

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

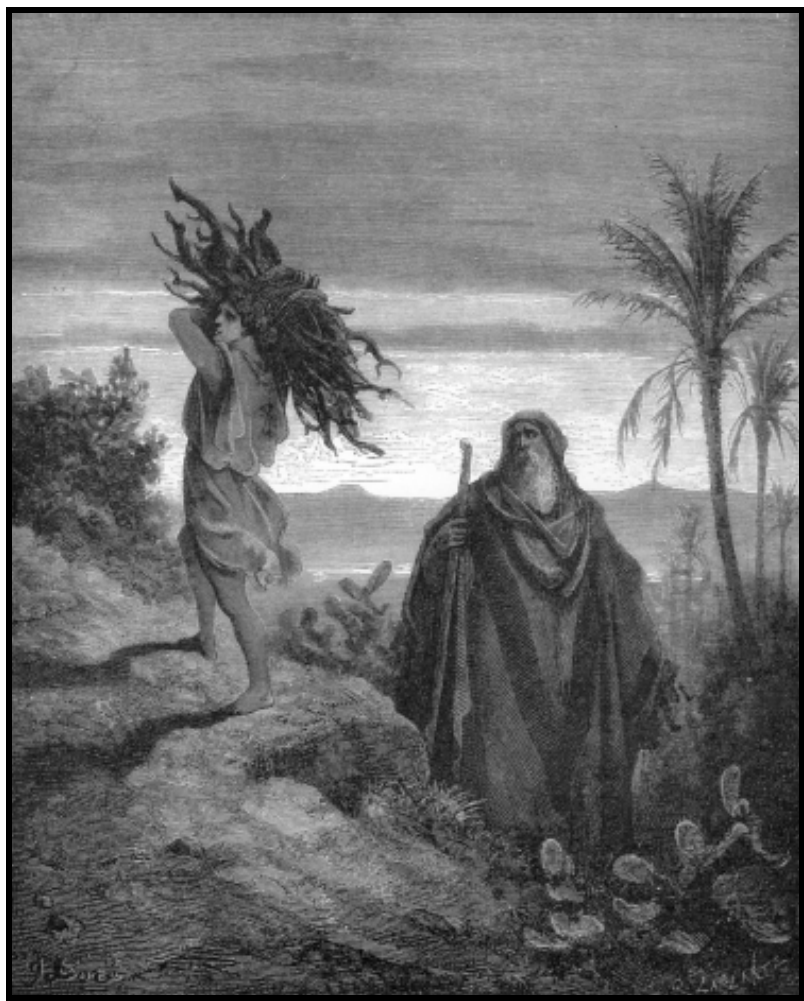


Illustration: The Trial of Abraham's Faith

A Devotional for the
Week of the Second Sunday in Lent.

SUNDAY.

Your sorrow shall be turned into joy. – John 16:20.

In that night of parting Jesus said to His disciples: "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." Then said some of His disciples among themselves: "What is this that He saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me; and, because I go to the father?" They said therefore: "What is this that He saith, A little while? We cannot tell what He saith." Now Jesus knew that they were desirous of asking Him, and He said unto them: "Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said. A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing." (John 16:16-23.)

When Jesus suffered and died, the unbelieving multitude of the Jews rejoiced, for they thought that now there was an end of Him. And the disciples' faith in their beloved Lord collapsed like a dying fire, and they wept and lamented in great sorrow. But when the Risen One came to them, and even more, when the Holy Spirit gave them the true and full knowledge of Christ, their sorrow was turned into joy, into joy which no man and nothing could take from them. And no anxious questions, disturbed them any more.

– And, dear Christian, when, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, the Father mightily draws you to your Savior, but you, in the pain of sin and temptation, do not see that even now you are in the embrace of Jesus, the True Savior, then you have great sorrow. When, however, the Holy Spirit, through the Gospel, anoints your inner eye, so that you truly and clearly discern Christ and His grace,

then your sorrow will be turned into joy, into all-conquering and everlasting joy, and then you know all things that you desire to know. O Christian, seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the Word.

