

# THROUGH NIGHT TO MORNING

by

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## SERMON EIGHTEEN -

### GRACE

**"Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."**

**"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16)**

As a party of us went through the Tower of London our guide took us first into the dungeons with their darkness and gruesome memories. Here Guy Fawkes was tortured; there Anne Askew was broken on the wheel, and there again Sir Walter Raleigh was incarcerated for twelve years. Around the dingy, damp walls are the rusty iron staples to which miserable prisoners were chained.

Out of this gloomy, gruesome place we were led into the fresh air and then into the jewel room where the crown jewels and other precious stones sparkled in the sunlight. The gloom of the dungeons made the jewel room all the brighter.

I confess to a similar experience in the study of this chapter. Verses and are a trifle gruesome. "The sharp two edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow," does gruesome work and the experience it gives us is not pleasant. It is the surgeon's knife faithfully applied without the deadening influence of an anesthetic. Even the comfort received from the sword's bending back the neck of evil and flaying it alive is not of the soothing kind.

However, we now come out of these gruesome memories into the jewel room, full of light and sparkling gems. It is the throne room of Grace in which are the crown jewels which we may not only view but possess. They are seven in number and each one of us may have them all.

### ACCESS TO GOD'S POWER

I. The first crown jewel in this diadem of grace is the fact that we HAVE ACCESS TO GOD'S POWER. A throne means power. Back of it stand the army and navy ready to support its claims. Back of it are all the wealth and prestige of the realm. Back of it is the life of every patriotic citizen. Back of it are all the alliances with friendly powers. The throne of grace means that GOD is now ruling in the power of His love and we have access to that power. Righteousness,

justice, holiness all combine in CHRIST to support the claim of grace.

### **STEADFASTNESS IN CONFESSION**

. The second crown jewel in the diadem of grace is OUR STEADFASTNESS OF CONFESSION. "**Let us hold fast our profession.**" When one has just accepted CHRIST as Saviour and feels the peace of forgiveness and the joy of reconciliation, it is easy to confess Him before men. We would like to tell all the world that we trust and love Him. But after the ardour of the first experience has lost its freshness, the danger is that we lose our steadfastness in confession. The lamp is lighted, but it is under a bushel. The flag is in camp, but not in the breeze. We are doing business, but the sign over the door has fallen down and we have neglected to replace it. The tree is alive, but it has no leaves.

### **SYMPATHY WITH WEAKNESSES**

. The third crown jewel in the diadem of grace is SYMPATHY WITH WEAKNESSES, JESUS, our High Priest, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities and His grace enables us to be touched with a feeling of each other's infirmities.

CHRIST is not a mere official doing business for us. Our weaknesses move His compassion.

Note the difference between infirmity and sin:

- Infirmity is the weakness of a good thing like weak faith, weak love, weak hope, weak body.
- Sin is always and everywhere an evil, not to sympathize with but to destroy.

CHRIST is not touched with a feeling of our sins. He bore them in His own body on the tree and they broke His heart with their crushing weight of guilt and pollution. He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Against all sin and sinful tendencies He bears the drawn sword. There is no truce in the battle between darkness and light, disease and health, sin and holiness, death and life.

In the sphere of right and wrong CHRIST is relentless against wrong. In the realm of law, justice burns with righteous indignation, while in the realm of love, mercy melts with tenderest pity.

Through the atoning sacrifice of CHRIST, justice and mercy unite in making the throne of grace. GOD can now be merciful to sinners without the sacrifice of justice.

It is joy for us to be touched with the feeling of another's strength. This fact accounts for hero worship. We are mastered by the force of our hero's character or achievements. What we call personal magnetism is more than anything else the response of our nature to strength in another. It is not so easy to be touched with a feeling of weaknesses in others. Their weaknesses repel, if they do not disgust us. To pity may be to despise and then to turn away from.

### **SINLESS TEMPTATION**

. The next crown jewel of grace is SINLESS TEMPTATION. CHRIST "**was tempted in all**

**points as we are yet without sin."** He Who bore the guilt of sin for us also endured the temptation of the Devil for us. He died that we might live, and he conquered that we might conquer. He met the adversary with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of GOD, the same sword, true and tried, which He gives to us.

## **COURAGE TOWARD GOD**

The fifth crown jewel is COURAGE TOWARD GOD. "**Let us come boldly,**" that is, with liberty of speech. We sometimes lose our liberty of speech to men and we realize that we lost our testimony. But losing our liberty of speech toward GOD means that our prayer life has declined.

