

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!



Illustration: Jesus Walking on the Water

A Devotional for the Week of the Second Sunday After Epiphany.

SUNDAY.

Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. – Matthew 14:27.

When our Savior had miraculously fed the five thousand, He straightway constrained His disciples to get into a boat, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. He went up into the mountain apart to pray. When the evening was come, He was there alone. But the boat was not in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying: “It is a spirit.” And they cried out with fear. But straightway Jesus spoke unto them, saying: “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” And Peter answered Him and said: “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” And He said: “Come.” And when Peter was come out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying: “Lord, save me!” And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him: “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” And when they were come into the boat, the wind ceased. (Matthew 14:22-32.)

Indeed, Jesus is, in truth, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten Son of the Father. His divine eye sees when His own are in trouble. He hastens to help them. But when He comes, His own often do not know him and His wondrous ways, and rather think that hell is near. And great fear takes hold of them. Then they must listen to the voice of His word: “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” And they must take courage and good cheer, and fear nothing, relying only on Him and His Word. But how easily such consolation of faith does vanish again! When new waves of disaster threaten, how little in faith are they! Then naught remains but to cry: “Lord, save me!” And the faithful Lord will not refuse to do so. He will stretch out His hand and help – help always – unto eternal life.

PRAYER. – Jesus Christ, great and faithful Lord, I am a poor being – weak of faith, easily perplexed, soon despairing. Have patience with me. Cast me not away from Your presence; and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Do not leave me nor forsake me. For Your name’s sake, O Lord, guide me amid all temptations from within and from without until I shall obtain eternal life, where I shall bless and glorify You forever. Amen.

Hymn 373.

JESUS, my Truth, my Way, | My sure unerring Light,
On Thee my feeble soul I stay, | Which Thou wilt lead aright.

My Wisdom and my Guide, | My Counselor Thou art;
O let me never leave Thy side, | Nor from Thy paths depart.

Thou seest my feebleness; | Jesus, be Thou my Power,
My Help and Refuge in distress, | My Fortress and my Tower.

Give me to trust in Thee; | Be Thou my sure Abode:
My Horn, and Rock and Buckler be, | My Savior and my God.

Myself I cannot save, | Myself I cannot Keep;
But strength in Thee I surely have, | Whose eyelids never sleep.

My soul to Thee alone | Now, therefore, I commend:
Thou, Jesus, having loved Thine own, | Wilt love me to the end!

MONDAY.

He that believeth shall not make haste. – Isaiah 28:16.

When Jesus' activity in Galilee was at an end, He went with His disciples into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, cities of Syrophenicia. And behold, a Canaanitish woman, a heathen, cried unto Him, saying: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying: "Send her away, for she crieth after us." But He answered and said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

In Israel, and not among the hearth, Jesus was to manifest Himself through miracles while sojourning visibly on earth. But the woman came and worshiped Him, saying: "Lord, help me." But He answered and said: "It is not proper to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs." And she said: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said unto her, "O woman, great is

thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (Matthew 15:21-28.)

"He that believeth shall not make haste." Call upon Jesus in every trouble of body and soul. Ask Him for every deliverance in time and eternity. When He pretends not to hear you, and when He reprimands you on account of your unworthiness, and your conscience says it is true, then do not make haste and flee from Him. *Your faith must not be based upon your worthiness, but upon Christ's mercy pledge to you in His Word.* Plead that, and continue in prayer. He cannot deny Himself – His mercy and His Word. He will give you what you desire. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

PRAYER. – O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Your great tender mercy so often seems harsh toward us who believe and set our hope in You. Nevertheless, You are our Father and Redeemer; Your name is from everlasting. Grant that I may learn to know You aright, taking You at Your Word, and when in temptation and affliction, You contend with me, grant me grace to conquer You – yes, You – in exulting faith and in the end to feel that You are with me. Hear me, O Savior, for the sake of Your most trustworthy loving-kindness. Amen.

Hymn 498, 4. 5. 7.

He knows the time for joy, and, truly, | Will send it when He sees it meet;
When He has tried and purged thee duly | And finds thee free from all deceit,
He comes to thee all unaware, | And makes thee own His loving care.

Nor think amid the heat of trial | That God hath cast thee off unheard;
That he whose hopes meet no denial | Must surely be of God preferred;
Time passes and much change doth bring, | And sets a bound to everything.

Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving; | So do thine own part faithfully,
And trust His word, though undeserving, | Thou yet shalt find it true for thee;
God never will forsake in need | The soul that trust in Him indeed.

TUESDAY.

I will behold Thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness. – Psalm 17:15.

When the time of His suffering and death drew nearer and nearer, Jesus began to prepare the disciples for the shock which flesh and blood would experience. He told them of His impending suffering and death and of the consequent resurrection. And He did more.

One day He took Peter and James and John, and took them up to a high mountain. There He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. For a while He laid aside the lowliness of His human nature and caused it to glow in His heavenly, divine, glory. And, behold, there appeared unto Him Moses and Elijah talking with Him. Then Peter, as in a dream, said to Jesus: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." And when His disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said: "Arise, and be not afraid." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, except Jesus only, in old familiar form. (Matthew 17:1-8.)

What is it we see here? We see that Jesus, the Son of Man, is the very God of Glory, our Savior. We see that after this life there is in store for us another life, when our quickened body shall be like Jesus' glorious body. It is very good for us to be there. We shall be restored to one another, and recognize each other. We see that here on earth we must put all our hope in Jesus only and in His Word – that is the Father's pleasure. Let this be our song in the land of our pilgrimage: "I will behold Thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

PRAYER. – Almighty God, Heavenly Father, who did glorify Your dear Son Jesus Christ before the face of all the world, glorify Him, I beg You, also within my frightened heart by Your Holy Spirit, that I may cling to Him only and trust in His Word altogether, until at last, enlivened from death, I shall be glorified forever with all the elect, and dwell with You in eternal joy and blessedness. Grant this, O God, to me, a poor sinner, for the sake of You dear Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

Hymn 520.

NEARER, my God, to Thee, | Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross | That raiseth me,

Still all my song shall be, | Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee, | Nearer to Thee!

Nearer, my Lord, to Thee, | Nearer to Thee!
Who to Thy cross didst come | Dying for me!
Strengthen my willing feet! | Hold me in service sweet
Nearer, O Christ to Thee, | Nearer to Thee!

Nearer, O Comforter, | Nearer to Thee!
Who with my loving Lord | Dwellest with me!
Grant me Thy fellowship! | Help me each day to keep
Nearer, my Guide, to Thee, | Nearer to Thee!

But to be nearer still, | Bring me, O God!
Not by the visioned steeps | Angels have trod.
Here where Thy cross I see, | Jesus, I wait for Thee,
Then evermore to be | Nearer to Thee!

WEDNESDAY.

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

– *Matthew 9:13.*

We have so far, since Epiphany Day, beheld Jesus' *divine* glory, from His miracles. We shall now view His *saving* glory, the glory of His mercy toward poor sinners.

When our Lord had healed the man sick of the palsy in Capernaum, He went to the Sea of Galilee with His disciples. And He saw a man named Levi Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom. This was one of the justly ill-famed and proverbial publicans, who were guilty of so much injustice. Jesus said to him: "Follow me." He became the Apostle Matthew. This same Matthew then made a great feast in his own house for Jesus and His disciples, and there was a great company of publicans and other sinners that sat down with them. And when the self-righteous, sanctimonious Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples after the feast: "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" When Jesus heard this, He said to them: "They that be whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth – I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Matthew 9:9-13.)

Jesus has come expressly for us poor and condemned sinners, and not

for the good and righteous. And us He calls to repentance, that penitently we acknowledge our sin, and believe in Him, and take full and lasting comfort in Him. Not a single sinner is excepted, however wicked he may be.

PRAYER. – Dear Heavenly Father, who through Your Word has called us miserable sinners to Your kingdom, where there is forgiveness of sins, which Your dear Son has merited, and every grace and mercy – I beg You so to enlighten my heart by Your Holy Spirit that like Matthew, the publican, I may always follow that call – ceasing to sin, bettering my life, and looking confidently to Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for all grace, and thus finally entering heaven. Amen.

Hymn 318, 1-4.

JUST as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

THURSDAY.

Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. – Matthew 11:28.

One day a Pharisee, in one of the cities of Galilee, desired that Jesus would eat with him. And Jesus went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat, but was not shown the customary courtesies. And, behold, there was a woman in the city who was a notorious sinner. When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him, weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee saw this, he spake within himself: "This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner."

Jesus said to him: "Simon, I have something to say unto thee." And he said: "Say on." Jesus said: "A certain creditor had two debtors – the one owed him 500 pence and the other 50. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon answered and said: "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave most." And He said unto him: "Thou hast rightly judged." And He turned to the woman, and said to Simon: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her: "Thy sins are forgiven." And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" But Jesus said to the woman: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke 7:36-50.)

