

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!



Illustration: Christ Taken Down from the Cross

A Devotional for the Week of the Third Sunday after Easter.

SUNDAY.

Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. – 1 Peter 1:18-19.

We have been redeemed, yea, redeemed by Christ from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. Hallelujah! But *wherewith* has Christ redeemed us? Not with gold and silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. How are we to understand this? Thus: With His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death Christ has rendered satisfaction for us, has paid the penalty of our guilt, has suffered our punishment required by God's righteousness. Hence we are free from the guilt of sin, and God declares us guiltless. Hence we are free from death, the penalty of sin, and God gives us life. Hence we are free from the power of the devil, and God receives us as His children.

We are redeemed. What does Scripture say? It says: "He (God) hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." And it says: "Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." (2 Corinthians 5:21 & Isaiah 53:4-5.) And in raising Christ, God declared before heaven and earth and hell that Christ has in reality and truly redeemed us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.

PRAYER. – O my Lord and Savior, let me never forget how dearly it cost You to redeem me. But God has accepted the purchase-price and has considered it sufficient, and has raised You

from the dead, O my Savior. Thanks, thanks be to You, Lord Jesus, for Your holy, precious blood and for Your innocent suffering and death. Give to me the spirit of faith, that I may rejoice in the knowledge that Your resurrection is my salvation. Amen.

Hymn 223.

WHO is this that comes from Edom,
All His raiment stained with blood;
To the captive speaking freedom:
Bringing and bestowing good:
Glorious in the garb He wears,
Glorious in the spoil He bears?

'Tis the Savior, now victorious,
Traveling onward in His might;
'Tis the Savior; O how glorious
To His people is the sight!
Satan conquered and the grave,
Jesus now is strong to save.

Why that blood His raiment staining?
'Tis the blood of many slain;
Of His foes there's none remaining,
None the contest to maintain.
Fall'n they are, no more to rise;
All their glory prostrate lies.

Mighty Victor, reign forever,
Wear the crown so dearly won;
Never shall Thy people, never,
Cease to sing what Thou hast done;
Thou hast fought Thy people's foes;
Thou hast healed Thy people's woes.

MONDAY.

To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. – Romans 14:9.

To what end has Christ redeemed us? To this end, that we might be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Yes, that we might live in blessedness, to this end Christ has redeemed us. For this is blessedness, that we are His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and – well, there it is: blessedness. His great love for us who were lost moved Him to redeem us at so great a price, and to deliver us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, that we might be His own again, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

Perhaps you art thinking of all the dead who hoped in Christ, and now for years and centuries, yes, thousands of years have been lying in their graves; and you would ask how the merciful purpose of Christ was accomplished in them? O my friend, death there makes no difference at all. All the dead who have died believing in Him He has in His bosom, and He even keeps their dust: they are all His own: they shall all rise and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.

– O Christian, lift up your heart to the risen Savior, who by His death has redeemed you at so great a price, and say to Him: Lord Jesus, I am Yours, and You are my Lord. Give me Your blessedness!

PRAYER. – Indeed, Lord Jesus, I am Yours, and You are my Lord! With Your God's blood You have bought me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. I want to belong to You, and to none other. I want to live in Your kingdom, and nowhere else. I want to serve You, and no one else. I am Yours in life and death. I will be Your own in life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn 218, 7. 9.

I cleave now and forever,
 To Christ, a member true;
My Head will leave me never,
 Whate'er He passeth through;
He treads the world beneath
His feet, and conquers death
And hell, and breaks sin's thrall
I'm with Him through it all.

Hr brings me to the portal
 That opens into bliss,
Where graven in words Immortal
 This golden scripture is:
"Who there are scorned with me
Here with me crowned shall be;
Who there with me shall die
Shall here be raised as I!"

TUESDAY.

He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. – 1 John 2:2.

Whom has Christ redeemed? The very best answer for you to give to this question is: Me and all lost and condemned mankind. By answering thus, you appropriate the salvation of Christ to yourself; you seize upon it and comfort yourself with it as firmly and confidently as if Christ had redeemed you only. And this is what you may and should do; God wants you to do this. For Christ has redeemed all lost and condemned mankind, and hence you also. No man is excepted from the salvation of Christ, hence neither you. If it were not so, if the cheerless doctrine of Calvin, the father of the Reformed Church, were true, that Christ had only redeemed the believers, how, then, would you be altogether certain that Christ had redeemed you, even you?

