

DAY BY DAY

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

4.13: OUR NEED OF CHRIST

1. CHRIST SUFFERED FOR US

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

“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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Isaiah 53:1-11.

“When God's written word was given through the Hebrew prophets, Satan studied with diligence the messages concerning the Messiah. Carefully he traced the words that outlined with unmistakable clearness Christ's work among men as a suffering sacrifice and as a conquering King. In the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures he read that the One who was to appear, was to be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter,” “His visage ... so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” The promised Savior of humanity was to be “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; ... smitten of God, and afflicted;” yet He was also to exercise His mighty power in order to “judge the poor of the people.” He was to “save the children of the needy,” and “break in pieces the oppressor.” These prophecies caused Satan to fear and tremble; yet he relinquished not his purpose to thwart, if possible, the merciful provisions of Jehovah for the redemption of the lost race. He determined to blind the eyes of the people, so far as might be possible, to the real significance of the Messianic prophecies, in order to prepare the way for the rejection of Christ at His coming.” Prophets and Kings, 686, 687.

When the Savior finally appeared “in the likeness of men,” and began His ministry of grace, Satan could but bruise the heel, while by every act of humiliation or suffering Christ was bruising the head of His adversary. The anguish that sin has brought, was poured into the bosom of the Sinless; yet while Christ endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, He was paying the debt for sinful man.” Prophets and Kings, 701.

2. REJOICING IN AFFLICTION

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Habakkuk 3:17, 18.

“In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan, those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. But to the obedient is given the promise, “He shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. “They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.” To that time of distress the prophet Habakkuk looked forward, and his words express the faith of the church: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” The Desire of Ages, 122.

“What a solemn, sacred, important work is the endeavor to represent Christ's character and His Spirit to our world! . . . All need to be under the inspiring, assuring conviction that they are indeed wearing the yoke of Christ and carrying His burden.

“Trials will be met in this work; discouragement will press in upon the soul as teachers see that their labors are not always appreciated. Satan will exercise his power over them in temptations, in discouragement, in afflictions of bodily infirmities, hoping that he can cause them to murmur against God, and close their understanding to His goodness, mercy, and love, and the exceeding weight of glory that is to be the reward of the overcomer.

“But God is leading these souls to more perfect confidence in their heavenly Father. His eye is upon them every moment; and if they lift their cry to Him in faith, if they will stay their souls upon Him in their perplexities, the Lord will bring them forth as gold purified. The Lord Jesus has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5.

“God may permit a train of circumstances to come that will lead them to flee to the Stronghold, by faith pressing to the throne of God amid thick clouds of darkness; for even here His presence is concealed. But He is ever ready to deliver all that trust in Him. Gained in such a way, the victory will be more complete, the triumph more sure; for the tried sore oppressed, and afflicted one can say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Job 13:15. Testimonies 6, 156, 157.

3. CHRIST'S YOKE AND BURDEN

“Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.

“In the vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown the danger of the people of God in looking to Brother and Sister White, and thinking that they must come to them with their burdens, and seek counsel of them. This ought not so to be. They are invited by their compassionate, loving Savior, to come unto Him, when weary and heavy laden, and He will relieve them. In Him they will find rest. In taking their perplexities and trials to Jesus, they will find the promise in regard to them fulfilled. When in their distress they feel the relief which is found alone in Jesus, they obtain an experience which is of the highest value to them.

“Brother and Sister White are striving for purity of life, striving to bring forth fruit unto holiness; yet they are only erring mortals. Many come to us with the inquiry, Shall I do this? Shall I engage in that enterprise? Or, in regard to dress, Shall I wear this or that article? I answer them, You profess to be disciples of Christ. Study your Bibles. Read carefully and prayerfully the life of our dear Savior when He dwelt among men upon the earth. Imitate His life, and you will not be found straying from the narrow path. We utterly refuse to be conscience for you. If we tell you just what to do, you will look to us to guide you, instead of going directly to Jesus for yourselves. Your experience will be founded in us. You must have an experience for yourselves, which shall be founded in God. Then can you stand amid the perils of the last days, and be purified and not consumed by the fire of affliction through which all the saints must pass in order to have the impurities removed from their character preparatory to receiving the finishing touch of immortality.” Testimonies 2, 118, 119.