PRAYER. – Lord God Holy Ghost, You – precious Light – enlighten me by Your holy Word, that I may know Christ, my Savior, aright, rejoice in Him greatly, and be abundantly satisfied in such knowledge: who with the Father and the Son live and reign, true God, in all eternity. Amen.

Hymn 83, 5.

Wisdom's highest, noblest treasure,
Jesus, lies concealed in Thee;
Grant that this may still the measure
Of my will and actions be.
Humility there, and simplicity, reigning,
My steps shall in wisdom forever be training.
Oh! If I of Christ have this knowledge divine,
The fulness of heavenly wisdom is mine.

MONDAY.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. – John 16:23.

Do you hear, O Christian, what the Lord assures you here? Whatsoever you will ask in Jesus' name, trusting in Him who made you a dearly beloved child of God, grounding yourself on this His promise, but in humble child-like submission to God's fatherly wisdom, He will give it you. This is glorious! Until then the dear disciples had not prayed thus in Jesus' name. Why not? Because as yet they had no full inward understanding of the Word and speech of Jesus. For the greater part it had remained a dark saying to them. And He had been with them, and had always supplied what they lacked. But now He said: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." For now the time was to come when, through the Holy

Ghost, Jesus would tell them plainly of His Father, the time when the Holy Ghost would make Jesus' Word concerning the Father all light and bright and clear to them, so that it would cease to be a dark saying to them, but that they would be assured that they are God's dear children, to whom the Father gladly gives all good things for Jesus' sake. When this time came, they asked the Father in Jesus' name.

– And that time has come for you, too, O Christian! In Jesus' Word you have the Holy Ghost, who enlightens you. You are sure that you are God's dear child. You pray in Jesus' name, but you do not want to ask God for what is not good, as those do who pray foolishly. You confide in God's love and wisdom. And God hears your every prayer. And you rejoice. And to you and to all the children of God do the kind and comforting words of the Savior to His disciples apply: "And I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

Indeed, the Lord Jesus has come forth from the Father, and has come into the world to atone for us, and to make of us God's dear children: again, He has left the world and gone to the Father to gather the fruits of such atonement from His heavenly Father – and for us, that is, to give us the Spirit of blessed sonship of God, so that now with all confidence we ask the Father, who dearly loves us, for all good things. And He gives them to us. And we rejoice.

(John 16:23-28.)

PRAYER. – Lord God, dear heavenly Father, through Your Son You have made us Your dear children, and have told us that in His name we should ask You for all good things, and that You would hear us. Open our timid hearts through Your Holy Spirit, that in full confidence we may know You to be our loving Father, telling You all things, bringing all our complaints to You, asking You for all things, even as dear children ask their dear father. And then hear us, O Father, according to the firm assurance of Your dear Son, and at all times give us what Your kind fatherly heart knows to be best for us; yes, do more than we ask or think, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Hymn 67, 8.

O bliss! In Jesus' name I've tendered
My prayer; He pleads at Thy right hand for me.
Yea and Amen in Him is rendered
What I in faith and spirit ask of Thee.
O joy for me! And praise be ever Thine
Whose wondrous love has made such blessings mine!

TUESDAY.

In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world. – John 16:33.

When the Lord conversed so kindly with His disciples and promised them that later on they would fully understand His words, they said, in a burst of feeling: "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly and speakest no proverb. Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee;" for, they would say, Thou answerest before we ask. "By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." Ah yes, poor disciples, they believed, believed in their Savior. But their faith was still very weak. Therefore the Lord answered them: "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." How manifestly were these words fulfilled but a few hours later! -And his last words were: "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." (John 16:29-33.)

Have not we, too, tribulation in this world? Does not the devil, as a roaring lion, walk about, seeking whom he may devour? Do not the unbelieving children of the world hate us? Does not our own wicked flesh and blood imperil us? Does not all manner of trouble and adversity threaten? and death? and judgment? and hell?

