

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 16

July 2008

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THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN

Jim D Gray

Luke 17: 22-33; 22: 52-54; 23: 1, 20-25, 33, 34, 39-43

I want to speak about the days of the Son of man. I might read other passages earlier in Luke's gospel as we proceed. There was never a time like this in the earth's history, when there was One here called the Son of man. For the young people, the Son of man is the Lord Jesus, and His life was made up of days. That thought came to me this morning in giving thanks for the emblems. The earth never saw anything like this before, the days in which Jesus went about, known as the Son of man. He has a kingdom and He is going to come in His kingdom. There is still His day to come, "thus shall the Son of man be in his day", that is a day to come. The Son of man was here, and He moved amongst men and largely was despised. Luke tells us much about the days of the Son of man. I cannot go into it all but as you look through the pages of his Gospel you will find that. I think he tells us more about the days of the Son of man, or the days of Jesus, than any other gospel writer. He makes this matter interesting, the days of the Son of man. The Son of man will come again, not in humiliation, but here He was a lowly Man, Jesus the Nazarene. He rose in the morning, and He listened with His ear to what His God would tell Him to do, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed", Is 50: 4. His days were directed; every day He was in the liberty of sonship with His Father. Happy communion it was as He moved amongst men, taking account of the situation that man was in. He could compass what no one else could compass. He felt for man. The Lord Jesus as the Son of man was a Stranger. He was a Man of another kind, of another order. He was "the second man, out of heaven". 1 Cor 15: 47. He did not belong to Adam's race. He was born of a woman, but she was the vehicle used to bring Him into this world. Man had no part in it.

Luke tells us about one of the days of the Son of man. In chapter 5 verse 17 it says, "And it came to pass on one of the days, that *he* was teaching, and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judaea and out of Jerusalem; and the Lord's power was there to heal them". No matter what your standing in this world is, you need healing. There they were, Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, "and the Lord's

power was there to heal them". They did not get the gain of it. It was one of the days of the Son of man, and they despised Him. There was a poor paralytic man, "And lo, men bringing upon a couch a man who was paralysed; and they sought to bring him in, and put him before him", Jesus. "And not finding what way to bring him in" they went up on the housetop and opened the tiles and let him down, and he got the blessing, verses 19-24. The Lord says, "Days are coming, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man", Luke 17 v 22. Here they were. The Lord's power was there to heal them, that was to heal the doctors of the law and the Pharisees, but they despised Him and this poor man got the blessing. He got blessing on one of the days of the Son of man; it is a sample day. What does he get? The Lord healed him physically, but also he forgave him his sins. In verse 20 He says, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee", and in verse 24-26, "I say to thee, Arise, and take up thy little couch and go to thine house. And immediately standing up before them, having taken up that whereon he was laid, he departed to his house, glorifying God. And astonishment seized all, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day". The Lord Jesus says, "that ye may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins", v 24. For it had said, "And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason in their minds, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who is able to forgive sins but God alone? But Jesus, knowing their reasonings, answering said to them, Why reason ye in your hearts? which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?", v 20-23. What was easier for the Lord to say, friend? It was easier for Him to say, "Rise up and walk" than to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee". Why? Because the Scriptures tell us that to forgive sins the Son of man was "made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death", Heb 2: 9. He had to go into death to forgive sins. That was one of the days of the Son of man.

There was another one. There are several in the book but I will not refer to them all. In Luke 8 the disciples were with Him in the boat, "And it came to pass on one of the days, that *he* entered into a ship, himself and his disciples; and he said to them, Let us pass over to the other side of the lake ... And as they sailed, he fell asleep; and a sudden squall of wind came down on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in danger; and coming to him they woke him up, saying, Master, master, we perish. But he, rising up, rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he

said to them, Where is your faith? And, being afraid, they were astonished, saying to one another, Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?", v 22-25. The Son of man, a demonstration of His power, "Who then is this?" Have you and I got respect for the Son of man? There was no time like this on the earth, with this blessed Person, known as the Son of man, taking account of man in all his needs. A lonely Man, taking account of man, going around Galilee and Judaea. Somebody said that He never wrote a book, yet He is remembered by millions who have come to Him as their Saviour, the Son of man. Now it says here, "Days are coming, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it". That would be on account of His crucifixion. They cut Him off. Then it says, "And they will say to you, Lo here, or Lo there; go not, nor follow them. For as the lightning shines which lightens from one end under heaven to the other end under heaven, thus shall the Son of man be in his day." When is that going to take place? Scripture is very interesting. There have already been two thousand years between the cutting off and the coming again of the Son of man. I was struck in reading Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah hath anointed me to announce glad tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God", chap 61: 2. "To proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah", and then there is a comma, "and the day of vengeance of our God". There have been already two thousand years between those statements. The Lord stopped when He preached the gospel as given in chapter 4 of Luke's gospel at "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord", v 19. It is very remarkable, because if you notice the construction of this passage, there is a semi-colon before it and a semi-colon after "our God"; but "the acceptable year of Jehovah," "and the day of vengeance of our God" are only separated by a comma. But divine Persons had in mind about two thousand years of grace, "the acceptable year of the Lord". The Lord Jesus is saying here, 'The day of the Son of man is coming'. It is a future day. So there was a day when He was here, one of the days of the Son of man when He was available to mankind, when He was still in flesh and blood condition, going about. The works of power of the age to come were taking place. Things that will take place in the millennial day, you might say, were taking place and persons were being healed. The man with the withered hand was healed, the paralytic man was

healed. Persons were healed and demons were cast out of them. Chapter 8 of this gospel brings out certain women who followed him; they had been healed, v 2. What a time it was! It says, "And it came to pass afterwards that *he* went through the country city by city, and village by village, preaching and announcing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with him, and certain women who had been healed of wicked spirits and infirmities, Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered to him of their substance. And a great crowd coming together ...", Luke 8: 1-4. These were the days of the Son of man.

I want to speak about the Lord's sufferings before I come back to speak of the matters that come up in this section in chapter 17. A day came when the Lord Jesus says in chapter 22, "When I was day by day with you in the temple ye did not stretch out your hands against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness". You recall that when He preached the gospel in Luke 4 in Nazareth they were going to take Him and cast Him over the brow of the hill on which their city was placed, but He walked through their midst and they could not take Him, v 30. But here the Son of man is taken; the Ark goes into captivity, to use an Old Testament expression. He says, "but this is your hour and the power of darkness". It was their hour and the power of darkness, but it was God's hour too. The Son of man, made a little lower than angels on account of the suffering of death, was going into death. I want you to consider the submission of Christ. It says, "And having laid hold on him, they led him away, and they led him into the house of the high priest". There was no resistance. Man's malicious ways were going to work out God's thoughts and God's ways. The Son of man was going into death. It says, "And the whole multitude of them, rising up, led him to Pilate", another step in the humiliation of the Son of man. What a Person He is! The Son of man whom "thou visitest", Ps 8: 4. God took account of the Son of man every day. This was the final day. It says in verse 66, "And when it was day". God is with Him. "And the whole multitude of them, rising up, led him to Pilate". Then you get that section where Pilate realised He was innocent; He was not guilty. Yet he assented to the desire to crucify Christ, crucify the Son of man. It says they would desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, but their opportunity on one of those days had gone. What a time it was, the life of Jesus here. It had never been seen before and would never, in that sense, be seen again. These persons, the Pharisees and the

