes, if He ordains only those whom He pleases to be His witnesses, from whom one receives whatever He should say without contradiction or reply? Certainly it must be so unless we want to be rebels even against God Himself. This, then, we have to remember in the first place.

Besides, let us note also, although our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to women and they held the first degree of honor, He Himself gave sufficient testimony to His resurrection, so that, if we do not close our eyes, stop up our ears and by certain malice will to be hardened and stupid, we have an abundant certainty of this article of faith, as also it is of great importance. For when St. Paul refutes the incredulity of those who still doubted if Jesus Christ was raised, he mentions not only the women, but he mentions Peter and James, then the twelve Apostles, then more than five hundred disciples to whom our Lord Jesus appeared. How, then, can we excuse our malice and rebellion if we do not give credit to more than five hundred witnesses who were chosen for that not on man's part but from the sovereign Majesty of God. And it was not only just once that our Lord Jesus declared to them that he was living but many times. Thus, what the Apostles have doubted and their incredulity ought to serve us for a greater confirmation. For, if at first appearance they had believed the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, one might allege that it would have been too simple.

But they are so slow that Jesus Christ has to reproach them for being blockheaded people with no faith, for having minds so heavy and thick that they understand nothing. When, then, the Apostles were so unready to receive this article of faith, that ought to make us all the more certain. For that it was then brought to them as by force is good reason now for us to follow. As it is said, "You have seen, Thomas, and you have believed, but blessed are those who believe without seeing." Now, then, when it is thus spoken that our Lord Jesus appeared to two women, let us think of what is said from the other passage from Saint Paul that we may know that we need not stumble at those who speak to give credit to what they say according to the importance or condition of their persons, but rather we ought to raise our eyes and our senses on high to subject ourselves to God, who well deserves to have entire superiority over us and that we be captives under His Word. For if we are not teachable it is certain that we shall never profit from the teaching of the Gospel. And it ought not to be ascribed to foolishness when we receive what God declares and testifies to us. For when we shall have learned by obedience to profit in His school and in the faith, we shall know that the perfection of all wisdom is that we be thus obedient to Him.

Now let us come to this story which is here narrated. It is said that "Mary Magdalene with her companion came to the sepulcher the first day of the Sabbaths," that is, the first day of the week. For the Jews keep Saturday, which they call Sabbath, as the day of rest, as also the word signifies, and then they name the days following in all the week, first day after Sabbath, second day, etc. Now because they count the beginning of the day as at sundown, it is said that the Marys bought aromatic ointments after the sabbath was finished and made their preparations to come the next day to the sepulcher. And they were not only two. It is true that St. John names only Mary Magdalene. St. Matthew names two of them, and we see by St. Luke that there were a large number there. But all this agrees very well. For Mary Magdalene did the leading, and the other Mary is here named explicitly because she followed most closely. Meanwhile, several have come to anoint the body of our Lord

Jesus, but notably it is here said that they have come to see the sepulcher to know if there would be access and entrance. That is why two are here specially marked.

St. Matthew adds that the angel appeared to them while the two were there. But because only one spoke the word, that is why he is thus specially named. Finally as they go away, they meet our Lord Jesus Who sends them to His disciples in order that all may be assembled in Galilee, wishing to show them there His resurrection, and this, because the city of Jerusalem had deprived itself by its wickedness from such a testimony. True it is that the Fountain of Life was still there, for out of it proceeded the Law and the Word of God, but meanwhile our Lord Jesus did not wish to reveal Himself to His disciples in that city, when the wickedness was still so recent there. On the other hand, He also wished to conform to their hardness of heart. For they were, as it were, seized with astonishment so that the sense of sight would not have been enough unless He had taken them apart, and had shown Himself in such a way that they would have been fully convinced.

Now we see again here how the women who are named are not yet permitted to worship our Lord Jesus Christ as their Master, although they were troubled by His death. Consequently, we can well judge that the Word of God was always implanted in their hearts. For although their faith was feeble, they seek our Lord Jesus at the sepulcher. There is also in them a certain ignorance which cannot be excused. For they should already have raised their spirits on high, waiting for the resurrection which had been promised them — to which the third day was especially assigned. They were, then, so occupied that they did not understand the principal thing — namely, that our Lord Jesus had to obtain victory over death to acquire for us life and salvation. I say that is the principal thing, because without it the Gospel would be nothing (as says St. Paul) and our faith would be entirely destroyed.