We need to be bold before GOD in asking all He has promised. "**Whatever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive it and ye shall have it.**" "**If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**"

- Do you desire health that you may with it glorify GOD? Ask for it.
- Do you desire success that you may glorify GOD? Ask for it.

"**My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**" Is your need great? Boldly ask for a full supply. Is your need little? Be just as bold in asking for its supply. It is easier to lose our liberty of speech in praying for little things than for great. "**All your need**" covers everything.

If liberty of speech in public prayer remain after liberty of speech in private prayer has departed, it is formal, hollow and powerless. The secret prayer life is the source of the public prayer life. If the fountain dries up, the stream will cease to flow.

Our courage to pray depends upon our realization of the fact that "**CHRIST EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US**"

Our prayers ever need His intercession. He is our daysman.

He takes our prayers and makes them presentable to the Father.

A little child went into the garden to gather a bouquet of flowers for mother. When mother received them, the flowers were mixed with weeds and some trash. But mother's skilful fingers soon removed the unsightly things and made the bouquet fit for a place on the table in the parlour.

Our holiest acts of devotion need the touch of CHRIST to remove the selfishness, insincerity and coldness which are apt to be there. But He knows how to take our prayers and make them what they ought to be.

## **WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE MERCY**

A sixth crown jewel in the diadem of grace is a WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE MERCY. "**That we may obtain mercy.**" A learned man who had received honorary titles wrote after his own

name when he signed it "S. S," which he said meant" Sinner Saved."

We are quite ready to receive honours but receiving mercy carries with it the suggestion of sin which is dishonour, and the proud heart shrinks from the confession of sin which receiving mercy implies.

A king visited a prison and told the jailer that he wished to signalize his visit by giving at least one person his liberty. So he went round to all the cells and asked each prisoner why he was in jail. They all asserted their innocence of crime and blamed others for their misfortunes.

Finally he came to a poor down-cast fellow who said, "I was guilty of the crime for which I was committed and I am getting my just deserts." "That is the man," said the king, "I wish to liberate. He will do to trust with liberty." All the rest were willing to receive a favour from the king, but only this one was in an attitude of mind to receive his mercy.

"Only a sinner saved by grace" is not all there is of Christian experience, but it is the foundation on which everything else is built. There can be nothing else without it. The consciousness that all we receive of GOD is mercy and not merit is humiliating and only the power of GOD's grace can make us willing to acknowledge it.

It is through CHRIST, our High Priest and Intercessor, that mercy flows to us all the time.

He died that we might live and He lives that we may not die. "Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we are saved by His life" "Because He lives, we shall live also."

### **SEASONABLE SUPPLY**

The seventh crown jewel in the diadem of grace is SEASONABLE SUPPLY. "**That we may find grace to help in time of need.**" That we may find grace unto seasonable help, just the help we need, no more, no less, at the right time. We need grace, not only enough, but at the right time and administered in the right way.

In walking with GOD, we do not need grace for one big step, but, as in walking with a friend in the street, we need grace for a little step at a time.

- For breathing we need only one breath at a time.
- For food we need one meal at a time.
- For living we need just one heart beat at a time.

### **THROUGH CHRIST AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST WE RECEIVE ALL THESE CROWN JEWELS OF GRACE**

Through Him we receive the Spirit of power.

It was after His death, resurrection and ascension that the Spirit came at Pentecost and endued the church with power. And it is through the death, resurrection and ascension of CHRIST that the Spirit endues us to-day with power. "The Spirit was not yet" because CHRIST was not yet

glorified. When we give CHRIST the place of honour that is His due, the HOLY SPIRIT will work through us.

Through CHRIST, our living High Priest, **we can hold fast our profession.**

He even said to His disciples, "**When you are brought before magistrates, take no thought what you shall say.**" He promises to be with them and tell them at the time what to say. As High Priest He represents us in Heaven and represents GOD on earth. The HOLY SPIRIT is His own spiritual self dwelling with His people.

There is a legend that the Apostle Peter was fleeing from the persecution in Rome when CHRIST met him and said, "Peter, I am going back into the city to die, again." Whereupon Peter turned round and went back with Him. There is doubtless no truth in the legend, but there is a great truth suggested by it. When Peter was called upon to die and requested that he might be crucified with his head downwards, since he was not worthy to die like his Lord, it was CHRIST in him dying again and thus helping him to hold fast his confession.