priesthood of Israel, were envious of the Lord Jesus.. But He is submissive. So Pilate delivers Him up to their will. Their will was going to accomplish what God had in mind, but they will be held responsible for it. "They led him away" (v 26), and they laid hold of a Cyrenian to carry His cross. The Lord Jesus says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". What were they doing? This blessed Person was going forward to take up the matter of sins. The Son of man must suffer. That is what He says in chapter 17, before the day comes when He comes again, "But first he must suffer many things and be rejected of this generation", v 25. He suffered and was rejected of this generation. What a spirit was there in the Lord Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". They sneered at Him, they mocked Him, but one man laid hold of his opportunity. I want to say that, lay hold of your opportunity today. There is an opportunity, an opportunity to lay hold of Christ as your Saviour. It is an opportunity to put matters right with God. One man laid hold of his opportunity. One man knew that he was dying. He was on a cross beside Jesus. There were two malefactors and one rebuked Him. They both reproached Him at one point; the other gospels tell us that, they both reproached Him. I really value Luke's gospel for this. He brings in what the others do not bring in, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". I think that broke this man down - that is my personal impression. When he heard the Lord Jesus say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", he realised there was another kind of Man here. He laid hold of his opportunity. Lay hold of your opportunity to put matters right with the Lord. Lay hold of Him now. This man laid hold of Him and he says, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom". Where did he get that from? You wonder about it. The malefactor, he was a robber and a murderer possibly too, and he says, "we indeed justly, for we receive the just recompense of what we have done; but this man has done nothing amiss". He must have been convicted, I think, by the Lord's statement. No other person on a cross would ever have said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", because they were responsible for putting Him there. This man had light, and he says, "this man has done nothing amiss. And he said to Jesus, Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him ... To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise". The Lord can cause you to receive light at any time. I think the confession "this man has done nothing amiss" made way for God to give this man light in the last moments of his life here of the fact that there was another kingdom

coming. The Son of man was going to come in His kingdom and he wanted to be with Him. If you want to be with the Lord Jesus in His coming kingdom you have to accept Him as your Saviour, lay hold of your opportunity.

I want to show you from chapter 17 that God has always considered for man with what you would call grace. "And as it took place in the days of Noe, thus also shall it be in the days of the Son of man: they ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all of them". Is that not the world that we live in? Are you going on with that world? Am I going to go on with that world and disregarding the gospel? The gospel is going forth in the world. It concerns the Son of man. It concerns the One who said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". It concerns the One who bore the awful judgement of God on the cross, the One who died, the One who was buried and raised again. But men go on. They did it in Noah's day. Noah built his ark. He laid the keel, built the sides, and finished it. He built that ark every day. He built it for a hundred and twenty years and he preached righteousness, 2 Pet 2: 5. He told them he was building it for a place of salvation that they could have come into, and they laughed and they mocked at him till the day the door was shut; then it was hopeless. The flood came and destroyed all of them. Eight souls were saved. Think of that, eight souls out of a whole world of men and women. How many there were we do not know, but there was a population on the earth that was all destroyed, yet God gave every one of them the opportunity to listen to Noah and his preaching. He has given us the opportunity to listen to the gospel, to accept Christ as our Saviour. When He comes again the gospel is finished,

Then grace no more will say

"Yet there is room!"

(Hymn 70)

Then again, the Lord says, "in the days of Lot" - Lot lived in Abraham's day. He gave up his pastoral, nomadic life to become a magistrate in the city of Sodom, and he sat in the gate of Sodom and had influence there. God was concerned about the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. He heard about it in heaven. The scripture speaks about certain sins rising up to God in heaven in the Revelation (18: 5), but He says, "I will go down now, and see", Gen 18: 21. God came down in Christ to see the state of things in the world. The day of grace still continues. He came down in Lot's day. And He went to see

the city of Sodom, and Abraham interceded for that city because he knew Lot was there, but the people would not listen. Will you listen? Men and women around us do not listen; sometimes they do not. All the signs in this country at the present time are that man has little room for anything of God in his life. It is the character of things at the present time. The Lord says, "they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded"; it all went on till on "the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from heaven, and destroyed all of them: after this manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed". What a warning! The world is going to go on the way it is. There is not going to be any dramatic intervention from the divine side to show the Lord is about to come. The secret of the rapture is in the heart of believers. Men and governments will endeavour to explain away the rapture once it takes place. Thereafter is the public appearing of the Lord Jesus, and what follows then is judgement. Thank God for the day of grace, but be warned. I say to you again, how fair God is. He warns persons. He warned them in the day of Noah. What a world it was, a world of violence and corruption. The angels joined up with mankind. There were heroes and giants in those days. God had to remove them. But there was an opportunity for persons to listen to Noah's preaching. In the days of Lot, God went down into Sodom and He laid hold of Lot and extricated him, but all those who remained perished, Gen 19: 16, 25. You do not want to perish, do you? God has come down in Christ, which is far greater than what He did in Abraham's day. "That whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal", John 3: 16. God has in mind another sphere of life for every man. He "desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth", 1 Tim 2: 4. And then He says in Luke 17, "Remember the wife of Lot". Would you look back? Are you going to look back, back to the world you have been delivered from? She looked back to Sodom and became a pillar of salt, a testimony to the fact that her heart was there, Gen 19: 26. She had been taken out but her heart was there, "Remember the wife of Lot". Then He says, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose it shall preserve it". That is a conundrum. It means that the believer who loses his life for Christ's sake shall save it. If you lose your life in this world for Christ's sake, that is, that you accept the way of reproach, identification with the lowly Nazarene, accept Him as your Saviour, you will not be of much account in this world, but you will be preserved for another world. Whereas if you go on with this world, and

do not heed the gospel, "whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it"; the day will come when grace no more will say, 'Yet there is room!'.

May the Lord attract every heart here to lay hold of Him as their Saviour, remembering the patience of God. For two thousand years He has gone on. "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some account of delay, but is longsuffering" (2 Pet 3: 9), desiring that men should be saved. That is His object. I thank God for that. The heart of the believer is desirous of Christ to come, awaiting the coming of the Son of man, no longer the lowly Nazarene but coming in the clouds with His saints, coming with His saints, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Revelation 19: 14 brings that out. That is the One who will come, "the Son of man coming ... with power and great glory", (Matt 24: 30) to take up the reins of government, held for that blessed Man who stood before Pilate. Pilate was afraid. He knew there was a personality there that was greater than what he could see but he yielded, and is responsible for yielding, to the claims of those who desired the crucifixion of Christ. In the ways of God and the wisdom of God the Son of man had to go that way although men are responsible for what they did to Him. But the day of the Son of man is coming. The days of the Son of man as He was on earth are finished. "As the lightning shines which lightens from one end under heaven to the other end under heaven, thus shall the Son of man be in his day". There will be no doubt regarding His coming.