Thus these poor women, however much they may know the Gospel which has been preached to them to be the pure truth, nevertheless, are so troubled and confused that they do not understand that He was to rise, and thus they come to the sepulcher with their aromatic ointments. There is, then, a fault which is to be condemned. But their service is none-the-less agreeable to God, for He excuses their astonishment until He has corrected them. In that let us see when our Lord approves what we do, still we must not put that to our credit to say that we have merited it, while, altogether on the contrary, it is of His abundant grace if He acknowledges that which was not worthy to be offered to Him. For there will always be occasion to condemn our works when God examines them strictly, forasmuch as they will always be tainted with some spot. But God spares us and does not refuse what we come to offer Him, whatever weakness or fault there may be, seeing that all is purified by faith and we know that it is not without cause that we are acceptable to Him in Jesus Christ. This, then, we have to observe.

However, let us recognize also that there surely must have been another fragrance, much better, much stronger, in the sepulcher of our Lord Jesus Christ, than that of these ointments of which mention is made. We have already mentioned that the Jews were accustomed to anoint the body in order to be confirmed in the hope of the resurrection and of the heavenly life. It was to show that the bodies do not decay to such an extent that they cannot be preserved until the last day, and so that God may restore them. But the body of our Lord Jesus Christ had to be exempt from all such decay. Now the spices could not effect that, but, because it had been declared that God would not suffer that His Holy and Godly One should see corruption, that is why by a miracle our Lord Jesus has been preserved from all decay. Besides, because he has been exempt from corruption, we are now certain and assured of the glory of the resurrection, which has already appeared to us in His Person. We see, then, now, that the fragrance of the sepulcher and of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has permeated even to us, so that we may become alive by it. Now what follows? That we may go no longer to look at the sepulcher as these women, by whose ignorance and weakness we are served, but that we may soar upward, since He calls us and invites us there, since He has shown us the way, and He has declared to us that He has entered into possession of His heavenly Kingdom to prepare us a room and a place there when by faith we shall find Him there.

So then, let us realize the unity that we have with our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, He is willing to have a common life with us, and that what He has may be ours, even that He wishes to dwell in us, not in imagination, but in fact; not in an earthly, but in a spiritual manner; and in any case, that He so works by the power of His Holy

Spirit that we are united to Him more than are the members of a body. And just as the root of a tree sends its substance and its power through all the branches, so we draw substance and life from our Lord Jesus Christ. And that is also why St. Paul says that our Paschal Lamb has been crucified and sacrificed, so nothing more now remains but that we keep the feast and that we take part in the sacrifice. And as in old time in the Law when the sacrifice was offered they ate, now also we must come and take our meat and spiritual food in this Sacrifice which has been offered for our redemption. It is true that we do not devour Jesus Christ in His flesh, He does not enter us under our teeth, as the papists have imagined, but we receive bread as a sure and infallible token that our Lord Jesus feeds us spiritually with His body; we receive a drop of wine to show that we are spiritually sustained by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. But let us observe well what St. Paul adds, that just as under the figures of the Law it was not permitted to eat bread that was leavened and of which the dough was bitter, now that we are no longer under such shadows, we must put away the leaven of malice, of wickedness and of all our corruption's, and have bread or cake (says he) which has no bitterness in it. And how? In purity and sincerity. When, then, we come to approach this Holy Table, by which the Son of God shows us that He is our meat, that He gives Himself to us as our full and entire nourishment, and He wishes that now we participate in the sacrifice which He has once for all offered for our salvation, we must see to it that we do not bring to it our corruption's and pollution's to be mixed with it but that we renounce them, and seek only to be fully purified, so that our Lord Jesus may own us as members of His body, and that by this means also we may be partakers of His life. That is how today we must make use of this Holy Supper which is prepared for us. That is, that it may lead us to the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then to His resurrection, and that we may be so assured of life and salvation, as by the victory which He has obtained in rising from the dead righteousness is given to us, and the gate of paradise has been opened to us, so that we may boldly approach our God, and offer ourselves before Him, knowing that always He will receive us as His children.

Now we shall bow in humble reverence before the majesty of our God.

I Know He Is Risen

Kaitlin Atmore

Last Easter was the first time I heard the phrase, 'He is Risen!' and its response, 'He is risen indeed!' It was the first time my Dad had ever heard the response given to it. He greeted the Sunday school class with, 'He is Risen!' and to his surprise everyone appropriately replied – He is Risen indeed! Dad remained composed. I, on the other hand, sat there dumbfounded with my jaw hitting the floor and my eyes popped out of their sockets. As the shock wore off, I thought of how funny it would have been had someone said that to me earlier. I would have simply replied, 'I know'.

