

Oct 22, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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## Like a River Glorious *Hmel*

Like a river glorious, is God's perfect peace,  
Over all victorious, in its bright increase;  
Perfect, yet it floweth, fuller every day,  
Perfect, yet it groweth, deeper all the way.

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,  
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;  
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,  
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.

Every joy or trial falleth from above,  
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love;  
We may trust Him fully all for us to do.  
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.

### *Chorus:*

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest  
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

•t&dw

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## Thought of the Week. C.H. Spurgeon

“...If we would ripen in grace, we must live near to Jesus—in his presence—ripened by the sunshine of his smiles. We must hold sweet communion with him. We must leave the distant view of his face and come near, as John did, and pillow our head on his breast; then shall we find ourselves advancing in holiness, in love, in faith, in hope—yea, in every precious gift.

•t&dw

### *Feature Article:*

## Jesus Loves You - Whack!

*Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he had been sick, He remained two more days in the place where He was. John 11:5-6*

How often, in the midst of our trying circumstances, does Jesus do exactly the opposite of what we would have Him do. “Lord, had you been here my brother would not have died” (vv. 21, 32). As the fire begins to consume us, He often seems to throw on gasoline. As we pray with tears for our sick loved one, death snatches away the object of our love; as we fervently pray for our dire financial situation, we lose our job; as we pray for the salvation of a friend, the lost one plunges more deeply into a godless life. Sometimes it seems that even when He *does* promise us a rose garden, He gives us all thistles and thorns. When He promises us a land of milk and honey we get all cow dung and stinging bees. I’ve often heard people come to the point where they refuse to pray about difficult situations because, they say, “the more I pray the worse things get.”

Do we not see it so in the scriptures? How often for the saints do things go 180 degrees from what we would expect from a loving God in regards to His children. God promises to Adam redemption and life, and his firstborn son becomes the first murderer; Abraham leaves all for the promised land, and wanders through a desert the rest of his life; Joseph looks for the promised exaltation of himself, and is sold into slavery; David fights the Lord's battles, and his hometown is razed and his family taken captive; the disciples are promised a glorious kingdom, and the King is nailed to a cross and buried in a tomb. Paul is gloriously saved, and the Lord immediately shows him *what things he must suffer for the kingdom of God*. The apostle later reminds us, “*if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*” (1 Cor 15:19). Did all these saints, and many others, simply forget to *pray in faith*? We may be shocked, and our faith somewhat challenged, to realize that all the praying in the world will not ensure us a painless life.

Yet, throughout the centuries Christians have sung the songs of Zion, proclaiming the glories of the Lord and celebrating His undying love for His people. Why? Would they rather live in deep denial than forsake their

cherished religious crutches? In the midst of their sufferings, do they find that pretending that “God is good” is less painful than accepting that He is not? To the true children of God, all such explanations for *the hope that lies us* are but the foolish musings of unbelievers, and are as nothing to them. They know that *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us (Rom 8:18)*, and that these *afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17)*; and this is all precisely *because* He loves us.

In this present time, we must greatly strengthen and encourage ourselves by the knowledge that it is *always* at the hand of our *loving* Lord that we receive *all* of our circumstances. He loves us - *therefore, in answer to our prayers*, He often does what we would not choose. Yet Spirit-empowered faith teaches us to sing,

*Every joy or trial falleth from above,  
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love.*

In our afflictions we must hear the Voice of the Shepherd singing,

*When through the deep waters I call  
thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be with thee thy trials to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

Therefore, not only do the saints *accept* difficulties as being from the loving hand of God, but they often *choose* a path that leads to affliction. So Moses...

*...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **choosing rather** to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. (Heb 11:24-26)*

Returning to Mary, Martha and Lazarus, consider that Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus, in the end, from a *temporal point of view*, only accomplished what healing him would have done. Lazarus was made well; his sisters were blessed with his presence for a while longer. So why not just come and heal him in the first place? Why allow his death and all the pain and sorrow that surrounded it? Jesus tells us plainly: “*for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it*” (v 4). Here is the crowning purpose of all that Jesus sets before us in our lives. As

the circumstances of our days unfold before us, we are called to live them “*for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it*” There is nothing **of good or evil** that, in its effects, is not the servant of our sovereign God. As Spurgeon once said, the worst that Satan can deal is but a spoke in the wagon wheel of God's sovereign purpose. And, for the Christian, that purpose is wrapped in eternal, unending love.

●ejr3

Are there topics or questions you would like to see addressed in a future T&DW? . Please submit them to [pastored@springwoodchapel.com](mailto:pastored@springwoodchapel.com)

### *Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.* **Hearing the Spirit.**

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Matt 10:37.*

Seven times Jesus repeats this admonition to the readers of the book of Revelation (2:1 - 3:22). First, it is an admonition to those who have ears to hear; that is, *those who are capable of hearing* the Spirit - those whose ears the Lord has opened. Next, let all those who are able to hear know that they have *the responsibility to heed* - to take to heart - what the Spirit says. Finally, it is what the Spirit is saying *to the churches* that his people are to hear. In the west we have endless avenues of reading and hearing the scriptures. But God's primary word for us is going to come through what he is saying in and to the churches. It is in the local church that each of us are called in Christ to be a living stone in the living temple of God (Eph 2:21-22); it is there we are not to forsake our assembling together that we might encourage one another to love and to works of love (Heb 10:24); It is there that our gifts are to be honed to do the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-12); it is from there that the Lord sends us into the world as salt and light in the proclamation of Christ (Acts 13:1-3; 1 Thess 1:1, 8).

He who has an ear to hear, let him *be* where the Spirit is speaking.

●ejr3

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