For, in the first place, faith is often assailed and obscured; and moreover, faith must have a foundation to rest upon. But the foundation faith has is just this, that Christ has redeemed all lost and condemned mankind, and hence, you and me too. And this is most positive Bible doctrine. Do you note the text above? So all Christians must believe. And you know that other Word of God: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," John 1:29; and this: "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost," Matthew 18:11. Even the unbelievers, the godless, who deny, reject, despise, and scorn Christ, have nevertheless been redeemed by Christ. But just because they deny Christ, and for this reason only, they are lost. Peter writes concerning such; "They deny the Lord that *bought them*, and bring upon themselves swift destruction," 2 Peter 2:1.

My dear Christian, the risen Savior has redeemed *you*, for He has redeemed *all* lost and condemned mankind. May you believe this gladly and most assuredly, you poor sinner! This faith will not deceive you.

PRAYER. – Risen Savior, in Your victory over sin, death, and the devil I behold the victory over my sin, my death, my evil accuser and foe. Yes, You, O Lord, have redeemed all lost and condemned mankind, and hence also me, a lost and condemned sinner. Thanks, thanks be to You, my Lord and Savior! Give me Your Holy Spirit, that I may firmly cling to this blessed truth, and nevermore fear nor faint in such faith. Me, even me, You have redeemed, O Lord! I, even I, am redeemed. Amen.

Hymn 106, 7. 9.

Thou alone, my God and Lord,
Art my Glory and Reward;
Thou hast bled for me and died,
I will be no other's bride.

Patiently I wait Thy day;
For this gift yet, Lord, I pray,
That, when death shall come to me,
My sweet Jesus Thou wilt be.

WEDNESDAY.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you. – 1 Corinthians 15:1.

Let me put you in mind, my dear Christian, of the Gospel which has been proclaimed to you in this book from Holy Scriptures. You have embraced this Gospel in true faith. and your faith firmly rests on it. And by this Gospel, just as it has been taught you, you art saved, if you hold fast to it, unless you render your faith useless through subsequent unbelief. Now, what is it that you have been taught?

First of all, that Christ died for our sins according to the prophecy of Holy Writ, and that He was buried; but that, furthermore, also according to the prophecy of Holy Writ, He rose again the third day. And you have been told how He was seen alive by Mary Magdalene; by her companions; by Peter; by those two disciples going to Emmaus; by the whole company of disciples assembled in Jerusalem, twice; by the seven Apostles at the Sea of Gennesaret; by all the Apostles and over 500 brethren with them on a mount in Galilee; again, twice, by the Apostles in Jerusalem. And last of all He was also seen alive by Paul, the great Apostle of the heathen, who for so long had been His enemy, and a persecutor of those who believed in Him.

And you have been told that He was seen alive after His resurrection by the Apostles on many more occasions, than those enumerated in Scripture. And these eye-witnesses have declared to us the above-mentioned Gospel, the glad tidings that Christ, true God and man, according to the prophecy of the Old Testament, died for our sins and was buried and triumphantly rose again the third day. This is the Gospel that saves you. Abide with that! Hold fast to that! Let nothing turn you from it!

PRAYER. – Lord God, Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your holy Gospel, that divine power to save, which tells me that Your dear Son Jesus Christ died also for my sins, but that, conquering sin,

death, and the devil, and all that opposes me, He rose and became my true Redeemer. Give me, I beg You, Your Holy Ghost, that – unto my end – I may firmly believe these glad tidings and find abiding comfort in them, and die a blessed death. Amen.

Hymn 224, 1.

In death's strong grasp the Savior lay,
For our offences given;
But now the Lord is risen today,
And brings us life from heaven.
Therefore let us all rejoice,
And praise our God with cheerful voice,
And sing loud hallelujahs. Hallelujah!

THURSDAY.

Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

– 1 Corinthians 15:12.

If, as was shown yesterday, this is the saving Gospel that Christ the Crucified rose from the dead, how dare any one say that there is no resurrection from the dead, even such as profess to be Christians, yes, preachers and teachers of the Christian Church? Do they know that thereby they overthrow the entire Gospel? For if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then the preaching of the Apostles is vain, and all preaching that conforms to theirs; and then also your faith, dear Christian, is vain. Yes, then the Apostles are found to be false witnesses of God, because they have testified of God that He raised up Christ whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

For let it be said once more: if there is no resurrection from the dead, then Christ is not raised; and if Christ be not raised, then He is not the true Savior sent by God on whom you build your hope, O Christian; and your faith, therefore, is vain. Then you are yet in your

sins; then all they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then we Christians would only in this life have hope in Christ, and even that were a vain and futile hope, and we would of all men be most miserable.

– Ah, Christian, look at the matter squarely, and let not the great and universal delusion of the present day beguile you! -But now is Christ truly risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. All who fall asleep in Christ follow Him in the resurrection unto life everlasting. This is most certainly true.

