

TO MY SON

An Expositional Study of II Timothy

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CHAPTER SIX -

THE GOSPEL GOLD MINE

II Timothy 2:8-10

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

WHAT a gold mine of truth and blessing the passage is: every sentence an ingot, every word a nugget, the whole immensely wealthy with the glittering commodity of the Gospel. We discover that

THE GOLD IS ACTUALLY STORED IN CHRIST

In verse 10 we learn (a) That all is "**in Christ Jesus**", It is one of the outstanding emphases of the New Testament that everything that the believer possesses is "**in Him**"; over and over again does this phrase occur, and also the companion phrase "**in Christ**," You find this thought very prominent in the Epistle to the Ephesians; indeed, I am going to be so rash, and so bold, as to suggest that the many commentators who say that the key thought of that Epistle is the phrase "**in heavenly places** [the heavenlies]" might be asked whether they are quite right. Their phrase is certainly the theme of one early section of the Epistle; but is not the sum and substance of the whole to be found in the words, "**in Him**," "**in Christ**," "**in the Lord**"?

All that we Christians need is in Him; but we are ourselves also in Him - so that in Him "our need and His great fulness meet". Imagine a bitterly cold evening, whereon a poor, hungry, ill-clad, shivering mortal is standing gazing into the dining room window of a great London house. The table is laden with good things in abundance (for this is not war-time) and the man realises that, with what is there, and what is to come, all his appetite and need could be fully supplied - it is all in the House, stored up in there.

Fairy stories may legitimately take unexpected turns; so, as the occupants of this house are kindly folk, and as they observe the necessitous man and his eager hungry looks, a footman is

told to go to the door, and to invite him to come in. Now see what a change is wrought in his circumstances and condition. All that he needs is in the House; and, wonder of wonders, he also is in the House - his need and its great fulness meet. It is no fairy tale - for "**we have not followed cunningly devised fables**" (II Peter 1:16), but plain unvarnished truth, that a like blessed propinquity exists for all believers, seeing that supplies and suppliants are both alike in Him.

But our passage goes further From verse 8 we deduce (b) That this all is not only in Him, but is He. The beautiful truth emerges that He not only gives the Gold, but is the Gold; not only provides the Gospel, but is the Gospel.

Let the first reader of this Letter, and every subsequent reader, "remember" that fact - that he has to do, not merely with a thing, however grand; not merely with an experience, however glorious; but with a Person, infinitely wonderful, and blessedly adequate. Note, then, how He is presented here.

(i) His Person - "**of the seed of David**". It is His humanity that is stressed at this point, for He can only legitimately die for the sins of man if He Himself is Man; the only admissible "**mediator between GOD and man [is] the Man, Christ Jesus**", as we learn from 1 Timothy 2:5 - at the other side He must, of course, be GOD; but this side He must be Man and that is the emphasis here.

How truly human He always showed Himself to be: it was no pretence, no make-belief.

- In the Home growing naturally, as other children, mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially, Luke 2:52.
- In the Workshop-toiling just like every other artisan in the village, as the Carpenter, Mark 6:3.
- In the Desert - facing the full force of the devil's temptation like ourselves, Matthew 4:1; Hebrews 4:15.
- On the Road - feeling, as any man would, the pangs of hunger, if he left home before breakfast, Matthew 21:18.
- At the Graveside - so closely entering into the grief of His friends as to weep with them, John 11:35. [By the way, this is only the shortest verse in the Bible in the English. In the Greek it has sixteen letters, but I Thessalonians 5:16 has only fourteen letters!]
- In the Boat - completely exhausted, He falls into so heavy a sleep that even the violent storm fails to rouse Him.

Yes, His humanity is all so real; and in all the storms and stresses of our human life it is a refreshing, and steadying, and stimulating habit to "**remember that Jesus Christ**," as the opening phrase of our eighth verse tells us.

But you will notice that it is not only His humanity that is underlined here, but His Davidic descent. Dr. E. F. Scott, of New York, in the Moffatt Commentary, reminds us that "for primitive Christianity the descent from David was most important as the guarantee that He was the Messiah foretold in prophecy".

(ii) His Cross- "**the dead**," is another thing indicated. It was for that He came to take upon Him our flesh. In the deep necessities of things, He had to die; but GOD cannot die. So He became man that He might have a body to die with - as Hebrews 10:5 says, "**a body hast Thou prepared Me**"; "**Who His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree**," I Peter 2:24. But was that Death accepted at the Court of Heaven? The answer is in

(iii) His Resurrection - "**was raised**". It is most important to remember that the New Testament nowhere teaches that, by the exercise of His own mighty power, He raised Himself. Some of our hymns say that; but the Bible never does. He could have done so, as He specifically states in John 10:18, for He still retained His Deity; but He did not do so. Over and over again the phrase comes, "**God raised Him**."