At Easter time we celebrate Jesus risen from the dead. Many people are reminded of new beginnings, especially with the arrival of spring close to Easter Sunday (which, by the way, doesn't work in the Southern Hemisphere). New beginnings are good but they have to follow an end. Jesus' Resurrection was a new beginning. His death was an end to our sin.

Jesus' death was not quick and clean. It was long, agonizing, gory and shameful. In crucifixion, seven-inch iron spikes were hammered into the wrists, (Thomas refers to his hands in John 20:25, and so there is uncertainty as to the precise location – either the hand or wrist joining the hand). The nails through the Lord's hands and feet caused incredible pain whichever way He moved. The body was positioned on the cross in such a way that the lungs couldn't fill with air, ultimately resulting in suffocation. Jesus was scourged before He was crucified. Scourging alone was enough to kill someone and wasn't usually done in addition to crucifixion. It consisted of several whippings on the back with a leather strap containing pieces of bone and metal which ripped open the flesh and caused much bleeding. Jesus wore a crown of thorns. It wasn't placed daintily on His brow, but was used for mocking Him as King of the Jews. It was pressed firmly into His head making deep, bleeding cuts.

The Lord Jesus suffered all this, so we wouldn't have to. He made the ultimate sacrifice on a cross fulfilling the holy and sovereign purpose of God. It wasn't the nails alone that held our Savior to the cross, it was our sin. While He hung there our debt didn't increase, it was paid for in full.

Jesus died. He died indeed. But He is Risen and that... I KNOW!

“Whenever you meet a Christian, he or she is going to heaven.”
William Gurnall

For Whom Is The Sabbath? (Mark 2:23 – 28)

Russ Atmore

Scripture

Mark 2:23 – 28

Key Verse

“So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” Mark 2:28

Theme

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and the Sabbath is for us.

Exposition

Of all issues relating to the Moral Law of God, it seems as though the 4th commandment causes the most difficulty in interpretation. There are those who say that the Sabbath Day belongs to the Old Testament and is therefore not binding on New Testament believers. There are those who say that the Sabbath Day in the Old Testament is now called the Lord's Day in the New Testament due to the Lord being raised from the dead on Sunday. Among those who hold this view, there are differing views as to how the Day should be celebrated. The stipulation of the Sabbath in the Old Testament does not pertain to the New Testament, we are told. Then there are those who say it is relevant and obligatory and so back and forth go the arguments. There are even those who say nothing has changed and that the Sabbath Day remains in force for the Church (The Seventh-Day Adventists and others hold this view). What is apparent when you read the New Testament, is that the Pharisees had added a long list of do's and don'ts to Sabbath observance thus obscuring and hindering God's true design and intention for the day.

First of all, the view one takes of the Moral Law (the Ten Commandments) is going to have great impact upon our view of the Sabbath or Lord's Day. It does not need to be said that the Moral Law is simply a reflection of

the Divine character of God and therefore unchangeable, since God is unchangeable. If this is true, and I believe it is, then the Moral Law is always binding on us.

The Sabbath was instituted by God at creation. In this, it is unlike the other nine commandments. Like marriage, observing one day in seven is a creation ordinance. It therefore, at the start stands above the Fall of Man, and must be regarded as something good for our benefit, and something as obedience to God if kept and observed (Gen. 2:2, 3).

When God instructed Israel to keep the Sabbath Day, He attached the reason of salvation to it as a reason to keep it. Israel were to never forget that there had been a time when they were slaves in Egypt and that God had redeemed them (Deut. 5:12 – 15).

When the disciples walked through the grain field on the Sabbath Day (vs. 23), and picked some of the grain (see Deut. 23:25), this was viewed by the Pharisees as work (the act of reaping, vs. 24). Reaping was obviously working, and thus since it was the Sabbath Day, it was unlawful. In this they were correct. In order to avoid being charged as being indifferent to the Law, (if Jesus had ignored the Pharisees, or out rightly treated them as being petty) He countered their statement with a question of His own (vs. 25).

He refers to 1 Samuel 21:1 – 6, where David entered the house of the Lord and ate the bread which was only to be eaten by the priests of God. David obviously did something unlawful, yet God never rebuked or judged him for what he had done.

