

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

2.8: BLESSINGS

1. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” Matthew 5:7.

“The heart of man is by nature cold and dark and unloving; whenever one manifests a spirit of mercy and forgiveness, he does it not of himself, but through the influence of the Divine Spirit moving upon his heart. “We love, because He first loved us.”

“God is Himself the source of all mercy. His name is “merciful and gracious.” He does not treat us according to our desert. He does not ask if we are worthy of His love, but He pours upon us the riches of His love to make us worthy. He is not vindictive. He seeks not to punish, but to redeem. Even the severity which He manifests through His providences is manifested for the salvation of the wayward. He yearns with intense desire to relieve the woes of men, and to apply His balsam to their wounds. It is true that God “will by no means clear the guilty”; but He would take away the guilt.

“The merciful are “partakers of the divine nature,” and in them the compassionate love of God finds expression. All whose hearts are in sympathy with the heart of Infinite Love will seek to reclaim, and not to condemn. Christ dwelling in the soul is a spring that never runs dry. Where He abides, there will be an overflowing of beneficence.

“To the appeal of the erring, the tempted, the wretched victims of want and sin, the Christian does not ask, Are they worthy? but, How can I benefit them? In the most wretched, the most debased, he sees souls whom Christ died to save, and for whom God has given to His children the ministry of reconciliation.

“The merciful are those who manifest compassion to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed. Job declares: “I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out.” Job 29:12-16.

“There are many to whom life is a painful struggle; they feel their deficiencies, and are miserable and unbelieving; they think they have nothing for which to be grateful. Kind words, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would be to many a struggling and lonely one as the cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of sympathy' an act of kindness, would lift burdens that rest heavily upon weary shoulders. And every word or deed of unselfish kindness is an expression of the love of Christ for lost humanity.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 39, 40.

2. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8.

“Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there, will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for

careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.

“But the words of Jesus, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' have a deeper meaning, not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands, purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul, free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, childlike....

“The pure in heart see God in a new and clear relation, as their Redeemer; and while they discern the purity and loveliness of His character, they long to reflect His image. They see Him as a Father longing to embrace a repenting son, and their hearts are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“The pure in heart discern the Creator in the works of His mighty hand, in the things of beauty that comprise the universe. In His written word they read in clearer lines the revelation of His mercy, His goodness, and His grace. The truths that are hidden from the wise and prudent, are revealed to babes. The beauty and preciousness of truth, which are undiscerned by the worldly wise, are constantly unfolding to those who have a trusting, childlike desire to know and to do the will of God. We discern the truth by becoming, ourselves, partakers of the divine nature.

“The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future, immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.” - Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 42-45.

Jesus Is Holding Me: Two little girls were playing with their dolls and singing, “Safe in the Arms of Jesus.” “How do you know you are safe?” Asked the older sister.

“Because I am holding Jesus with both my hands tight.”

“That's not safe,” said the other. “Suppose Satan came along and cut your two hands off?”

The child looked troubled, dropped her dolly, and thought. Suddenly her face shone with joy. “Oh, I forgot! Jesus is holding me, and Satan cannot cut off His hands; so I am safe.” The Expositor.

3. BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9.

“Christ is “the Prince of Peace,” and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

“There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife, and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven, and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

“Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

“And “blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. “Every one that loves is born of God! I John 4:7. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”; but “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:9,14.

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarries not for man, nor waits for the sons of men.” Micah 5:7. -Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 46, 47.

“Human plans for the purification and uplifting of individuals or of society will fail of producing peace, because they do not reach the heart. The only power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Christ. When this is implanted in the heart, it will cast out the evil passions that cause strife and dissension. “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;” and life's desert “shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” The Desire of Ages, page 305.

“A consecrated Christian life is ever shedding light and comfort and peace. It is characterized by purity, tact, simplicity, and usefulness.... It is full of Christ, and leaves a track of light wherever its possessor may go.” Patriarchs and Prophets, page 667.

4. BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10.

“Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict. When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is drawing away the subjects of Satan's kingdom, and the prince of evil is aroused to resist it. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times; but the principle-the spirit that underlies it-is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.

“As men seek to come into harmony with God, they will find that the offense of the cross has not ceased. Principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places are arrayed against all who yield obedience to the law of heaven. Therefore, so far from causing grief, persecution should bring joy to the disciples of Christ; for it is an evidence that they are following in the steps of their Master.

“While the Lord has not promised His people exemption from trials, He has promised that which is far better. He has said, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side, even as He was with the faithful three in Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear their Lord, makes suffering for His sake sweet....

“Through trials and persecution, the glory-character-of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial, and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 48-50.

To victory through crisis, To pleasure through pain,
To glory through suffering, Through loss to great gain.
To His light through darkness, Through blindness to sight,
His strength for my weakness, Through frailness to might.
J. Berger Johnson.