May the Lord bless the word to each soul here. For His Name's sake.

Buckie

11th February 2007

HEIRS

Andrew Martin

Hebrews 1: 1-4

Psalms 2: 7-9

Romans 8: 16, 17

Ephesians 1: 10-14

Hebrews 11: 8-10

I desire to speak about heirs and what is inherited; the inheritance. The scriptures speak a good deal of inheritance and of those who inherit. And it is indeed a subject with which all of us are quite familiar. Generally, an inheritance is obtained upon the death of somebody, and in man's eyes the greatness of the inheritance may be an index of the social standing of a person. Certainly it indicates something of the disposition of the one who bequeathed that inheritance. Normally the inheritance goes to a son; it may go to the firstborn son. That is a thought that we find in scripture, is it not, that the inheritance really belongs to the son? You remember that Abraham was in deep exercise before God. He says, "I have no son, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus", Gen 15: 2. Think of poor Abraham, all that he had acquired; the massive riches that he had acquired, the wealth and greatness of his possessions; and he says to God, 'I have no son, no one to whom I can leave all this. It is going to go to a Syrian', "the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus". God had an answer to that, and God's answer came on the line of promise. It did not come through the working out of natural reasoning, it came on the line of promise. God had one Man before Him. God had one Man before Him right from the outset.

We read here in Hebrews about One by whom God made the worlds, the very creation - the worlds. I take it that that embraces the whole physical creation; and in making the worlds, God had in mind to create a place where He could set men with a testimony to His glory, and present Christ to them, present His own Son. And so we have in this scripture here the greatness of Christ. "God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son". Think of the speaking of the Son! He came into the creation that He had made - "whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the

worlds". You see the skill of the Holy Spirit in presenting to the writer here the glories of Jesus. It is manifest that He could not be referred to as Heir other than as Man, because God could not inherit anything, for He is the source of everything; and yet, "by whom also he made the worlds" - you see the greatness and the skill of the Holy Spirit here: the One who made the worlds came into them as a Man. Oh, what majesty there is in that, beloved! Think of it! Think of the greatness of the incoming of Jesus, coming into this scene, this scene that He had created. It is almost as if you can think of a divine Person rising up and going forward and coming into this very scene.

Forth from the regions of light unapproachable,
Leaving the heights that no mortal can ken.
Emptying Himself for the pathway of service,
Jesus is found in the likeness of men.

(G H Stuart Price, 1941)

What greatness, that there was One who could dwell in that light unapproachable, His own sphere, and in glorious majesty He could come forth, leaving those heights that no mortal can ken, come into this world and be seen here and known here, and be acknowledged by some as the Son. It brings out the greatness of His Person, the Son, known in manhood. He has spoken to us in the Person of the Son; the Man who was here was none other than Himself. The Son, "whom He has established heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds". The One who created the worlds, the earth and the heavens and everything that we can take account of; He created it all. He made all things, yet He is the Heir of all things. As Man He inherits everything that, as God, He created - He inherits it all as Man. Think of the greatness of One such as that! God has established Him in that way. You might say that God has issued a decree 'This is my heir, this is my Son'; He inherits all things. "By him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth ... whether thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities" (Col 1: 16), all things have their being through Him. That is the greatness of His divine Person, and as a Man He inherits it all. What an object! an object for our affections to take account of. We could not take account of Him in such a way had He remained in deity - all would have been simply unapproachable. He has come into manhood. He has been made known as Son and, as having come into manhood, He is Heir of all things. He relinquished nothing by coming into manhood, though for a time He laid His glory by,

yet, absolutely, He relinquished nothing. We often quote those words of Mr William Johnson, 'He never ceased to be what He was, by reason of what He became, but *He was perfect in what He became*' - how great! How great such a One is! He never ceased to be what He was but He "emptied Himself", Phil 2: 7. You remember that we get that beautiful picture in John 13. Jesus rises from supper and lays aside His garments; and there, beloved, He served His own by washing their feet. What a picture that is of the One who came down, 'leaving those heights that no mortal can ken, emptying Himself for the pathway of service - Jesus was found in the likeness of men'. I have been affected by those words. They were written by a young brother, one who served Him, at 29 years old. Think of what an impression he had of One who came forth from that light unapproachable, here to serve men; but the greatness of that One remains.

There are three chapters in the Bible that we often refer to that bring out the greatness of the Lord Jesus: John 1, Colossians 1 and Hebrews 1. In John 1, we find an only begotten in the bosom of the Father; in Colossians 1, we find the One who was the firstborn; and in Hebrews, we find that He is the Heir. Think of the greatness of One to whom God could commit all things! He is the Heir of all things. Now, that is going to be seen in the coming day. I read in Psalm 2 where the psalmist speaks of what God has done, "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; / this day have begotten thee." How great that was, the greatness of the incarnation! "Ask of me," he says, "and I will give thee nations for an inheritance". That will be seen in a day to come when His power will be manifested, when the church has gone to be with Christ, and the terrible times come upon the earth and a godly remnant of Israel will come to light, and they will acknowledge the wrong, the wickedness of what they did in rejecting their King. They will look for His return, and they will take account of Him with broken hearts, there with the marks of His wounds. They will look for His coming but God says, "Ask of me, and I will give thee nations for an inheritance". The influence of Jesus will spread across the whole earth, the whole world will be full of His glory; Isaiah anticipates that, the earth will be full of His glory, Is 6: 3. How wonderful that is! What a contrast to the poor world we live in, a day when the whole earth will be full of His glory; and that glory will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, Hab 2: 14. It will be His glory, His glory will shine out over His inheritance. God says "Ask of me, and I will give thee nations as an inheritance" - why? Because He is morally equal for it

and it is right that it should be His. What a glory will be seen in that day. I believe, beloved, something of that is to be anticipated today. I believe that it is to be known even today. We take account of one another, and I suppose most of us have come from what the scriptures refer to as the nations, those who had no claim upon God, no relationship with Him. The gospel has gone out where the Gentiles were and hearts have been subdued and souls have received the Lord Jesus. You might say He has an inheritance among the nations today? He has it in His assembly. Is that not a wonderful thing to take account of, that there are hearts that make way for Him? There are hearts which are bound to Him, that acknowledge His greatness, acknowledge His own rights. Is every heart here amongst those? Are your heart and mine among those who not only accept Him as a Saviour but bow to Him? I am sure everyone here knows what it is to have to do to Him because of our sins. If any one has not, I urge you, dear friend, you have got no time to lose. You have to do with Him, and I say this, that every soul will do with Him, and it is better to do with Him now as a Saviour. But has your heart bowed to Him, has it owned that He has a right over you? He has an undisputed right over your life and over everything that you do. Christ has a right over you. If He is your Saviour He has a special right. He has a right because He is your Creator, but He has a special right because He is your Redeemer, and, beloved, what a blessing there is in bowing the knee to Jesus and owning Him as Lord and seeking to be here for Him. It is part of His inheritance, it is what He has secured. You might say, can we really speak about it as an inheritance for Jesus? Now, indeed we can! In fact the scripture even speaks about God's inheritance, and God's inheritance, the scripture tells us in Ephesians, is in the saints. It is in the saints, it is what God has secured, chap 1: 18.

