

Christ is Victor

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“Coming to Jesus for Rest”

The lives of people are so complicated today that they defy any easy solution. The problems of men simply gnaw at their hearts until sudden sickness or even death overtake them. Highly educated men too have not learnt to overcome these emotions and passions, which run away with their better sense and ruin their families.

Has God got a solution for our problems or is He only a sentimental emblem, a picture to hang on your wall? The Living God has categorically told us: “Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” This is a promise to you and to me. Either this promise is true, or it is one of the greatest falsehoods ever uttered. But let’s be careful now, for He who uttered these words, the Lord Jesus, is the One in whom there is no shadow of turning. The Bible says of Jesus, “*who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*” (1 Peter 2:22). So it’s He, the Saviour, the sinless One, who spoke these words of invitation and promise: “*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28).

Within my own personal knowledge, I have seen and met thousands and thousands of people who tested these words of the Lord Jesus and found them true. They went to Jesus when all seemed lost, when their little world was blown to bits, when they knew there was no hope for them, and they found Him to be true and He gave them rest.

Among this number of men and women, young and old, who had found peace, rest and forgiveness in Jesus, were men whom their loved ones had given up as incorrigible, irretrievably lost and even those who had been on the verge of suicide.

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Christ is Victor
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“God’s Thoughts Guiding our Way”

“Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Psalm 139:5-6).

How does God be behind and before us? He has placed His thoughts behind and before us. Who makes heaven? It is God’s thought. It is completely controlled and governed by God’s thought. In heaven you will find God’s thought in action. God made Eden as a small heaven. God alone was coming and sowing His thought in that couple [Adam and Eve] there. They were very safe and the atmosphere of heaven was there. They were getting filled with God’s thought. There came another person there who began to sow his thoughts and create doubts in [about] God’s thought. You must be careful whom you talk to and whom you associate with. They may sow poisonous thoughts into you. All your thoughts must be tested by God. During my individual prayer God used to sift my thoughts and remove the thoughts which were not of God. Some thoughts were getting established in me, just at that time. I got a good place and chance for deep prayer. Then God got an opportunity to show me that those thoughts were wrong thoughts. But for that, I would have been ruined. Satan sowed many thoughts in me that were just like God’s thoughts. Then God warned me: “Take them away, they are not of me.” I was delivered.

What is hell? When Satan’s thoughts get established in us then we are in hell and the emotions of hell rule in us. That was how Adam was deceived. Satan’s thoughts got established in Eve and she acted on them. Wrong thoughts may come to you, but when you act on them concrete hell comes into you. Wherever you go you will sow those thoughts and you will be a danger to others. Eve was like that. She went and tempted Adam. They could have waited till evening to consult God about the counsel of Satan. When Satan puts his thoughts into people he goads them with his haste, so that they may be destroyed forever. In marriage, Satan tries to deceive many. He tries to hurry them and make them observe a kind of secrecy about it. He wants to bind them for life to the wrong person. What need is there to hurry? Why not put it to the test of the counsel of God? David says God has beset him behind and before. God is wise.

“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!” (verse 17). Who has the greatest success in his life? ... he who has God’s thoughts established in him and acts accordingly. Jesus always worked

out God’s thought. Paul [the first-century apostle] did God’s will. “*Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace*” (Acts 18:9). When he had to go to Europe, a man from Macedonia came and spoke to him. Once a prophet took his belt and, tying his hands, said Paul would be bound that way. Paul said he was not afraid of death. God’s thought was that he should go to Jerusalem and he would go at all costs. There was once a young man here. I encouraged him to preach. In a certain place they kept on inviting him again and again. I thought there was something strange about that. That boy was not particular about God’s will. Soon the man who was inviting him got him married to his own daughter. There are people who view God’s work with many motives—selfish motives. God’s kingdom is not their concern. Many look at godly young people with selfish motives and sow wrong thoughts into them. Sometimes even missionaries offer good opportunities in a worldly way. How can young men be preserved for God? God the Holy Spirit is sowing into your heart God’s thought and is building up your thought life.

My relatives did not have God’s thoughts for me. My father alone did not give me counsel because I was doing God’s will. Be careful about the storehouse of your mind. “Search me O God.” “Are all my thoughts God’s thoughts? Have I any motives of earthly gain?” When you are careful in this way, your prayer will have the power to reach heaven. Nehemiah [a fifth-century BC Jew] once had to go back to Babylon [where Jews had been in captivity] to extend his leave. During his absence, a priest had married his son to Tobiah’s daughter [Tobiah was an enemy Ammonite]. A room in the temple—where the incense and holy things were kept—was cleaned and given to Tobiah. Nehemiah came back from Babylon and saw the temple defiled. Nehemiah got Tobiah’s things thrown out and Tobiah’s son and all others that had intermarried with the heathen were driven out. Nehemiah got the gates closed to stop business on the Sabbath. Merchants from Tyre and Sidon waited by the wall for the gates to open. But Nehemiah stopped that also. He warned the people about disobedience. Be careful about your thoughts. As Nehemiah threw out the things that belonged to Tobiah, let us throw out the devil’s thoughts. Let God’s thoughts be behind and before us.