“Their hearts are so overgrown with thorns and with the cares of this life that heavenly things can find no place in them. Jesus invites the weary and heavy laden, with promises of rest if they will come to Him. He invites them to exchange the galling yoke of selfishness and covetousness, which makes them slaves to mammon, for His yoke, which He declares is easy, and His burden, which is light. He says, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls.” He would have them lay aside the heavy burdens of worldly care and perplexity, and take His yoke, which is self-denial and sacrifice for others. This burden will prove to be light. Those who refuse to accept the relief which Christ offers them, and continue to wear the galling yoke of selfishness, tasking their souls to the utmost in plans to accumulate money for selfish gratification, have not experienced the peace and rest found in bearing the yoke of Christ, and lifting the burdens of self-denial and disinterested benevolence which Christ has borne in their behalf.” Testimonies 3, 384, 385.

4. CHRIST'S LOVE ENDURING

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35-39.

“The word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells us of the power of prayer, how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. By sin, earth was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Savior, will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, “This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.” The Desire of Ages, 113.

“That God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith, will not pass by one of His faithful, self-sacrificing children. Of him that walks righteously it is written: “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” “They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.” “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him

also freely give us all things?" He who lightened the cares and anxieties of His widowed mother, and helped her to provide for the household at Nazareth, sympathizes with every mother in her struggle to provide her children food. He who had compassion on the multitude because they "fainted, and were scattered abroad," still has compassion on the suffering poor." Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 163.

"Christ died, not to alter God's will, but to fulfill it; not to satisfy God's anger, but to manifest His love; and therefore the cross proclaims that sin and suffering, however they have got into the world, are contrary to God's will." E. J. Hardy.

He died the malefactor's death, the Christ; Guiltless, pronounced by Roman judge, "no crime,"
The awful ending of that life sublime, Betrayed, and sold, and like a slave was priced;
Yet He and Death kept the prophetic tryst; He in young manhood, fragrant as "wild thyme
And valley lilies," meeting God's own time.

In shame and cruel insult died the Christ For me, for you, for all the world's great needs,
The guilt-sodden world in cancerous sin. Alarmed they are at noonday sun's veiled face,
Yet do not know that that rude cross, where bleeds God's Son, is His great bridge to life within,
To deathless home with Him, all by His grace. Milton C. Wilcox.

5. PERSONAL RELIGION

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20.

This is a personal invitation; it is to 'any man' not to 'any organization or group'. A personal experience in God is necessary to the salvation of every soul. This is strongly and repeatedly emphasized throughout the Scriptures of truth. The call of God is primarily not to man in a community sense, but to each individual. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"And the Spirit and the, bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

"In response to this call there must be the exercise of a personal faith. "If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Romans 10:9-11.

"For the acceptance or rejection of this call every man is made accountable. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12. And in the day of final reckoning every man will be judged according to his works, and the reward will be proportionate to the fruits of his labors. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works!" Matthew 16:27.

"Of that day of final awards the prophet Ezekiel declares, "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, said the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Ezekiel 14:20.

"One great danger which has threatened the church in every age is that this vital truth of a personal and practical Christianity would be forgotten. Israel of old forgot it. In consequence the form was substituted for the substance, the letter for the spirit, and trust was placed in service and ceremony rather than in

real heart work and personal experience. We may have a sort of denominational religion, but fail in obtaining a personal experience in God. Against this we are warned in the message to the Laodicean church as found in Revelation 3:14-21.

“Belief of a system of doctrines or faith in the triumph of a cause cannot be substituted for faith in a personal Savior. Faith in the conversion of others will not avail for the application of the blood of Christ to our own needs. We must see Jesus as our personal Savior, as the one who forgives our sins, and who speaks peace to our souls. He must dwell in our lives by His blessed Spirit, purifying our purposes, subduing our iniquities, and conforming us to the likeness of the divine example. With this personal knowledge of Christ in our lives, we shall be able to bring others to the same fountain of cleansing and blessing.”