I have been speaking about the Lord Jesus, and we love to speak about Jesus, but in Romans the apostle is speaking about what we have. For everyone who believes, and has their faith in Jesus, and owns Him as Lord, and has received the gift of the Holy Spirit - without which we can never be found pleasing to Him - there is a testimony and a witness. "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." Peter tells us that we have been born again, 1 Pet 1: 23. That is different from being born anew in John 3, but we have been born by the living and abiding word of God. That is, that through God's word, and your acceptance of His word, and your embracing through faith that His word is true and right, and your having bowed to it, there is something in your soul which God can identify as entirely of Himself. It

was a great day for me when I realised that there is something in the soul which is entirely of God. It can never be damaged, it can never be broken down, and God is entitled to look at you as if that precious work was all that there is of you. God is entitled to look at you in that way. How wonderful! The Holy Spirit links on with that and He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. It is because of this great work that has gone on in the soul, which we may not understand when it first takes place, that the Spirit is bearing witness with us that we belong to a family, and it is the family of God. Now that is not a very small company; who can say how many the children of God are? The coming day will declare it, there are myriads of them. The Spirit bears witness with us through it that we are children of God. Then the apostle goes on, he says, "if children" - it is not just having a part in the family, you see. You think of families and you think of our relations together, how you get on and all that sort of thing, but there is more to it. God has more in mind: if children, *heirs also*. In other words, you have been brought into this family and you are going to inherit something. You have something to inherit. You might say, 'how is that coming', it is "heirs of God". All the blessing that is in the heart of God! He goes on, "and Christ's joint heirs". Now that is what I would like you to take away - *Christ's joint heirs*. Everything that the Lord Jesus inherits in heavenly glory, in heavenly blessing, is yours as well. You might say 'but it is His! and He has inherited it, He has inherited it on the basis of worth,' Yes, but it is yours - *Christ's joint heirs*. Is that not a blessed thing to take account of? All that Christ enjoys, all that He has in the presence of God, the Father's love, the Father's heart, His links with the Father, all that He has (and all that He has is what speaks to Himself), that is all for you, it is all for me. Is that not blessed? *Christ's joint heirs*. So there is the One who inherits everything; He is the Heir of all things; that is, all things are committed to Him, the greatness of that blessed One, but He is now in glory in the Father's presence and we are joint heirs with Christ. Joint heirs - that is our inheritance! There is nothing small about our inheritance, nothing diminished, nothing reduced, Christ's joint heirs. Well, you say, 'Where do you see it?'. The apostle goes on and he just mentions "if indeed we suffer with him", that is the character of the day in which we are - "that we may also be glorified with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us" v 17, 18. You say, 'Well, in that case, is my inheritance something which is a long way off?' Well, physically it might be, if you had a relative in Australia who left you

large estates, it would do you no good at all unless you could go out there and see them, or administer them, or at least get some income from them. But the believer can enjoy his inheritance before he actually enters into it in finality.

In Ephesians we have a reference to the "Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance". Now the 'earnest' is an interesting word. It is not a word that we often use in everyday life - "the earnest of our inheritance". What the earnest means is not just that it is a reminder of our inheritance, not at all, the earnest is really part of the actual thing for our enjoyment. Some of us had a word on Tuesday night and a brother made a reference to the heavenly spies who went into the land. You will remember Moses sent in those spies and they came out laden with goods from the land, pomegranates and all manner of fruits and that great bunch of grapes as well, Num 13: 23. They came out laden with goods from the land - that is like the earnest. They might have said 'Look, this is the land, this is the product of it, this is it. If you go into the land this is what you will see, this is what you will enjoy, this is what will sustain you'. How much greater the Holy Spirit of promise who is the earnest of our inheritance, a divine Person Himself. I think you might say that the earnest is equal to the inheritance because our inheritance is the enjoyment of God Himself and our enjoyment of Christ in blessed and holy relationships.

Well, those two spies went into the land and it says in Numbers that they came to the city Hebron, Num 13: 22. The inheritance that you have is something which was in the heart of God before time was. You see, those men, and I take it all twelve of them had come out of Egypt - that land which, even in their day, was noted for its antiquities. Mr Evershed used to tell us that when Abraham went down to Egypt the pyramids would have been very old, even in his day. Egypt was noted for its antiquities, yet when they went into the land they found that there was something older than Egypt, that went back before Egypt. Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. Before the world was, before the foundation of the world, there was something that existed in the purpose of God. That is why we say Hebron speaks to us of God's purpose. It was founded before the world system. You know, one of those spies remembered Hebron - Caleb, forty-five years later, when they went into that land. They fought for it and then eventually, as if he could not wait any longer, Caleb went to Joshua and he said "I am this day eighty-five years old..... give me this mountain", Joshua 14: 10,12

He said, 'This is what my heart is set on, it is the purpose of God'. And Joshua gave him Hebron. He had seen that city, he knew that there was something that was far more stable than the whole world system, he knew that there was something that was established before anything of man existed and he said, 'That is where I want to live'. It is like a believer saying, 'I want to enjoy the purpose of God' and you know, the inheritance is what was in God's heart before time was, that is what it says here. It speaks about the Lord Jesus and the place He will be given, God will "head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon earth; in him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand" - beforehand - when was that? Before when? Before the foundation of the world. (The footnote to verse 5 will help you.) It was in God's heart, it was the purpose of God. Your eternal portion is something that was in God's heart before the foundation of the world. It is not an answer to the incoming of sin, it is not an answer to man's failure, it is what was in God's heart before the foundation of the world. Rest upon it, rest your soul upon that, that you have that which God had purposed before the foundation of the world, and you think of God's purpose to bring it to pass. It involved all His ways in grace. This section here is so full, but it just touches on certain things and it speaks about the Lord Jesus as the One "in whom we have redemption through His blood", verse 7. Think of it, that it should involve that, that the inheritance should be yours, that God should give up His own Son. He delivered Him up for us all, in order that we should gain our inheritance and in order that His purpose in relation to your inheritance and mine should be established. What a God we have to do with! How much it should make us desire then to enter into that inheritance, how much it should stimulate our affections, that we have this that was established before the world was, and the way to enter into it now is the Holy Spirit of promise who is the earnest of our inheritance. We need the Holy Spirit to enter in.