On the very few occasions when it says just that He rose again, it is dealing merely with the fact that He did, not with the power by which He did. I myself think that this is the reconciling explanation of the exception to the rule, which is found in John 2:19. In connection with the power thereof, it is more exactly true to say, not that He rose, but that He "**was raised**".

A familiar illustration will make it all plain. Suppose a man imprisoned, to serve some sentence.

Imagine that by his own strength and resourceful wit he breaks out. The crime remains unexpiated. and the law has dominion over him, and can arrest him, when found, and return him to his incarceration.

On the other hand, think of him as having completed his term, and of the Warden, the Governor's representative, the King's officer, coming and throwing open the door of his cell, and the gate of the prison, and bidding him go free. He has made atonement, he has served his sentence; the law has no further hold on him, has no more dominion over him.

Let us, in all reverence, transfer the figure to the case of our Lord JESUS. If He had by His own power forced His way out of the Tomb, we should not have known that the Sentence of Death was reckoned by GOD as having been fully and finally carried out. But the Governor (Psalm 8:1, 9) sent His officer, the angel, who "**rolled back the stone from the door**", Matthew 28:2 - and the Saviour came forth, in token that the sentence was completely served, the debt fully paid, the law utterly satisfied. The Cross was the payment; the resurrection was GOD's receipt. We now know that the demands of the law have no further claim, or hold, upon Him, nor upon us who believe, because we are "**in Him**" - "**death hath no more dominion over Him**," Romans 6:9; therefore, "**sin shall not have dominion over you**," Romans 6:14.

Well - in these ever to be "remembered" facts about the Lord, which make Him indeed to be the Gospel, Timothy is to find ground for his own steadfastness, and adequate rejoinder to those false teachers whom, according to Dean Alford, he would meet, and who flatly denied both the Incarnation and the Resurrection. So is the Gold stored in CHRIST. Then, next

THE GOLD IS ACQUIRED WEALTH FOR BELIEVERS

The apostle speaks of "**my Gospel**", as if, in some sense, he had acquired it for his own. At other times his stress on it was that it was "**the Gospel**". We all recollect his sublime intolerance of

anything else being considered a gospel at all, in Galatians 1:6-9. Now it is "**my Gospel**": all the gold of it acquired, not by his earnings, but by his Lord'S legacy, and made his own by the acceptance of personal faith. This is:

(a) For his own enjoyment. What enormous blessings come by way of the Gospel. See it

(i) *In the Nation* - the "**good news**" is brought to a darkest Africa, or to a pagan Britain, and you mark, in the course of time, the almost startling transformation. I wonder what beloved, intrepid Bishop Hannington would think of his Eastern Equatorial Africa to-day, or King Caractacus, or Queen Boadicea, of the change, in their Britain since the days they knew it, in A.D. 50 and A.D. 60, And

(ii) *In the Individual* - what countless, measureless blessings attend the personal reception of the Gospel.

The results that follow the acquisition of material wealth are but a pale illustration of what ensues from the possession of this spiritual gold, Here is a house - dilapidated, dirty, a disgrace to itself and to its road. One day, activities are observed, changes begin to appear - the garden is taking shape and beauty, window panes are mended and cleaned, woodwork is painted, curtains and decorations attract attention.

What has happened to the erstwhile repellent abode? Only this, that a rich tenant has come in to take up his residence. By reason of his mind and money he is able to transform the place. Just as the coming of the Gospel, in the Person of CHRIST, into a man's heart and life will (unless something is radically wrong) completely transfigure his whole character and conduct. To acquire such gold ministers to his own enjoyment.

But let us never for a single moment forget that the Gold is also meant

(b) For distribution to others. As the apostle uses that word "**my**" he would have us grasp that it is not only a Gospel for him to enjoy, but a Gospel for him to preach - a Gospel of such infinite and eternal worth to those others who need it that he is ready to "**suffer . . . even unto bonds,**" and to "**endure all things**" that they may have it. Our enrichment is for their enjoyment.

(i) Look at this in I Corinthians 1:5, "**in everything ye are enriched . . . in all utterance,**" Why the "**utterance**" in such a context? I presume that the good news of the riches is to be uttered abroad,

(ii) Even more clearly do we find it in 2 Corinthians 9:11, "**being enriched in everything to all bountifulness,**" His bounty to us prompting Our bounty to others, that "**through us**" they may thank GOD. I take it that we may all say this "**my**" of Paul's, as token that we have, by personal appropriation, acquired this wealth, which is Open to all believers who will thus have it. But let us underline it once more that this Gold of the Gospel is not for ourselves alone.

