

Sunday May 28th: 2023

The Bible Readings

The Old Testament

Psalms 34:11–22

The Epistle

Acts 2:1–40

The Gospel

John 16:1–16

The Hymns

- 1: Lord God the Holy Ghost
- 2: 'Twas the prayer of God the Son
- 3: Come, children, hear
- 4: The Comforter has come

1: Lord God, the Holy Ghost

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,
and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

[Acts 2:2]

1: Lord God, the Holy Ghost,
In this accepted hour,
As on the day of Pentecost,
Descend in mighty power.

2: We meet with one accord
In our appointed place,
And wait the promise of our Lord,
The Spirit of His grace.

3: Like mighty, rushing wind
Upon the waves beneath,
Move with one impulse every mind;
One soul, one feeling breathe.

4: The young, the old, inspire
With wisdom from above,

And give us hearts and tongues of fire,
To pray, and praise, and love.

5: Spirit of light, explore,
And chase our gloom away, –
With lustre shining more and more
Unto the perfect day.

6: Spirit of truth, be Thou,
In life and death, our Guide;
O Spirit of adoption now
May we be sanctified.

James Montgomery, 1771–1854

2: With One Accord

With One Accord

STORRS 7.7.8.7. Richard Storrs Willis, 1819-1900

*Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast
given me, that they may be one, as we are.*
[John 17:11b]

1: 'Twas the prayer of God the Son
That His people may be one;
Glory, hallelujah! Glory, hallelujah!
May His people be as one.

2: Parted from th'ascended Son,
All His people prayed as one:

3: Come, Children, Hear

Come, Children, Hear

WINCHESTER NEW

L.M.

Musical Handbook, 1690



A paraphrase of Psalm 34: 11-22

- 1: Come, children, hear about the Lord;
Show filial fear, and love His word.
Who longs to live? - in all thy ways
Do good, and give to God the praise,
- 2: From evil keep thy tongue with care;
May lips that speak no guile bear;
Depart from sin, much good then do;
Seek peace within, and peace pursue.
- 3: God's eye's upon the righteous, and
He hears each one from ev'ry strand;
'Gainst evil men, God shows His wrath,
All sight of them shall be cut off.
- 4: The righteous cry; the good Lord hears,
And from on high dispels their fears;
The Lord is nigh to all of such
Whose heartfelt sigh's a spirit crushed.
- 5: Affliction comes! but God extends
To righteous ones deliverance;
"Keeps all his bones" - O words of
cheer!
Those whom God owns will persevere.*
- 6: Though evil slays; and those, who
hate
All righteous ways, wax desolate;
Yet none of them that in God trust,
Shall be condemned, or ever lost.

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*Psalm 34:20 also prophesied that none of Christ's bones would be broken on the cross.

[See: John 19:36]

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4: The Comforter Has Come

“I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter.”

[John 14:16]

1: O spread the tidings round,
Wherever man is found,
Wherever human hearts
And human woes abound;
Let ev’ry Christian tongue
Proclaim the joyful sound:
The Comforter has come!

The Comforter has come!
The Comforter has come!
The Holy Ghost from heav’n
The Father’s promise giv’n;
O spread the tidings round,
Wherever man is found:
“The Comforter has come!”

2: Lo, the great King of kings,
With healing in His wings,
To e’vry captive soul
A full deliv’rance brings;
For Christ can make thee whole –
The song of triumph rings:
The Comforter has come.

3: Sing, till the echoes fly
Above the vaulted sky,
And all the host above
To all below reply,
In strains of endless love,
The song that ne'er will die:
The Comforter has come!

Francis Bottome, 1823–94

The Sermon

Preacher: Mr Peter Murcott

12: The Grace of God Beyond all Measure

*The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants:
and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate*

[Psalm 34:22]

IF there is one thing that is learnt as we journey through life it is this: time is short. When you were ten, twenty seemed a very long way off. Yet the older you get, the shorter each decade becomes. Swift as the wingèd arrow flies, my time is hastening on!¹

In view of this, a vital piece of information needs to be known: no one who trusts in the Lord shall be desolate, nor ought to be desolate. Desolation takes many forms. Often it arises from mistakes, sometimes serious ones, or missed opportunities, and most of all, from the misery of sin. Temptation lurks at every step of the way, and never more than today. Yet two things should be learnt and remembered about sin and temptation: Satan cannot compel without our consent.