In Hebrews 11 we have something else, we have faith. You need to lay hold of it in faith. Abraham was called to go out and he went out. He was a great man in that city, a great city indeed. I believe it was a seat of learning and Abraham, as secular history tells us, had quite a prominent place in it. A great man indeed, and he had a word to go out and he obeyed God. He had faith, faith in God. Think of that! God's word can be taken without any discussion, without any argument. God's word can be taken and accepted. That is what faith does.

I work opposite a man who told me that he *will not* believe. I have heard this from others as well, he will not believe anything that cannot be proved. And when I said, 'So you do not believe that your wife loves you?' he said, 'Well, I do not know'. There are things we accept, but it is not just accepting things, but faith is acknowledging God's word, that it comes from God, without any questioning, and acting on it because it is God's word. That is what Abraham did. God said to him, 'Go out' from this place and leave your father's house' (Gen 12: 1) and he went out. "By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out, not knowing where he was going." Abraham owned very little of this earth. He bought a field to bury his dead, Gen 23. I think that was the only ground that he owned. He speaks to us of a man of faith, a man who walked here by faith knowing that this world was not for Him; He had another world. You say, 'How could Abraham have had a life like that?' "He waited for the city which has foundations of which God is the artificer and constructor." Abraham had seen many cities; he had seen the cities of Mesopotamia, he had seen the cities of the Philistines, he had seen the cities of Egypt and he had seen the danger that lay in all these cities - he was waiting for another city. What was the city that Abraham was waiting for? We get a description of that city, a detailed description of the city Abraham was waiting for in Revelation 21 and 22. You see that city which has foundations of which God is the artificer and constructor in all its glory. Abraham will have a place in that city; he will have a place there. You say 'I thought the heavenly city was the assembly?' Yes, but every heavenly family will have a place there. What a blessed sight we see in that chapter. "Her shining was like a most precious stone, as a crystal like jasper stone" Rev. 21: 11. The glory is there, shining out of that city. Why? Because it is God's handiwork. God is the artificer and constructor. I suppose the artificer reminds us of the skill that has gone into every bit of divine handiwork, every bit of divine workmanship. What skill has gone into that; and God is the constructor. Think of the greatness of what that city is. We have measurements in Revelation. We cannot take them literally; it is symbolic. If you were to take the measurements literally, you would see that the walls of the city were a thousand miles in each direction. Of course the whole thing is symbolic, because what God has constructed, in that sense, cannot be measured by man's standard. It cannot be measured according to men's measures. It speaks of a man's measure in relation to the city; that is one blessed Man, His

measure. The city is to be the expression of Christ Himself. Abraham was looking for this inheritance; he went out and all that time he walked in faith. Now faith is a wonderful thing. Without it, it is impossible to please God, verse 6. You cannot please God without it. That was the great problem in the wilderness for the children of Israel: when they heard the report of the land, they did not receive the word with faith. They heard about the enemies, and the great cities, and the fortifications and all that, and they said 'Oh no, we do not want it!' and God was angry with that and He said 'not one of those people who have rejected my testimony will go into that land, not one of them will go into that inheritance', Num 14: 22, 23. Two men went in who did not reject it. Without faith it is impossible to please God. But faith is not just a once only thing. We say 'Yes, I have faith in the Lord Jesus, and I have faith in His work, and I have faith in His precious blood'; that is wonderful, but these people in this chapter here, they *walked by faith*. It is a principle for every day, to *walk by faith*, and the more we walk by faith, I believe, the more we will see the things of earth loosing their grip and the more attractive our heavenly inheritance will be to us. What does that mean, 'to walk by faith'? It is really acknowledging your place before God, acknowledging that you cannot walk here without Him, without His word, without His guidance, without His company. You need to walk by faith and these people here in this chapter walked by faith.

Now another thing they had was company of one another. "By faith he sojourned as a stranger in the land of promise as a foreign country, having dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise". Our inheritance is never intended to be entered alone. We were never meant to have a glorious future and something that we could enjoy, alone; "the heirs with him of the same promise". When the apostle Paul left the elders of Ephesus he said "Now I commit you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all the sanctified", Acts 20: 32. The sanctified - that is the saints, the sanctified ones, those who have been set apart - the inheritance is among the sanctified. I think that our greatest enjoyment of eternal blessing is when we are among the sanctified, among those who have been secured. You come together, you receive impressions from one and another, it is something that is being built in to your constitution enabling you to enjoy what God has prepared. God has prepared His own inheritance, prepared it for those that love Him. But whenever you meet a believer and you speak to them, you get something, do you not? There is an inheritance among

the sanctified, and here we see this great man, Abraham, the father of those who had faith. He was dwelling with those who were the heirs with him of the same promise. We are not only joint heirs with Christ, we are joint heirs with one another. We will enjoy eternal things together, we know that. It is our blessing to be able to enjoy eternal things together now. It is not a hardship, it is a blessing to enjoy eternal things in the company of the saints. What a blessing it is and God in His goodness has put us in circumstances where that can be known. There are those who are alone, there are those who do not have such a blessing but it is part of our inheritance. I look around this room and I am heartened to see faces of many who will form that great company with whom we will share eternal joy. Beloved, this is our portion now.

Well, I realise that there is a lot more that could be said but I had this impression - the heirs and the inheritance. Christ is established Heir of all things. Nothing can change that can it? The glory and greatness of that blessed One, He is the Heir of all things. In the fulness of time He will wind up everything, dispose of everything according to the will of God; how wonderful that will be. As saints we are brought into that wonderful privilege of being joint heirs with Christ; Christ's joint heirs and all that that involves. What was established in purpose, what is entered into through the Holy Spirit now and enjoyed through faith, is our blessed portion, beloved. May we enter into it more for His Name's sake.

Walton-on-the Naze

8th September 2007

“A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS”

Bill Lovie

2 Kings 7: 1-9 (“tidings”)

Luke 15: 20-24

2 Corinthians 9: 15

I suppose we could have really started with where we finished, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable free gift”. I do not think Paul means that there are things you cannot speak about, but that they are so great we can hardly encompass them. Think of the language Paul uses in relation to the glad tidings. He speaks to Timothy of “the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God”, 1 Tim 1: 11. He speaks to the Corinthians earlier in this epistle of “the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ”, chap 4: 4. In Ephesians 3: “to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ”, v 8. What language! Oh, how unspeakable God's free gift is! What is it? There are things that you cannot buy. If we speak of salvation, the price has been paid, paid in full, paid to God's satisfaction. If God is satisfied, what can man say? Are you going to raise a question with God? God is satisfied. God is satisfied in Jesus. Are you satisfied in Jesus?

“A day of good tidings”, what a picture we have in Kings. It is a famine. God would use famines to speak to people, to speak to men. He used a famine in Luke's gospel to speak to the younger son. He would use these things to speak to us. You might say, 'These are hard times; these are difficult'. No, it is good, a good day. We are in a good day. Why is it a good day? Because Jesus is proclaimed as Saviour for sinners, proclaimed as *your* Saviour. Have you come to know Him yet? Have you come under the shelter of that precious blood of the Lord Jesus? Have you? Oh, it is “a day of good tidings”! Think of what we sang -

Soon Jesus' voice of love may cease appealing'

(Hymn 202)

When will that be? I do not know. You do not know. The Father knows. The Lord is awaiting the Father's time, and He is going to come and take everyone that loves Him to be with Himself. What a moment! Will you be there? It is very solemn!