Jesus mentions “*in the days of Abiathar, the high priest*” (vs. 26), which it is difficult to understand because Ahimelech was the high priest when this event in 1 Samuel 21 occurred. It is possible to read this as, “*in the days when Abiathar was priest*” as being a general kind of statement which the Jews were liable to do in their Writings (see Mark 12:26). Abiathar proved to be more prominent than Ahimelech whom he succeeded.

Jesus introduces what David did as proof that the Sabbath Day was made by God for the benefit and blessing of man (vs. 27). The Sabbath brought untold blessings to the person who observed it. It provided rest from work, and it enhanced the abilities of individuals to work in the new week. Rest provides strength and recovery. The Sabbath was not intended to restrict man nor to make him feel as if he was some sort of fatalistic robot who has to observe or else. This is why the Puritans referred to Sunday as the market day of the soul. The benefits in keeping one day in seven were great.

The Sabbath Day forbade work in Exodus 20:8 – 11 for the simple reason that God has set apart one day in seven for rest. Israel was required to remember the Sabbath Day (they would be inclined as we are, to forget it and work). Human need takes precedence over ceremonial laws, which is why acts of mercy are recommended on the Sabbath Day. No Israelite would leave his donkey or ox in a pit on the Sabbath Day – he would work to help the beast out of its dilemma. God accepted this as right and legitimate.

It is possible to read into the passage that when Jesus mentions David and the legitimate use he enjoyed over the divinely appointed use of the Bread of the Presence, that Jesus is pointing to the fact that he as David's greater Son, has sovereign right over the Sabbath. This is seen from His statement in verse 28 – the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. Authority over the Sabbath and its activities is the Lord's by right, (not the Pharisees nor ours). The benefits and blessings are ours.

Application

Evangelical Christians, by and large, do not have a high view of the Lord's Day. We agree that we must worship God and enjoy fellowship with each other, but we also want to do what we want. If we have work to do, we do it on Sunday. All kinds of sports now take place on Sunday. Shopping Malls allow shopping on Sunday.

The list is endless, and yet when you discuss these things as a change indicating decline, we acknowledge this, but continue to do the very things we say are a manifestation of decline. That seems to me an interpretation of the Lord's Day in the same vein as the Pharisees view of the Sabbath. What I argue for here is simply that the

Lord's Day is for our good, not our pleasure. I have six other days for my pleasure (and good), but the principle of setting apart one day for rest is the issue. Rest is good and brings blessing in life. We complain that we don't have more time, yet God gave us exactly 24 hour days in a 7 day week, based on the example of His work in the beginning. One of those days, however, is a day for rest and in using it in this way, we honor God and He blesses those who Honor Him. Worship on the Lord's Day is not work (contrary to what many think), it is a privilege and responsibility. Let's use the Lord's Day for his glory. If you view every day the same (Rom. 14:5; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16), this can really only be in respect of the ceremonial aspects of it (food and drink, etc), but the aspect of rest as divinely instituted can never be done away with – it is a reflection of God's character, and we must never forget that since Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, He is also Lord of the Lord's Day.

“The soul is the life of the body. Faith is the life of the soul. Christ is the life of faith.”

John Flavel

Bible Quiz

Kaitlin Atmore

S R S W S E F S S D I
R E N H D B N I G A E
I B A I S N G N G B L
S M E T U U I R M M S
E D S E F K A A A L U
N R D A F C L N L V S
O S P R E C I O U S E
R T P A R A D I S E J
H E A L I N G O A V G
T D G R N S R L S O R
O F S P G C D O O L B

Solve the Word Search Hymns & Choruses

- O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me,
When by His _____ I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.*
- Christ, the Lord, is _____ today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply, Alleluia!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal, Alleluia!
Christ hath burst the gates of hell, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids His rise, Alleluia!
Christ hath opened _____, Alleluia!

3. *Up from the _____ He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

4. Jesus, keep me near the _____,
There a precious fountain
Free to all, a _____ stream
Flows from Calvary's mountain

5. What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the _____ of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Oh! _____ is the flow
That makes me _____ as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

6. *I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story of _____ and His _____*

7. Crown Him with many crowns, the _____ upon His _____
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who _____ for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless _____ through all eternity.

8. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of _____ and _____;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was _____

*“Take heed of secret sins. They will undo you if loved and
maintained.”*

Jeremiah Burroughs