—N. Daniel

Come unto Me, all ye that suffer under your heavy load of sin and guilt, and I will give you rest. The call is to all who are sorrowful and shaken by repeated shocks, the nervously exhausted, the weak in body and mind and the despairing. “Come unto Me,” the Saviour is calling you.

Once a college student wrote to me, “I have committed every conceivable sin, is there hope for me?” He had indulged in sexual perversions, which had left him weak and distraught. He seemed to despair that he was too far gone. I wrote, “Yes, there is hope for you, when you repent.” The Lord Jesus touched this boy and peace and forgiveness of sins was given to him.

I begin to wonder if some people are really serious in undertaking pilgrimages to all sorts of places. Some go to Bethlehem for Christmas. A place, however sacred, cannot meet your deepest soul-needs. It’s “a Person” you need—the Saviour Jesus, who beckons you, saying, “Come unto Me”.

People want a formula, a sentence or two of magical words, which will do the trick and bring relief, or they ask for a charm, a relic or talisman, which they may wear round their arm or neck, to give them a sense of security. They are prepared in their distress to make costly offerings, to win the favour of some mythical person or even some self-styled god-man. They are even prepared to join a church, as they would a club, in the fond hope that that may solve their problems.

No, my friend, it’s to a Person you must go, you must go to the Saviour who loves you and welcomes you, saying, “Come unto Me.”

Some time ago, I received a letter from a young man, who wrote saying that he had divorced his wife and was looking round to find a suitable girl to marry. His marriage broke down completely. His wife seemed to have no room at all for Jesus. From the continual tension, both of them had suffered nervous breakdowns too. I wrote to him, “No, God is able to bring your wife back to you. The Lord Jesus does not want any man to marry, when his wife is still alive, it amounts to adultery. Keep the door open for your wife to come back.” He paid heed to my words. He began to seek cleansing and deliverance from his sins and the powers of darkness and also to rebuild his broken home.

The Lord heard our prayer. This week it was such a joy to me to hear from that young man that he had married again the wife he had divorced, and that they were now living together. This family is living in the heart of Europe, where marriage bonds have become very weak and where the flesh seems to reign supreme. Now he wants me to go and preach in some of the towns in his area.

It’s the Lord Jesus who has built the home of these young people, who had become nervous wrecks by not making Jesus the centre of their home. The words of Jesus are not vain words, “Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” How true are these words!

No one can give rest to a man deep in his soul, not even your father or mother, but only Jesus. He has the power to give you that deep settled rest, as He has the power to forgive your sins.

Without your knowing it, there is a guilt complex in you. The unforgiven sins in your life set up a disturbance and restlessness in your sub-conscious mind. Guilt in the sub-conscious mind soon produces disease and such diseases overwhelm you; doctor and psychiatrist cannot help.

“Come unto Me and I will give you rest” is no smooth, soothing formula, which just sounds religiously refreshing at a distance. You need this rest and so do I. In fact life without this sweet rest and peace is not worth living. It is a hollow, painful, boring existence.

“I will give you rest” is a promise which does appear to be too good to be true, but notwithstanding it is real. Millions have tasted this peace and rest, which Jesus gives, and you too my dear listener must taste Him.

—Joshua Daniel

“Out there I found my God”

One Sunday in 1942, a bomber plane was rocking gently above the South Pacific Ocean. On board were five men of the US Army Air Corps, Transport Command, soon to enter a most gruelling adventure. One of them later recounted it in his book *We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing*: “On that sunny afternoon,” he wrote, “I was being sped at 200 miles an hour towards the greatest adventure any man can have.” That adventure, he observed, is that in which a man finds his God.

Into the ocean

The five men on board the plane were Bill Cherry (the commander and pilot), James Whittaker (co-pilot and author of the ordeal), John J. DeAngelis, James W. Reynolds, and John Bartek. In Hawaii, the men received a mission to fly the famous WW1 hero Captain Eddie Rickenbacker and his military aide Adamson on a secret mission for the US War Depart-

ment. Another engineer, Alex, recently discharged from hospital, also joined the team.

A serious problem began when the men missed their destination island, possibly due to a damaged instrument. Reynolds managed to contact a station that could help the lost plane, but it was about 1000 miles away. The plane did not have enough fuel to cover that journey. After three hours, Bill began the descent to sea. He would have to make an emergency landing.

“Do you fellows mind,” DeAngelis asked, “if I pray?”

Cherry snapped at him. Whittaker felt irritated; what a time to talk about praying! How often he later remembered those brash thoughts with shame in the coming days.

“Five feet!” Rickenbacker shouted. “Three feet!... One foot!”

“Cut it!” yelled Cherry.

Whittaker pulled the mainline switch, killing every electrical connection in the plane. The waves rolled around them. The shock and pressure of the landing were almost indescribable. Whittaker yanked

Reality Check!

**“WHEN THE
SON OF MAN
COMES, SHALL
HE FIND
FAITH ON THE
EARTH?”**

(JESUS, LUKE 18:8B)

the rip cord to free one of the two rubber rafts, and two others shoved up a tiny raft through the escape hatch.