In the picture "CHRIST or Diana?" you see the beautiful young woman to whom friends are appealing and begging her to offer incense to the heathen goddess, but you can see from the firm yet peaceful expression of her face that the living CHRIST is with her, making it possible for her to hold fast her confession.

Through CHRIST as our living High Priest *we receive the crown jewel of sympathy with the weaknesses of others.*

"**I live,**" says Paul, "**yet not I but Christ liveth in me.**" CHRIST who lives in me will love in me, and when I am tempted to despise the weak or become harsh toward the weakness of others, I say "O Thou, Who art touched with a feeling of my infirmities, let Thy heart of tender sympathy rule in my heart so prone to selfishness. Push out my heart of stone, O CHRIST, with Thy heart of flesh. Weep Thine own sympathy through my eyes and move my hand through Thy compassion."

Through the living CHRIST as High Priest *I may be tempted and endure without sin.*

CHRIST, Who was tempted in all points as I am, knows that I am tempted in all points as He was, and He knows how to make a way of escape.

He Who conquered Satan once can conquer him again, and when I am tempted by Satan, I will turn him over to his Master. When I do so, the victory is won before the battle is begun, for the Devil knows better than to meet his Conqueror in conflict again. If the flesh assails me, I turn to CHRIST, not to help me in the battle, but to fight for me.

Ancient wars were decided by duels, as in the case of David and Goliath. So are all my battles to be duels between my enemy and CHRIST. And not only Satan, but every enemy of my soul, is a conquered foe.

CHRIST was tempted in all points as we are, and the fact that He remained without sin proves

that He conquered in all points. He holds to-day the right of conquest over every enemy that attacks my soul. Conquered foes are weak-hearted. When light appears, darkness disappears. When CHRIST appears, all the powers of darkness flee. By faith let the living CHRIST fight your battles and you will never lose a victory.

Through the living CHRIST *I have courage toward GOD.*

CHRIST knows how to pray.

When the disciples heard Him pray, they felt that they had never prayed before or heard anyone else pray. So they came with the prayer, "**Lord, teach us to pray.**"

- At His baptism, with the open heavens above Him, He prayed.
- On the Mount of Transfiguration, with gleams of Heaven's glory about Him, He prayed.
- In the Garden, being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly.

I desire to live the prayer life - to pray without ceasing. How can I do it?

In the press of work and weariness that follows I am apt to forget or neglect. I, therefore, invite Thee, Thou living, everwakeful, watchful, prayerful CHRIST to live Thy prayer life in me. Pray through me when Heaven opens from above, as at Thy baptism, or hell from beneath, as in the Garden.

Thou knowest how to mingle petition and praise in due proportion. Fill this body, Thy temple, with the incense of praise and let Thine Own self-sacrificing soul express Itself through my soul.

Through the living CHRIST *we are willing to receive mercy.*

If the vision of the living CHRIST is before us all the time, there will be no lack of conviction of sin. It is when we look at imperfect, deformed men that we become pharisaical and think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.

Comparing ourselves with others, we may feel that we are better than others, but when we compare ourselves with CHRIST, the cry of the publican, "**God be merciful to me, a sinner,**" is the only prayer that can express our feelings.

A perpetual vision of CHRIST compels us to walk humbly before GOD.

Through the living CHRIST *we find seasonable help.* How seasonable He was in dealing with His disciples. He gave them truth only as they could bear it.

- When they needed rebuke, He was faithful enough to give it.
- When they were in sorrow, He spoke just the words of comfort they needed.
- When they were perplexed, He gave them guidance.
- When they were depressed, He gave them encouragement.
- When Peter had sinned, He gave him the look that he needed to break his heart and send him out to weep over his sin!

And now that Peter has repented, He says, "**Go tell my disciples AND PETER,**" mentioning his name lest he might think that now he is no disciple at all.

Thy work, not mine, O CHRIST,  
Speaks gladness to my heart.  
It tells me all is done;  
It bids my fear depart.

Thy tears, not mine, O CHRIST,  
Have wept my guilt away  
And turned this night of mine  
Into a blessed day.

Thy wounds, not mine, O CHRIST,  
Can heal my bruised soul;  
Thy stripes, not mine, contain  
The balm that makes me whole.

Thy death, not mine, O CHRIST,  
Has paid the ransom due.  
A thousand deaths like mine  
Would have been all too few.

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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