6. DO YOU KNOW THE LORD?

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

You may be a member of the church; but there are some members of the church, some professed Christians, who really do not know the Lord. We are all busy men and women, busy in our individual experiences of gaining a livelihood and caring for our families. We are a busy denomination. We have a great and important message to carry to the world. We are straining every energy to carry it forward.

But we may do all this and not know the Lord Jesus Christ. We may give liberally to missions, be faithful in the payment of tithes and strict observers of the Sabbath of the Lord so far as outward form is concerned, and yet not have reached in our own Christian experience a real knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We may give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies for the burning, and still lack the essential quality of love. We may have a name to live, and yet our experience is a dead one?

What is it to know the Lord Jesus Christ? It is to know Him in all the blessed relationships which He sustains to the human family. It is to know Him as a friend, the dearest friend in all the world. It is to know Him as a loving Father, a sin-pardoning Savior.

To know the Lord is to know the power of His resurrection in a changed life; not as a Savior alone in the great eternity beyond, but as a Savior here and now; as one that cleanses from sin here, today. Do you know the Lord in this relationship? He can give us the victory over your temper, over evil surmising, over envy and jealousy, over evil speaking? He is able to do all this, and added to His great power is His willingness to do it. The joy of the Christian life is the joy of victory, of triumph over sin, in personal experience; and this personal triumph it is the privilege of every disciple of the Lord to have.

7. A RESOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:10-14.

How fast the years come and go! It does not seem twelve long months-fifty-two weeks-three hundred sixty-five days-since first we began these studies. But now it has gone; it will nevermore return. Only in memory shall we live over again its hopes and fears, its successes and failures, its joys and sorrows. For some its pathway has been strewn with flowers; others have found only the briars and thorns. It has

brought to some new hopes, enlarged opportunities, achievement of cherished plans. To others have come blasted ambitions, shattered ideals, heartbreaking disappointments. Some have met failure and defeat in Christian experience, others progress and victory.

The memory of the past will prove a curse to the extent that we live under the pall and shadow of its failures and sorrows. It will prove a blessing to the extent that we learn from past experiences lessons for future need.

There can be no standing still; not to advance is to fall back. Our times are in God's hand. By His grace we may make the future what we will in its influence upon our eternal destiny. The future, as the past, may bring trials and tears. The road may lead over stony places where we shall suffer bruises and bleeding. We may lose position, property, friends, and even health; but these experiences may prove God's workmen to chisel and polish us, as rough, unhewn stones, for His heavenly temple. By submitting to Him our wills, by permitting Him to choose our ways and work out His great purpose in our lives, we may make of the New Year a triumphant success.

Let us say with the great apostle: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We face a future of momentous possibilities. We know not what strange and mysterious experiences may come to the nations of earth or to us as individuals; but the loving and all-wise Father knows, and we may rest securely in His care. He says to us as to Joshua, when he was facing a strange and unknown world: "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 goeth." Joshua 1:7.

The Pilgrim's Journey

"I met a pilgrim on the way, A gray-haired man and aged;
I asked if calm had been the day, Or if the tempest raged.
"The storms were fierce," he made reply; "But mid the darkness dense,
My hand was in my Father's hand, And none could pluck me thence."

"Were there no dangers by the way, No fiery darts to meet?
Were there no cunning snares prepared For thy unwary feet?"
"The path with danger was beset; But this was my defense;
My hand was in my Father's hand, And none could pluck me thence."

"Did thou not suffer trials sore, And sorrows hard to bear?
Where there not seasons of distress, And days of anxious care?"
"Ah! though I suffered pain and loss, This was my recompense:
My hand was in my Father's hand, And none could pluck me thence."

"There is a valley dark and deep Where thou alone must go,
Does thou not fear to enter there?" He smiled and answered,
"No, For as I journey calmly on, Until He calls me hence,
My hand is in my Father's hand, And none can pluck me thence."
Elizabeth Rosser.