The first man we read of, the one that speaks to Elisha, does not believe. Can it be? Is anyone here like that, unbelieving?

Why unbelieving? Why wilt thou spurn
Love that so gently pleads thy return? (Hymn 217).

Here is a man who does not see it. He is not going to see it; he is not going to taste it. Think of that, lack of faith. He does not believe what he is told. The gospel is a message of faith. It goes out from faith to faith. The one who preaches has faith, and you must have faith to answer to it. Do you? Have you answered yet? Have you answered? Are you waiting? Are you disbelieving? Oh, that no-one here has a heart that is hard! The more often you hear the glad tidings and you do not accept the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, your heart becomes a little harder; each time it becomes a little harder. You are doing that yourself. How solemn if anyone in this room, having heard the wonderful news, the wonderful good news, has not yet come to know Jesus as their Saviour. As well as all your sins, and what you are as away from God in your sins, you are heaping up upon yourself the responsibility for rejecting God's Man, God's chosen Man, the One whom God has provided. He is God's "unspeakable free gift". He is what God has provided. It is not what man has provided. We have this dearth here. In an earlier chapter we are told that things that are completely worthless are going out for a huge price. That is like this world. If this world can get something more for something, it will do it. It will not care what true value is. It is worth what it can get. That is the way this world proceeds. That is the way commercialism works. That is what this world is built upon, man's greed. Think of what God is providing. What a price has been paid, dear friend, what a price! It has cost God His own Son. Think of that! Think of how He could say, "I will send my beloved son: perhaps when they see him they will respect him", Luke 20: 13. Think of God's feelings in that, God's feelings in His giving, God's feelings in His provision of His own Son. His own Son was the One upon whom He poured out His righteous judgement on the cross at Calvary. Think of that! The Lord Jesus, a perfect, holy, sinless sacrifice! What a One He is! Do you know Him yet? Have you come to know Him for yourself? It is "good tidings". When that door of mercy closes, these "good tidings" will be no more. What a terrible place this world will be to live in! If anyone who has known the gospel and not believed is left here, they will know what has happened. The world at large may not know what has happened, that all the believers in the Lord Jesus have gone. What a miss they will be! This world will degenerate. God's judgement will come upon it. How terrible! And anyone left who has heard the glad tidings will know, but for them, sadly, it will be too late.

When that door is closed, it will not be opened to you again, but it is open now. This is “good tidings”.

Think of these men! These men knew what they were, four leprous men. It is a universal number, four; so it represents all men: “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”, Rom 3: 23. That is what these four leprous men represent. Dear friend, they recognise what they are. They recognise what they are in their state and in their condition as far from God. They recognise it. That is the first step you need to take in coming to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. As you look to Him in all His perfection, in all His sinlessness, in all His glory, where He is now on the Father's throne, and all He has accomplished and done and the way He has gone, as you look on that, you realise what you are, and what it cost Him to go that way. Oh, dear friend, it cost Him His life! He laid down His life for you. Do you accept Him? Do you accept Him yet?

For these men it was not much of a decision they had to make. There was no food in the city. They could not go into the city, no point in going there. So they think they will go to the army that is surrounding the city, besieging the city. The worst that can happen is that they die. What an outlook! Oh, dear friend, that does not have to be your outlook. It would not be a day of good tidings if that is all we could say. What do they find? Everything is there. Everything has been provided. The enemy has gone. The enemy has fled. He has been completely defeated. You may say, what a simple matter this is. They just heard something and they were gone. Think of that!

The Lord Jesus has been into death, the Lord Jesus atoned for sins on the cross. Think of that! He “bore our sins in his body on the tree”, 1 Pet 2: 24. What a matter! He endured the righteous judgement of a holy, sin-hating God. What a matter! And then, having completed that matter, He went into death, laid down that life, laid it down in power: “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit”, Luke 23: 46. He laid that life down, went into death. Think of that! And as He went into death, He broke death's power. What a Victor! That is the type we have here. The enemy has fled. There is no-one there left. All that there is is plenty. What do they find? They go into the first tent, you might say it is the extremity of the camp, in a bit of trepidation. Oh, there does not need to be trepidation in your heart, dear friend! Everything has been done. The Lord Jesus has accomplished the work on Calvary and He is risen, He is living, He is ascended, He is glorified, He is at the

right hand of God, He is seated on the Father's throne. What a place is His! That is where the gospel is coming from. You do not need to fear, dear friend; everything has been done. All that is left for you is plenty. Look at what they find! They ate and they drank. That is what met their immediate need. Your immediate need is met in the glad tidings. It is met in coming to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. You may feel your need; they were starving. Are you starving? Do you know what it is to hunger? These persons knew it and their immediate need was met.

Then they find that there is more. The first thing is silver. That suggests redemption. They found it. They had it. It was theirs. They found that there was plenty of silver and gold, and garments, and they went and hid them. Well, that was not right. I suppose it was a bit like the woman who had the flux of blood all those years. She touched the hem of the Lord's garments and she was cleansed. Immediately the Lord knew it. She knew it. No-one else knew it. She was quite happy to hide. She got what she wanted. The Lord brings her forth, but not to expose her, Luke 8: 43-47. The Lord would not want to expose us but He wants to bring out what the change is, so that they come to it themselves that they were not doing right. "This day is a day of good tidings". Think of that message that they bring back into the city! Think of the message that is going out! The Pharisees and the priests, they took apostles at the beginning of Acts and beat them and said, 'Do not speak any more about this', Acts 5: 40, but they could not help it. They could not help but speak about it. Oh, dear friend, if you come to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you go to school on Monday or go to work on Monday, are you different? Of course, you are different! Are you going to speak about it? Of course, you should speak about it. That is a test to us; what there is cannot be hidden. It is "a day of good tidings". They want others to come into it, what they have enjoyed for themselves. That is why we have preachings; that is why we have preachers, persons that have come into the gain of what has been provided to them, and they want others to come into the same blessing. And it is available to all. There is no shortage in blessing. God is not like men where there is shortage, where supplies run out and they need to wait until the next shipment comes in. God's resource is infinite. Oh, how wonderful! What a day of good tidings! These persons knew it, they went to the city and sadly, alas! the man, the captain at the gate, the one whom the king leaned on, saw it but he did not taste of it; he was trampled. Think of that! Let no-one here be like that man in this "a day

of good tidings“!