And then we take note that

THE GOLD IS ALWAYS FREE FOR CIRCULATION

We have heard of money kept secretly rolled up in an old stocking, or locked up in the vaults: there is no manner of restriction imposed upon the distribution of this Gold. The people who need it are so needy that it would be a tragedy, and a crime, to hoard it up, and not to hand it on - **"if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost,"** says 2 Corinthians 4:3, so we rejoice to know that it is free from all restraint.

"The word of God is not bound," says Our verse 9 - this phrase is just another name for **"my gospel,"** which, in the strictest sense is not Paul's word, but GOD's word. In I Corinthians 2:1, he himself describes it as **"the testimony of God."**

It is true to call it Paul's word, with all its human and personal qualities and characteristics; but it is not the whole truth: the ultimate fact is that it was given to Paul by **"revelation of Jesus Christ"**, as he confesses in Galatians 1:12, and was GOD's word for sinful men. For the dissemination of that mighty word. the brave apostle was now brought **"even unto bonds,"** never again should he be free to broadcast the soul-saving, the life-changing, message as he had so loved to do, and so **"suffered"** for doing.

He was now **"bound"** - but even yet **"the Word of God was not bound."**

It is true to say that

(a) *Age cannot bind it.* On the one hand it is, in itself, both ancient and modern - immensely old, yet extraordinarily up-to-date: age does not tie it to an arm-chair, nor condemn it to a somnolent impassivity. It is as vigorous as ever it was. Nearly nineteen hundred years have run their Course since Paul dictated these words to his son, but the Word, the Gospel, has not lost one iota of its pristine virility. On the other hand, its message is valid for both old and young - those with life behind them, and those with life before them, find in it alike their way to GOD, their way with GOD, their way for GOD.

No wonder that the apostle elsewhere exclaims (Romans 1:16), **"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is (still, in spite of its age) the power of God unto salvation to everyone [of whatever age] that believeth,"**

(b) *Language cannot bind it.* We take up our Bible, and find the Authorized Version so throbbing with life, so instinct with power. Whether the Word as a whole, or the Word of the Gospel in particular, it retains the original power of the original tongue.

The Hebrew, the Aramaic, the Greek - these were the vehicles of the inspiration; but the something like a thousand languages into which it has been translated possess the same power of conviction, conversion, compulsion, and comfort. Read, for example, the Annual Report, for any year, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and you will see how remarkably true it is that, in the myriad speech of mankind, the Word retains its freshness and freedom of mighty influence - language cannot impede that.

(c) *Persecution cannot bind it.* The enemy has tried to stamp it out. In our own country he has caused it to become a forbidden book, and ardent souls have had to read it in secret places, in

peril of their very lives: He has engineered great bonfires for its burning, when thousands of copies were consigned to the flame; but some were hidden, to break forth again in due time.

It is like a little seed dropped by chance into the soft earth of some roadway. The local authority has been paving the street, and very soon a great, heavy stone has been laid and hammered down upon our little seed, to its utter destruction. But wait: is it destroyed? In course of time, the very paving stone is moved by the life-power that was in the seed.

In modern Russia the hard, cold, dead stones of atheism were dumped down upon all religion, in the full expectation that the Word would be stifled; but we have lived to see that the plot has failed, and that the stones themselves have started to be lifted off.

(d) *Deficiency cannot bind it.* The great power has evidenced itself even upon those who might scarcely have been expected to understand it. There is no profounder book in circulation, and there are parts of it likely to baffle the keenest minds; yet quite uneducated folks have come to a wonderful grasp of its truths and its secrets. For it is ever true that GOD's things, as I Corinthians 2:14 reminds us, "**are spiritually discerned,**" and that, not by natural intellect but "**by faith we understand**", Hebrews 11:3.

So it is blessedly apparent that the Gospel cannot be chained: the Worker may suffer even "[b]unto bonds," but the Word is "not bound"!

Now for another thought

THE GOLD IS AMAZING FORTUNE FOR SINNERS

Paul speaks to Timothy about

(a) "The elect's sakes" - those who are the beneficiaries of GOD's choice. How amazing it is that, of His sovereign will, He should elect to save sinners! He did not stay to select the best of the bad bunch, He did not wait until they had been able to improve themselves a bit, but "**when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly . . . while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,**" Romans 5:6, 8, 10.

Feeble, sinners, enemies: what a crescendo of disability yet - He brushed aside all the disqualification, and, by the exercise of His Divine Royal Prerogative, He elected us. Us? Yes; if we are true believers, it is a sure token that we are among His elect. Do not forget that, as Ephesians 1:4 has it, we are "**chosen in Him**".