Yes, and do not the trifling, miserable things often frighten us more than the great and serious hostile powers that surround us? And does not our own faith often grow weak? Do we not often grow faint-hearted and despondent? What are we to do? We must take refuge in the Word of Jesus. In His Word the Holy Ghost is divinely present, and through it He rules and strengthens us, and makes us mighty in God against every terror, and gives us peace in Jesus, who has overcome the world, and every wicked thing in the world, for us. And He comes and gives us the victory He has gained over everything. And by His Word and the Holy Spirit He gives us sure knowledge of this, and good cheer. Indeed, let us take refuge in the Word of Jesus and be of good cheer. Then the storms of life will not be able to engulf us. And lastly we shall enter the abodes of eternal peace.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, You know how frail I often am, and of so little faith. And yet I am Yours and believe in You. Help me, my Savior! Strengthen me, for I am so weak; endow me with courage, for I am so timid. Give me Your peace! O Lord, Your help is at hand already, indeed, in Your Word. Your Word is a divine power. Thanks be to You for Your Word! Draw me to Your Word, and let me experience its power. O Lord Jesus, You great Conqueror, give me Your victory unto eternal peace, unto eternal comfort. Amen.

Hymn 107, 4.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want; | More than all in Thee I find:
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, | Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Thy name; | I am all unrighteousness:
False and full of sin I am; | Thou art full of truth and grace.

WEDNESDAY.

And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. – John 17:3.

In the night in which He was betrayed, after the parting words which John records had been spoken. Jesus lifted His eyes up to heaven and, with a loud voice, in the hearing of His disciples, prayed to His Father. First He prayed for Himself, saying: " Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee, as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:1-5.)

Dear Christian! The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. All men are in the Savior's hand. Without Him no man can have eternal life. He gives eternal life to all whom the Father gives to Him, whom the Father makes His own through faith. Through His work and through His saving Word the Son glorifies the Father; He truly reveals the Father in His great tender mercy. And, again, the Father glorifies the Son by presenting Him to the world as the only Savior, and by highly exalting Him, after His work of salvation was accomplished, into the eternal glory which He had with the Father before the world was, from everlasting. And now He - who thus through faith knows the Father to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He sent to be the Savior - has eternal life.

May the Holy Spirit ingraft this in your heart, O Christian, so that you may always remain in such knowledge, which is eternal life.

PRAYER. – O Father in heaven, I give thanks to You that You have granted me grace to know You according to Your tender mercy, which was manifested in Christ Jesus, Your dear Son, our Lord and Savior. O Father, grant me Your Holy Spirit that I may abide in the Word which tells me of such compassion, trusting in the same to my end, and thus inheriting eternal life which Your dear Son, my Savior, has merited for me at so great a price. Amen.

Hymn 67, 2.

O Father, draw me to my Savior,
That Thy dear Son may draw me unto Thee;
Thy Spirit guide my whole behavior
And rule both sense and reason thus in me,
That, Lord, Thy peace I taste may ne'er depart,
But wake sweet melodies within my heart.

THURSDAY.

Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth.

– *John 17:17.*

And now the Lord prayed for His disciples, the Apostles. He prayed thus: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy Word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I unto Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth." (John 17:6-19.)

To "sanctify" means to set apart for God. Only through God's Truth, received in faith, is man sanctified; and the Word of God is this Truth. And the Word of God is the Word concerning Christ, who has sanctified Himself for a sacrifice of the world's atonement. Thus sanctified, the Lord sent His Apostles into the world to preach His Word. And His prayer kept them. – Christian, never forget that you, too, are sanctified to God through the truth of the Word of Christ received in faith. You are God's, and God will make use of you in His service. And He will keep you.

PRAYER. – I thank You, my God, that out of pure grace, for Christ's sake, You have sanctified me through Your Word, which is the eternal Truth. Let me be and remain Your own eternally. Let me be Your servant, useful to You, thoroughly furnished for all good work. Keep me, O God; for I trust in You. Amen.

Hymn 252, 4.