Luke 15 is well-known. Think of what is available there; think of the Father's heart! The younger son comes to himself. He is in the far country. We have all known what it is to be in the far country. Let no-one in this room still be in the far country! There is no need to be in the far country because it is a place of want, a place of need, a place of dearth. Oh, dear friend, come to know Jesus! Come to yourself! He comes to himself and he recognises what he has and it is nothing, and he realises there is something better, far better, the Father's house. You must make a move, put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, and accept Him as your Saviour. Think of how pleasing that is to the Father! Here is one who speaks of the Father, a divine Person, and He is moving, moving towards you. It has often been said that you do not have to move very far. Dear friend, you do not have to leave your seat. You will know the Father coming. As coming to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you will know the Father's delight in you. The Father was waiting for this. The Father is waiting for you. The Lord is waiting for you. Think of that! Have you moved, made a move in your heart? It is a heart matter. You do not have to get off your seat. Have you made a move in your heart towards the Lord Jesus, put your faith and trust in Him? Say, 'Lord Jesus, I accept and believe that Thou hast died for me'. Can you say that? He is your Substitute. He is available to all. How wonderful that is! But unless you put your faith and trust in Him for yourself, it is of no avail.

But this younger son comes to himself. He realises there is nothing, comes to himself, knows where there is plenty. He has low thoughts about himself and that would be right. How wonderful to think of the Father's thoughts! Think of the Father's thoughts of the Lord Jesus, the Father's thoughts of His Son! How wonderful, how great these thoughts are. The Father looks on the returning sinner, the repenting sinner, because that is what this man is, a repenting sinner. He moves in repentance. I think his repentance deepens as he moves and that is how it should be. How wonderful to have that initial thing, then to move and to find that the Father is looking on you as He looks on Christ. He is not offered a servant's place, not a lowly place within the door. We might be satisfied with our sins being forgiven and that is all. We are going to be saved, we are going to be in heaven eternally. How wonderful that is, but how much more is on offer in this day of good tidings! Think of the Father looking on you as He looks on Christ, “Bring

out the best robe". There are other robes perhaps, but there is the best robe. I have the best robe; you can have the best robe. Every believer on the Lord Jesus gets the best robe, clothed in the worth of Christ as we have often heard. Think of the Father looking on you, looking on every one who has put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, looking on them as He looks on Christ. Think of the delight He has in that One and His delight in you because you have put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. How wonderful!

These things rise far above our meagre thoughts. Indeed, how unspeakable is God's free gift! How wonderful it is, dear friend. Have you come to know Him for yourself? There is one here - we did not read of him - who never comes in. Is anyone here still outside? Are you still outside? Why? Why should you be outside? Think of what is available! Think of what is on offer in the house, what the Father is giving! Think of sonship! That is what the Father is giving. The delight that He has found in His own Son, the Lord Jesus, He finds in us because we have come to put our faith and trust in that blessed One. He has made us sons. We have the gift of the Spirit. We do not become sons after we get the Spirit; we get the gift of the Spirit because we are sons. How wonderful that is! That is the way God moves. How unspeakable His free gift is! Dear friend, have you come to know the Lord Jesus for yourself. Or are you still outside in bitterness, perhaps looking at others? Oh, dear friend, do not look at others. Yes, they are sinners, but sinners saved by grace. The younger son is there in the house. He does not deserve it. None of us deserves it, but that is the goodness and grace and majesty of God's thoughts. How wonderful they are! What a day of good tidings! What a day we are in, a day that is shortly coming to a close. The time is appointed. God has appointed that time but not so that persons may be lost. It is appointed so that persons may be saved. It may be that you may be saved tonight, maybe because of that. Oh, dear friend, what a moment! It is a wonderful moment.

We went up to the cemetery where my mother was buried after the headstone was put up. If you walk through a cemetery, it is very solemn. Look at the headstones, dear friend. I do not suppose this captain at the gate, and this elder son, would not have been very old. If you look at these headstones, you will somebody find your age there. Whatever cemetery you walk through, you will find somebody your age. How solemn! Are many years ahead of you? Who knows? Young children, God in His goodness sees to it that they are catered for. Think

of that! The grace of God, how wonderful! There are those here, all ages represented in this room, some under the age of responsibility - we do not need to worry about them. God has seen to that in His divine fairness. How wonderful! If you are getting a little older, if you are about twelve, you are becoming responsible, getting older and older and more responsible. The more often you hear the glad tidings, the more responsible you are. Is anyone here still outside? The next headstone to my mother's was a man that died the same day as her. He was in his late thirties, he was a pharmacist, and he died in a car crash. Think of that! How sudden! There was one who knew the Lord as her Saviour, peacefully waiting for Him to take her to be forever with Himself - how wonderful! - and another, who knows? I do not know, perhaps a believer. I do not know - "The Lord knows those that are his" (2 Tim 2: 19) - whose death was suddenly, violently, unexpectedly.

Dear friend, have you come to know Jesus yet? Are you still outside looking in? You do not need to be. This is "a day of good tidings". Oh, how solemn it is, how urgent the word is. Do not put it off, do not waste any more time, dear friend. Come to know the Lord Jesus for yourself! Come to know Him now, then you can know what it is to have this "unspeakable free gift". It includes the gift of the Spirit, another divine Person. How wonderful it is that God sets us up so that we can move through this scene. We are empowered to move through this scene, not as we were before, not like the four leprous men in the Old Testament. I suppose they remained lepers. Oh, dear friend, you can be cleansed, you are made fit, set up. You are set up for eternity, yes, but set up to move through this scene in power, bearing a testimony to what God has done in you in coming to know Jesus as your Saviour. Oh, how wonderful! Is there anything better?

Dear friend, I feel these words have been spoken feebly but I trust each one here may not be putting things off but may have their faith and trust firmly in the Lord Jesus, the One who has died for them, the One who has shed His blood for them, and the One who lives for them. May it be so for His Name's sake.

Kirkcaldy

10th February 2008

KEEPING THE CHARGE

Alan McSeveney

Hebrews 7:22-26

Luke 2:36-38

1 Corinthians 15:29

I would like to say a short word about keeping the charge. The Lord Jesus Christ is presently in heaven. He is there having accomplished the work that He was given to do. Every Christian knows that He bore their sins in His body on the tree, 1 Peter 2: 24. He was buried and was raised from among the dead. He ascended up into heaven, and in heaven He has committed Himself to keep the charge. In Hebrews 7 the charge is that He is supporting continually in intercession before God everyone who belongs to Himself. It is so comforting to know that at any time, no matter what the circumstances are, there is a Man in heaven who bears you on His heart, who carries you on His shoulders and who always has you in His mind as He intercedes before God. You can always come to Him. No matter what you are going through, or how high the waters seem to be, you can always turn to the Lord Jesus and know at that point that He is bearing you up before God. Dear brethren, the only way to get through sorrow is to face it with Christ. If you face it on your own you could become bitter, but if you face it with Him you know something of His sympathy and His support. You begin to understand the reason for your sorrow as you draw closer to Him. You find that He is indispensable to you and that you are indispensable to Him. The Lord Jesus is interested in you, He cares for you, He loves you. He has brought you this way and is going to stand by you and support you. The brethren may not always be available but you can always turn to the Lord Jesus and know that He is available. Every moment of your life, throughout the day and into the night when sorrow fills your spirit, you can always turn to Him. It is wonderful to know Him! It is wonderful to have the comfort in your heart in knowing that He is in control, and that if a Christian dies, it is because they are asleep through Jesus. He has been in control of your life all the way through. He has been looking after you through every circumstance of life and He does not lose His control when you face death. He reserves His rights. He puts you to sleep. He takes you to be with Himself. It is a great comfort that the Christian has to know that the Lord Jesus is in control and that He is ever living to intercede for us

who approach to God. If you go into the presence of God, you will find the answers to your sorrows. You do not always find the answers down here to all the sorrows of life, but in going into the presence of God you find a blessed Man there. It is there you find the answers to all the sorrows of life. He is always living to intercede. He keeps the charge. You can depend on Him. He is reliable, consistent, and dependable. There is no one like Him. Beloved brethren, may we just encourage our beloved sisters and all the family to take their sorrows into the presence of God and to appreciate that the Lord knows all about them.