If we have chosen the Lord JESUS as our Saviour and Lord, we may be quite sure that it happened because, first and foremost, He chose us. Listen to Him, in John 15:16, "**Ye have not chosen Me [merely] but I have chosen you . . .**" What absolute assurance of salvation this gives us, since it depends, not on our initial merit, nor on our subsequent doings, but on His almighty grace and sovereign will.

These sinners, then, as yet not brought in, are the apostle's deep concern,

(b) "That they may . . . obtain the salvation".

It is there for them; but they must come and get it.

(i) *We have the Fact of the Gospel* - "**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,**" I Timothy 1:15.

By the way, do you feel that that last phrase is but an emotional exaggeration? Well, I suppose we shall always think that until we get as near to GOD as Paul did. They who are the holiest are the most conscious of their sinfulness. We who are so far off can scarcely grasp that. His coming to die, coming to save: there lies the Gospel for sinners.

(ii) *We get the Proclamation of the Gospel* - Paul, with others beside, and Timothy among them, and you and I also, seeking to let sinners know the good fortune that awaits them, if only they will come and "**obtain**" it. Have you occasionally read this advertisement in the news paper: "Will Thomas Smith, last heard of at So-and-so, communicate at once with Messrs. Somebody and Some Such, of Somewhere, when he will hear of something to his advantage"?

I would strongly advise Tom to act without delay, for there is a fortune involved.

(1) A relative left it. Tom had been the scapegrace of the family; but this particular uncle always had a sneaking affection for him, and, in spite of his unworthy behaviour, he had decided to leave all his money to him.

(2) The lawyer advertised it; or Tom might never have known about it.

(3) Thomas obtained it by applying as quickly as ever he could.

It is somewhat like that with this Fortune of Gold of the Gospel - GOD has made it, and bequeathed it to sinners; His servants are to advertise it, that sinners may learn of their good fortune; and then, sinners are to come, and by the exercise of their own personal faith in the Lord the Saviour, "**obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.**"

Do you remember Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*? What mighty efforts Amyas Leigh and his company made, what terrible sufferings they endured, what losses they sustained, in searching South America for the mythical Manoa and its glittering gold. Disappointed, disillusioned, you recall Parson John Brimble-Combe's lament, "I think the gold of Manoa is like the gold which lies where the rainbow touches the ground - always a field beyond you." The gold of the Gospel is not like that. It is not mythical, but real; it is not gotten by effort, suffering, and loss, but by the simple appropriation of faith; it is not beyond us, but beside us, in the Person of our Lord Himself. What good news for the sinner; what amazing fortune. One last thing about it

THE GOLD IS AUTHENTIC CURRENCY IN HEAVEN

Our passage closes "**with eternal glory.**" It has met the sinner very much on earth; it has altered his whole condition by enrichment with supernal gold; and now, at last, it brings him unchallenged into glory. Unchallenged, for his gold is as an "Open Sesame" at the gates of Heaven: that which is true coinage here is recognised and accepted hereafter, You can't get

through the Gates without paying; yet you have nothing to pay with - not your own merit, not your own deeds, will suffice. Be thankful that Someone Else has paid for your admission - with His precious Blood, with the Gospel Gold.

I happen to be a member of the Surrey County Cricket Club. One summer morning some years ago, as I was making my way towards the Kennington Oval, to see the August Bank Holiday match between Surrey and Notts, I observed a boy looking very hungrily and longingly through the Jack Hobbs gates, as if he would give anything to go in, but hadn't the price of admission. I paid his entrance, and took him into the Pavilion with me, where, his eyes aglow all day, he spent those hours in unalloyed "glory".

Happy are they who, in the sense of Revelation 22:14, "**enter in through the gates**"; their entrance was procured by gospel gold, given them by GOD, so that they called it "**my**" (v. 8); and they were then admitted not to a day of glory, like my boy friend, but to "**eternal glory**".

Some years ago I read, with great profit, a little book by that fine Bible teacher, the late Mr. George Goodman - one of the brethren commonly called "The Brethren", to so many of whom, as to him, I owe so much. This was an exposition of Romans 1-8 - a portion that he had made so peculiarly his own. What concerns me at the moment is the glorious Title that he gave his book: he called it *From Guilt, Through Grace, To Glory*. What a perfect description of those marvellous chapters. Such is the Journey, financed by Heaven's Gold, and such the Journey's End.

Once more we read through our present appointed passage, and as we rise from its perusal, we are constrained to exclaim, "What a Gold mine!" This "**word fitly spoken is like apples of gold,**" as Proverbs 25:11 says; in Tennyson's lines

"Jewels . . .
That on the stretched fore-finger of all Time
Sparkle for ever"

~ end of chapter 6 ~