PRAYER. – God, Holy Ghost, Spirit of truth and Spirit of Christ, who by the mouth of the Apostles did cause the salutary death and triumphant resurrection of my Savior to be preached, I pray You to steel and strengthen my heart against all the specious seduction of false prophets, who withal clothe themselves with the name of Christ. Grant that I may cling fast and immovably to Your Gospel, which proclaims to me a blessed resurrection and eternal life pledged me by the resurrection of my Savior. Amen.

Hymn 228, 1. 4. 6.

WELCOME, Thou Victor in the strife,
Welcome from out the cave!
Today we triumph in Thy life
Around Thine empty grave.

O let Thy conquering banner wave
O'er hearts Thou makest free;
And point the path that from the grave
Leads heavenward up to Thee.

Fearless we lay us in the tomb,
And sleep the night away,
For Thou art there to break the gloom,
And call us back today.

FRIDAY.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. – 1 Corinthians 15:22.

Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For by one man came death, and by one man comes the resurrection of the dead. The one man by whom death came is the first man, Adam. Through his sin death, the wages of sin, first entered into the world. And death passed upon all men, for in Adam, the progenitor of the human race, all have sinned. And death rules with dread power, extending its power into eternal death, eternal damnation. And the one man by whom comes the resurrection of the dead is the second man, Christ. Through His substitutional righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto the justification of life. Righteousness and resurrection from the dead and eternal life are at hand for all men because Christ is the Substitute for all mankind. Eternal blessedness now beckons invitingly from beyond the grave.

This is how it is: Christ, our Savior and Substitute, has risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that sleep in the bowels of the earth. Christ died for us, and conquered death for us, and as the first-fruits, He rose from the dead and entered into eternal life - as the first-fruits. All that are His own through faith must and shall follow Him in the resurrection to come and enter life eternal with Him. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

O child of Adam and heir of death by nature - watch and pray that you may abide in Christ; then shall you most assuredly arise to inherit eternal life.

PRAYER. – My Lord and Savior, who like the first sweet little flower of spring did lift Your head from the icy pall of winter, grant that to my dying day I may be among those who through faith are rooted in You and grown together with You, that I, too, may rise

from the dead, and bloom in eternal life with all that are Thine. Amen, Lord Jesus, keep me from the gloomy deadly deceit of unbelief. Amen.

Hymn 547, 6.

Come, O Christ, and loose the chains that bind us!
Lead us forth, and cast this world behind us!
With Thee, th' Anointed,
Finds the soul its joy and rest appointed.

SATURDAY.

Every man in his own order. – 1 Corinthians 15:23.

In the resurrection of the dead every one and everything shall come in the order appointed by God. The first-fruits in the resurrection is Christ, as has been abundantly shown. Then they shall rise unto eternal life who are Christ's at His coming to judgment. Then, immediately after this resurrection and the judgment, comes the end of the world. Then, having done all things well, Christ will deliver up to the Father the Kingdom of Grace, the King and Mediator of which He has been hitherto. Then He will also abolish all worldly rule and authority and power, and, in particular, all power hostile to His own. But Christ must reign as King of His Kingdom of Grace and as our Mediator until, at the end of the World, He will have made all His enemies His footstool and utterly have made an end of them.

The last enemy of His own that shall be destroyed, is death: they who have risen unto eternal life shall see nothing more of it. For the Father has put all things under Christ's feet. He has told us so in His Word. But when He says that all things are put under Christ, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him, that is, the Father. But when at last, and right manifestly, all things shall have been subdued unto Christ, then shall also the Son, Christ, the King and Mediator, Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that is, to the Father; then shall He appear before the Father

with His entire congregation of the redeemed of all times and say : I have finished the work which You have commanded me to do; then shall He deliver up the Kingdom of Grace and His mediatorship unto the Father who gave it to Him. And then shall the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all in all; then shall the riches of blessedness and of glory pour forth upon us from the Triune God.

PRAYER. – O God the Father, what riches of bliss do You promise me to see! O God the Son, Lord Jesus Christ, my King and Mediator, how well will You accomplish all, even unto my eternal glory! O God the Holy Ghost, by Your holy Word You will confirm me in faith unto the end, that I may live to see it all. O Triune God, indeed, I shall live to see it, for You will raise me from the dead by Your divine power and grace, and bring me to the eternal consummation, where You shall be all in all. Amen.

Hymn 222, 1.

JESUS lives! No longer now
Can thy terrors, Death, appall me;
Jesus lives! By this I know,
From the grave He will recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence.

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