Not only does the Lord Jesus keep the charge but we can be thankful that there are those here on earth, who also keep the charge. We read in Luke 2, about Anna. I am not going to give a eulogy about our sister, but I think any one who reads these verses and has known our sister would know how applicable they are to her. Our sister and many others of the same generation have been marked by keeping the charge. They have been consistent, reliable and dependable. Whenever you go to the local assembly, you know that they are going to be there. That is the kind of persons that they are. Their lives are committed to it. They have had their opportunities in life. They have had things put before them that they could have accepted but they preferred to commit themselves to Christ's chief interest. That is what their heart was set upon. That is what our sister's heart was set upon. That is why there is a locality here in Twickenham today, because of our sister and persons like her who have stood by what was precious to Christ, and who committed themselves wholeheartedly to Him. They consistently attended meetings because they longed for fresh impressions concerning the Lord Jesus. I am sure they were never disappointed.

Beloved brethren, the only kind of life worth living is being committed to the Lord Jesus and to His interests. That may involve fasting. It certainly will involve praying but what a blessing there is in getting fresh touches as to Himself and having the best company that you could possibly have with persons who enjoy redemption and who are able to share experiences as to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, I say in closing, that there is a generation who have committed themselves, and that generation, one by one, are being taken from us. This is not the first burial in this room in the last twelve months. There are those who are gradually being taken from us persons who were dependable and consistent, and who have kept the

light burning. What about those of us who are left? I suppose every person in this room has been baptised. I wonder if we fully realise why we were baptised. We were baptised to fill up the ranks of those Christians who have gone before, and whom the Lord has taken to Himself. They have been faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ in a world that has rejected Him, and have committed themselves to His chief interest here on earth, His assembly. That is why we were baptised. Perhaps we knew nothing about it, but nevertheless, that is why we were baptised and there comes a point in our life when we need to answer to our baptism. First of all it requires repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As knowing the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit we can then commit ourselves to fill up the ranks of those who have gone before, who the Lord has taken to Himself. That might be a challenge to us. However, if we accept it, we will not lose out. There is a tremendous blessing for every one who will commit themselves to this line of things. I would just leave that word with us all. You were baptised for a reason, and the time has now come, to answer to your baptism, to take up your responsibilities and to commit yourself to keep the charge. The Lord will help you. May He bless the word.

Twickenham

7th February 2008

“THE LOVE OF THE CHRIST CONSTRAINS US”

John Wright

2 Corinthians 5: 14-15

Luke 21: 1-4

The Lord would encourage us at a time like this, beloved brethren, in the filling out of the little time that remains to us. Our sister has filled out her place, her part, and as we have been reminded she has been an example for us. I was thinking particularly, as our brother spoke, of the long time she has been a widow, and the way she had been an example in that time. But the Lord would speak to us Himself. He would appeal to our affections in regard of Himself. He has been into death, beloved brethren; He has actually died. “He died for all”. How large His heart is that He should die for all. He died for me; He died for you, but He died for all. That the Lord Jesus Himself should actually be in death is a thing to contemplate. As we think of who He is in the glory and greatness of His Person, how wonderful that He should come into manhood, that He should come into a condition in which He could die; in which He did die. He came for that express purpose, to die. What a wonderful thing that is, and He has displayed His love. The apostle speaks of the love of the Christ constraining him. The life of the apostle after he met the Lord or the Lord met him on the Damascus road: his course was under the constraining love of Christ. He was influenced by that, his whole course was marked by that; he was constrained by the love of the Christ. “The love of the Christ constrains us”. His judgment of things, his judgment of persons, was under the constraining love of the Christ. He was influenced by that one thing before him, “the love of the Christ constrains us”. Is that so with me, beloved brethren? The love of Christ: it was the governing influence and power in the life of the apostle, and he says, “having judged this, that one died for all then all were dead”. It proved that all were in the state of death, nothing responsive to God. That was the state in which we were. So the Lord Jesus Himself has been into death, and has been raised, which is a glorious fact. Our brother has drawn attention to it, that He has been raised. He has been raised by the glory of the Father, because He was so pleasurable to the Father, the life of the Lord Jesus. Think of the life of the Lord Jesus, how full it was, how full it was to God. Yet there was a point, a time, when God was without Him; but He raised

Him. And now He has Him in His presence forever. That blessed Man! But He is to be our object. He has been raised so that those of who live should no longer live to ourselves but to Him who has been into death and has been raised. We live to Him. What a blessed object we have, an object to fill and satisfy the heart, a glorious object in Him, beloved brethren.

Well, I just thought of this widow woman in Luke. She put in all the living that she had, all of it. Not part of it, but all of it. What an example she was. The Lord was taking account of the rich casting in much. She had no ambitions here. Her life was devoted to this one object, God's interest; and she put into the treasury all the living that she had. Well, beloved brethren, it is a challenge is it not, to put in all our living into the treasury of God? How God valued it, how the Lord Jesus appreciated it! Well this woman, I would think, was too great for the temple system. She was too great for it. The temple here was going to come down. There was something greater that she would come into. She would come into the building that Christ was about to effect; she would come into the spiritual house. She would be a living stone. She would have her vital and living part in that. And we are to have our vital and living part in it, beloved brethren. That will be as we are motivated, and influenced, by the love of the Christ, and we put everything into it. The day calls for it, to put everything into it. Well, she could have held back part. She was dependent on God, a widow indeed. She was marked by that feature, she trusted in God, she depended upon Him; but she put in all the living that she had.

Well, may we be encouraged in this, beloved brethren. We have part in a vast living system; something far greater than what was in the temple here. We are brought into what is the living God's temple, the habitation of God. What a thing it is to commit ourselves to Him, and have a vital and living part in it. May we be stimulated in this, in the Lord's Name.

Twickenham

8th February 2008

(At the meeting for the burial of Mrs Helen Hawkins)

Edited and Published by David Brown and Andrew Burr
81 Roxburgh Road West Norwood London SE27 0LE
Printed By ICP 18 Station Road Crayford Kent DA1 3QA