Do you see our text above? Do you see from this story how Jesus fulfills it? Do you see how Jesus receives sinners? Do you see how those who know that Jesus has forgiven them much, also love Him much? And do you see how those who think they need but little forgiveness have but little love for Jesus? Do you know your sins? Do you know the Savior's compassion? And do you love Him much?

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, who did forgive many sins to the sinful woman, and thereby did reveal the great love You do bear us sinners – give me, I beg You, a penitent heart, that my tears, too, may bear witness of the sorrow for my sins. Grant that, relying on Your Word in true faith, I may

come to You, and ever again find forgiveness of sins and peace and joy of heart, and that I love You, O merciful Savior, above all things. Amen.

Hymn 318, 5. 6.

Just as I am, Thou will receive. | Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe, | O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thy love unknown | Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone, | O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

FRIDAY.

This man receiveth sinners. – Luke 15:2.

This is a word of derision with the self-righteous Pharisees. With us it is a word of praise and blessing. The following story is the origin of it.

All the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto Jesus to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying: “This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.” And He spake this parable unto them, saying: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, ‘Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.’ I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.” (Luke 15:1-7.)

Jesus receives sinners; He seeks the straying sheep. Jesus has much power and a thousand means to seek. Do you know of a lost sheep? Commit it to Jesus. Jesus deals kindly with the sinner, to seek and find him. You, do likewise in Jesus’ name and with His Word.

And when Jesus has found a sinner, when the sinner repents, He takes him to His bosom and absolves him through His Word, comforts him, quiets his fears, and gives him the free Spirit who works confidence of faith within him. And all heaven rejoices – yes, rejoices more over that one sinner than over all the dearly beloved who already have the precious righteousness of faith. O the Savior’s love! O the grace of God! Jesus receives sinners!

PRAYER. – Dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, rich in mercy – who has come into the world to seek and to save those who were lost, and who is found conversing with poor sinners. I give thanks to You for Your great mercy and grace, and I beg You, promise to me true repentance and daily continuance in the same – that there may be joy in heaven over me, and that my joy may be eternal and perfect. Amen.

Hymn 105.

I WAS a wandering sheep, | I did not love the fold;
I did not love my Shepherd’s voice, | I would not be controlled;
I was a wayward child, | I did not love my home;
I did not love my Father’s voice, | I loved afar to roam.

The Shepherd sought His sheep, | The Father sought His child;
They followed me o’er vale and hill, | O’er deserts waste and wild;
They found me nigh to death, | Famished, and faint, and lone;
They bound me with the bands of love, | They saved the wandering one.

Jesus my Shepherd is | ‘Twas He that loved my soul,
‘Twas He that washed me in His blood | ‘Twas He that made me whole
‘Twas He that sought the lost, | That found the wandering sheep;
‘Twas He that brought me to the fold, | ‘Tis He that still doth keep.

I was a wandering sheep, | I would not be controlled.
But now I love my Shepherd’s voice, | I love, I love the fold.
I was a wayward child, | I once preferred to roam,
But now I love my Father’s voice, | I love, I love His home.

SATURDAY.

Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.
– Luke 15:7.

A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: “Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.” And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself unto a citizen of that country; and he sent him into the fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said: “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.’” And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” But the father said to his servant: “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” And they began to be merry. (Luke 15:11-24.)

Jesus spoke this parable. “Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents.” You may be perfectly sure that God receives you, when, trusting Jesus and His Word, you come to your heavenly Father, against whom you have so often offended. Jesus Himself brings you to the Father through His Word and Holy Ghost.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, when I have sinned – yes, when I have strayed and lost my way, and fallen grievously, then do not leave me, O my Savior, but create repentance within me through Your Word and Holy Ghost, so that I say: “I will arise and go to my Father, and will say to Him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before You, and am no more worthy to be called Your son.’” Lead me thus to the Father, my Savior, who has atoned for me with Your blood and death, and intercede for me. Then shall the Father surely receive me, and love and caress me, and make me His child for time and eternity. Do not leave me, Lord Jesus, do not leave me, until I reach Your Father’s eternal mansions. Amen.

Hymn 107, 1.

Jesus, Lover of my soul, | Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the waters nearer roll, | While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, | Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide; | O receive my soul at last!

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).

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