Thou art, O Holy Spirit, | The true anointing Oil,
Through which are consecrated | Soul, body, ease, and toil
To Christ, whose guardian wings, | Where'er their lot appointed,
Protect His own anointed, | His prophets, priests, and kings.

FRIDAY.

Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am. – John 17:24.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ, through the Word preached by the Apostles, and are sanctified to God through such faith, must, by such faith, be one with the Apostles and with one another – one, as the Father and the Son are one, one in the Father and in the Son. And the Savior's glory must rest upon them: it must unite them. And they

must be the Savior's witnesses to the world, so that children of the world may also come to faith in their Savior: those whom the Father, through faith kindled in them, has given to the Son. And the love with which the Father loves the Son will rest upon them, for through faith the Savior is within them. And at last they shall be where Christ is; they shall be with Him and behold and enjoy the glory which the Father has given His eternally beloved Son

– What glorious Christian calling! What blessed Christian hope! – But, oh, for our sin! How little of this unity, of this glory on earth, do we see! How we do hinder the work of God! And yet – all those are one who truly are in Christ, and the Savior's glory nevertheless is gleaming on them, and God nevertheless does His work through them, and they shall nevertheless in the end come to Jesus. The Savior's prayer prevails. What blessed grace!

PRAYER. – Dear Father in heaven, for the sake of the prayer of Your Son have mercy upon us and do not cast us – Your Christians – away because of our sin and infirmity. Defend us against all that would seduce us, and ward off all self-conceit, every delusion, every false doctrine that opposes Your truth and divides Your dear Church. Let me, a poor sinner, continue steadfast in Your truth; let Your Son's saving glory be seen on me; let many who are still afar off be brought to faith in Christ through me, and in the end graciously receive me into Your heavenly glory. Have mercy, O gracious God, have mercy, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Hymn 239, 10. 11.

Through Him we heirs of heaven are made;
O Brother, Christ, extend Thine aid,
That we may firmly trust in Thee,
And live through Thee eternally. Hallelujah!

Amen, Amen, O Lord! We cry;
Do Thou, who art exalted high,
In Thy pure doctrine keep our hearts,
And shield us from the Devil's arts. Hallelujah!

SATURDAY.

Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd and against the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. – Zechariah 13:7.

When they had sung a hymn, Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. It was about midnight. And the Lord said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter answered: "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." And Jesus said unto all: "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." Peter answered: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus said to him: "Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me."

And Peter still said: "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." Likewise also said all the disciples. On approaching their destination, the Lord said: "When I sent you without purse, or scrip, or shoes, lacked ye anything?" And they said: "Nothing." Then Jesus said unto them: "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors; for the things concerning Me have an end."

They were to prepare spiritually for great trouble. But they put an altogether carnal interpretation upon this and said: "Lord, behold, here are two swords." Jesus did not wish to instruct them on this point any further, and so He said: "It is enough." – The disciples now faced the greatest temptation. And, poor men, they boasted of their strength, Peter especially. Thus they had to fall, Peter especially. And temptation will approach you too, O Christian. In no way depend

upon yourself! Rely solely upon Jesus and on His Word, in which He promises to keep you, and through which He gives you of His power.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, I rely completely on You, O faithful Shepherd! Of myself I can do nothing. By Your grace I will fight. But unless You provide strength and victory I am lost. Assist me in all temptation! And if I fall by reason of my conceited flesh, let not my faith cease. Comfort me again, raise me, receive me into Your strong, saving arms. I rely on You, my Savior! Amen.

Hymn 365, 5.

Help me, for I am weak; I fight,
Yet scarce can battle longer;
I cling but to Thy grace and might,
'Tis Thou canst make me stronger;
When sore temptations are my lot,
And tempests round me lower,
Break the power:
So through deliverance wrought,
I know that Thou forsak'st me not.

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

The hymn stanzas are from *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1918).

The illustration is from *The Doré Bible Gallery* (circa 1885).

As long as they are free to others, you may make copies of this devotional.

For more devotionals or to support *Good News for the Diaspora*, please visit

www.scholia.net