5. BLESSED ARE THE REVILED AND SLANDERED

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:11, 12.

“There was never one who walked among men more cruelly slandered than the Son of man. He was derided and mocked because of His unswerving obedience to the principles of God's holy law. They hated Him without a cause. Yet He stood calmly before His enemies, declaring that reproach is a part of the Christian's legacy, counseling His followers how to meet the arrows of malice, bidding them not to faint under persecution.

“While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character. That is in God's keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as “seeing Him who is invisible”; looking “not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.”

“Christ is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misrepresented by men. His children can afford to wait in calm patience and trust, no matter how much maligned and despised; for nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, and those who honor God shall be honored by Him in the presence of men and angels....

“In every age God's chosen messengers have been reviled and persecuted; yet through their affliction, the knowledge of God has been spread abroad. Every disciple of Christ is to step into the ranks, and carry forward the same work, knowing that its foes can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. God means that truth shall be brought to the front, and become the subject of examination and discussion, even through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated; every controversy, every reproach, every effort to restrict liberty of conscience, is God's means of awakening minds that otherwise might slumber.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 52-54.

“Jesus has not left you to be amazed at the trials and difficulties you meet. He has told you all about them, and He has told you also not to be cast down and oppressed when trials come. Look to Jesus, your Redeemer, and be cheerful and rejoice. The trials hardest to bear are those that come from our brethren, our own familiar friends; but even these trials may be borne with patience. Jesus is not lying in Joseph's new tomb. He has risen, and has ascended to heaven, there to intercede in our behalf.” Testimonies, Volume 7. page 128.

6. BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spoke unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shall thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou may prosper whither so ever thou goes.

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shall make thy way prosperous, and then thou shall have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whither so ever thou goes.” Joshua 1:1-9.

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” I Corinthians 16:13.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:10, 11.

“Our Shepherd is our captain. He guides us into the promised pastures, but He goes before us. Whatever dangers beset us, He is sufficient for all. We know not how often His arm protects us; we attribute to our own strength deliverance which He alone has wrought.” Dean Alford.

Courage, courage, fellow pilgrim, Though the way seem rough and long.
Listen, let me tell the secret: You can cheer it with a song.
Do you carry heavy burdens, Crushed beneath a weight of care?
Let me whisper, weary pilgrim, He will hear the feeblest prayer.

Face the battle, face it bravely. You've a Helper, strong is He;
Faithful is your God, believe it; Faith will bring the victory.
Faith can bring the shout of triumph in the long and darksome night;
Faith can view the Land of Promise, Flashing forth its glory bright.

Courage, courage, weary pilgrim; Courage, we are almost home.
Faith has caught the strains of music Wafting from that glorious home.
Lift your head; by faith behold it, Nearing now that happy shore.
Soon, if faithful, we shall enter Heaven-at home forevermore. MRS. T. Buchman

7. NO HELP IN EGYPT

“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! Yet He also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back His words. But will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out His hand, both he that helps shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.” Isaiah 31:1-3.

“Woe to the rebellious children, says the Lord, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin. That walk to go down into Egypt, and have

not asked at My mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion." Isaiah 30:1-3.

"The warnings given in the word of God to the children of Israel were meant not merely for them, but for all who should live upon the earth. He says to them: "Woe to the rebellious children.... that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at My mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! If the Lord reproved His people anciently because they neglected to seek counsel of Him when in difficulty, will He not be displeased today if His people, instead of depending on the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness to lighten their way, turn from Him in their test and trial, for the aid of human beings who are as erring and inefficient as themselves? Where is our strength? Is it in men who are as helpless and dependent as ourselves, who need guidance from God even as we do?" Testimonies to Ministers, pages 380, 381.

"The world, it is said, is always looking for men who are not for sale; men who are honest, sound from center to circumference, true to the heart's core. Men who know their message and tell it; men who know their places and fill them. Men who know their own business and tend to it; men who will not lie, shirk, or dodge; men who are not too lazy to work, nor too proud to be poor. Men who are willing to eat what they have earned, and wear what they have paid for; men who are not afraid to say 'No' with emphasis, and who are not ashamed to say, 'I can't afford it.'"

Just go on with your daily tasks, doing the best you can in your circumstances, and wait for God's time. if you are a disciple of Christ, God is going to make something very beautiful, very noble, out of your life when His work on it is finished J. R. Miller.

Eagles In A Storm

Did you know that an eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks?

The eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm.

While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it. The eagle does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm.

When the storms of life come upon us - and all of us will experience them - we can rise above them by setting our minds and our belief toward God.

The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them. God enables us to ride the winds of the storm that bring sickness, tragedy, failure, and disappointment in our lives. We can soar above the storm. Remember, it is not the burdens of life that weigh us down, it is how we handle them.

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31. [Waiting on the Lord means we are trusting in Him fully.]