And yet we are weak: “*Who can say, “I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?”*”² We might wish that we could keep ourselves free from sin by sheer will power, and many have tried to do so. Yet as Paul confessed: “*For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.*” And his conclusion was this: ‘O

wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of death?”³

Desolation

To be desolate is to be in despair. The root of desolation is one of hopelessness and helplessness. Another translation of this word is “condemned” or to be found guilty. In response, an American hymn that says this: –

“I was sinking deep in sin,
Sinking to rise no more,
Overwhelmed by guilt within,
Mercy did I implore:
Then the Master of the sea
Heard my despairing cry,
Christ my Saviour lifted me,
Now saved am I...”⁴

James Rowe, 1865–

1933

“Saved!” what a wonderful word! It speaks of a rescuer, who put his own well-being aside. That Rescuer was Christ Jesus. It was when no one else could help — no other person, no other creed, no other religion, no counsellor, no one at all, however kindly disposed or well meaning, none but Jesus. That is at the heart of what the Psalmist tells us. “The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants” – there is no one, who serves God, who hasn’t been redeemed, or bought back, by Jesus.

Let us examine this word –

REDEEM

IT may be used in various ways. In financial terms, it is to buy back, such as with a mortgage of a property. The mortgage is a bundle of rights over a property that is granted to a lender in exchange for a sum of money. When that money is repaid, one has bought back that bundle of rights, meaning that the lender no longer has any hold

on the property. He cannot sell it, to recover the debt, because it has all been repaid with interest. The owner of the property is now free from any such consequence.

In spiritual terms, “redeem” is used in the sense of rescuing a soul from a condition about which he can otherwise do nothing. He has sinned against almighty God. As Paul tells us: **“The wages of sin is death...”** [Romans 6:23] The word “wages” here means sin’s punishment. Is there nothing that mortal man alone can do?

Try Good Deeds

What about trying to obliterate the sin not only by sinning no more, but by actively doing good? It sounds very logical, and there are those who go down that route. Alas, our human nature has a fatal disposition to sin, so we are bound to fail. The sinner needs someone to rescue him from that terrible state. Our text says: **“The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants.”** Who was it who played the decisive part in that plan of redemption? Who alone could achieve such a thing? The Christian faith teaches that there is but one Person, the Second Person of the Trinity — Christ Jesus. There is none else. That is what Peter told the Sanhedrin when he and John were on trial: –

**“There is none other name under heaven given among men,
whereby we must be saved.”⁴**

“None” is an extremely important word. If taken to heart, it not only saves a great deal of trouble, but it ought to fill every believer with complete gratitude to God for sending Christ Jesus to save us, and to inspire determination to make His name known, loved, trusted and obeyed.

The hymn-writer, Christina Rossetti, in focussing on the word “none” wrote this about Christ Jesus: –

**“None other name, none other Lamb,
None other hope in heaven, or earth, or sea,
None other hiding place from sin and shame,
None beside Thee.”**

This is what Anne Steele, 1717–78, declared: –

“None else will heaven approve,
Thou art the only way;
Ordained by everlasting love,
To realms of endless day.”

Now, hear how Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander explained to her Sunday school class *why* Jesus is the only way back to God–

“There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in.”

There was no other good enough, because “*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” [[Romans 3:23](#)]. The only way in which anyone could be redeemed, or bought back from the kingdom of darkness and desolation, was *with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” [[1 Peter 1:19](#)]

A Matter of Great Joy

Seen in that light, and with such a Saviour, what can ultimately make one desolate in this life? Death has been destroyed. The humanly impossible has been achieved by Christ through the shedding of His precious blood. O it was a fearful price that He paid at Calvary! Through faith in Christ, each believer becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Surely that is a matter of great joy that cannot be concealed. To hear the Name of Jesus alone should be enough. As Charles Wesley wrote, with the healing of the paralysed man by the Beautiful Gate in mind: –

“His name the sinner hears,
And is from sin set free;
'Tis music in his ears,
'Tis life and victory:

New songs do now his lips employ,
And dances his glad heart for joy.”⁵

Now, with such abiding joy in the heart, what are the ramifications for Christians?

THE RAMIFICATIONS

Here we would turn to Psalm 57:7 which says: *“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.”* And what will the song be? In every way henceforth to go, to stand and to speak all the words of this life — showing by deeds as well as words that Jesus is Lord. As for the past: –

The past is as past as the sin in my life,
Which was swept away
By the flood of grace and mercy
That flowed into my heart
From Jesus, my Lord –
My God, My Life,
My All in All,
The Eternal Hope of Things to Come,
My Peace.

O Lord, Thou hast already set me
Upon the rock that is higher than I;
Thy hand has been pointing
To the way I should go;
But all too often
I have lingered, and looked behind.

Lord, with trembling, I see Thy hands,
Wounded for my transgressions,
And the path of shining light

Which, but for my weak and foolish ways,
I should have followed from the start.

But now, I'll step out in faith,
With waves of eternal joy,
And gratitude for cancelled sin,
Welling up in my soul.

*Lead me, Lord –
I've many years to make up!*

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To which the Holy Spirit says in Psalm 34:11: “Come, my children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.” Amen.

Footnotes

- 1: A hymn by John Fawcett, 1739–1817
- 2: Proverbs 20:9
- 3: Romans 7:19 & 24
- 4: Acts 4:12.
- 5: ‘Let earth & heaven agree’ verse 4.

A Lesson for Life

The whole series summarised

Christ Jesus called twelve disciples to follow Him to whom He taught many things. Here are twelve lessons from God the Holy Spirit. They begin with: –

1: The Gracious Summons *Psalm 34:11*

We are called to listen to the Holy Spirit. He will teach us filial fear of the Lord, founded upon love — the safest, surest ground on which to walk through life.

2: The Great Question *Psalm 34:12*

Many questions are bandied around today; but there is no question greater than “Where does your heart truly lie?” and “What is your aim in life”

3: The Guarded Speaker *Psalm 34:13*

In God's school, very clear guidance is given. Those who seek to serve God must watch what they say. Speech is a unique gift, to be used wisely and well.

4: The Good Doer *Psalm 34:14*

Goodness and God are inseparable. Christ said: “*..none is good, save one, that is God.*” Unless His supreme Word is put into practice, nothing has been learnt.

5: The Gaze of God *Psalm 34:15*

Man-made surveillance has mushroomed. We may wonder who is watching, and why? Well, they will never match God, whose eyes are upon the righteous.

6: Gone for Ever *Psalm 34:16*

God knows the deeds of sinners, and He sets His face against them, so that they will ultimately come to nothing. That needs to be faced, and be acted upon.

7: The Goodness of God *Psalm 34:17*

God's goodness is demonstrated not only by His general grace in the created order, but in His particular and effective response to the cries of His people.

8: The Gospel of Salvation *Psalm 34:18*

Although God is not far from any of us, never will the closeness of His presence be felt more than by those who turn to Him with broken hearts for healing.

9: The Guaranteed Deliverance *Psalm 34:19*

The trials and tribulations of the righteous take many forms, some of which, humanly speaking, seem insoluble. Yet nothing is too hard for God.

10: The God Who Keeps *Psalm 34:20*

God keeps all His promises, and He keeps His people. Seeing that He is the believer's keeper, surely they should keep their hearts fixed on Him.

11: The Gainsayer and the Ungodly *Psalm 34:21*

The ungodly thinks that if he attacks the people and the things of God for long enough, he will win. He is doomed to both disappointment and desolation.

12: The Grace of God Beyond Measure *Psalm 34:22*

It is beyond understanding why God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, except that we know that He did. None who trusts in Christ shall be lost. None

but Christ can save. Let those who serve Him say so!