The men had to get out fast.

“Out there”

Three small rafts were soon strung together in the shark-infested Pacific waters. They bore eight men equipped with air pumps, knives, pistols, flares, oars, fish hooks, fishing lines, life jackets, some personal items—and four oranges.

In one raft, two men kept their arms around each other to keep from falling out; in the tiniest, two had to sit with their legs over the other’s shoulders.

On the following day, each man received one segment of a little orange for breakfast.

When Johnny Bartek sat reading a New Testament, something kept Whittaker from heckling him.

The men baked in the sun that day; during the night, their teeth chattered. Weakened, sunburnt, and stung by salt spray, the agony of hunger and thirst increased. There had been no sign of ship or plane, and no reaction to their flares.

A small miracle happened on the fourth day when a sea swallow landed on Rickenbacker’s head. Swiftly caught, it served not only as bait for a catch of fish but food too.

On day five, enough minnows were scooped up for a snack. At length the rafts were pulled together for a prayer meeting and the men repeated the Lord’s prayer—or what they knew of it.

Adamson was reading aloud from the

New Testament when suddenly Cherry stopped him: “What was that last, Colonel? Where is that from?”

“It is from the Gospel According to Matthew,” came the reply, “Do you like it?”

“It’s the best thing I’ve heard yet. Read it again, Colonel.”

“Therefore, take ye no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For these are things the heathen seeketh. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Whittaker was somewhat impressed but finally dismissed the words with the decision that he would believe when he saw the food and drink. He was to see something “startlingly like proof” the following night.

When the cool of evening came on the sixth day, it was a while before the men could summon the energy to assemble the rafts and open the prayer service. Whittaker passively joined in the prayers; it appeared ridiculous to him that men as practical and “hardboiled” as they could expect a mumbling voice out on that waste of water to summon help for them. Cherry repeated his favourite passage about food and drink on the morrow.

“Always tomorrow,” thought Whit-

taker bitterly, “What is this, a come-on game?”

After finishing his verse from Matthew, Cherry’s voice went on, now praying, reverently addressing the Lord as “Old Master”, simply, directly, and in earnest.

“Old Master, we know this isn’t a guarantee that we’ll eat in the morning. But we’re in an awful fix, as You know. We sure are counting on a little something by day after tomorrow, at least. See what You can do for us, Old Master.”

That was how they all came to talk to God, simply, no “thees” and “thous”.

When Cherry had finished, he fired off their evening flare hoping that something might happen—and the unexpected did.

The flare’s propulsion charge was faulty and the flaming ball rose high into the air before falling back. It hissed and zigzagged around the water, illuminating the ocean. Two fishes, possibly attracted by the glare and scared by barracuda, broke the water and plumped into a raft. Breakfast was provided for day seven.

Yet the men had still not drunk any water since landing; their thirst was intense by now, and their mental state grew lower.

Water supply became a focus for prayer. Whittaker joined more wholeheartedly than ever before in one of the prayer sessions, perhaps because of his terrible need or because of a growing conviction that no human agency acting alone could save them. Cherry addressed the Lord: “Old Master, we called on You for food and You delivered. We ask You

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“OUT THERE...” CON’T ON PAGE 4

now for water. We’ve done the best we could. If You don’t make up Your mind to help us pretty soon, I guess that’s all there’ll be to it. It looks like the next move is up to You, Old Master.”

The men prayed the Lord’s Prayer again. While the rafts rolled on the ocean, Whittaker was thinking that this was God’s chance to make a believer of him.

After a while, Whittaker looked to the left. A cloud that had been fleecy and white was darkening. Then a bluish curtain unrolled from the cloud to the sea: rain. “Here she is!” Cherry shouted, “Thanks, Old Master!” Soon the rain was splashing into their parched mouths, washing over their burning, stinging bodies. The men saturated their shirts with water, wrung the rain into their mouth. They also deposited the water into their life jackets. The rain lashed down for nearly an hour.

On the tenth day, Cherry handed out the last of the water. He led the Lord’s prayer too that evening, and each fellow prayed individually. There were promises made to God to lead new lives if he would spare them. There were open confessions of past sins. Whittaker made resolutions too. He would later make up with his brother whom he hadn’t spoken to in 15 years.

Throughout the late watches of the chilling night, Whittaker sat sleeplessly thinking over their condition and the state of his soul. “I can tell you now,” he would later write, “that there can be no atheists in rubber rafts amid whitecaps and sharks in the equatorial Pacific.”

“I was finding my God in those watery wastes and we were meeting as strangers. ... We might have remained strangers, had it not been for Him. He soon was to send the two divine miracles that twice more were to save my life and change the way of it about as completely as a life can be changed.”

“Two miracles”

On the thirteenth day, a blue curtain of rain moved towards the men across the sea. They prayed for it to reach them. Yet when it was less than a quarter of a mile away, a wind blew it away.

Somehow Whittaker’s faith did not die. For the first time he found himself leading the others in prayer. He did not know how to address God properly so talked to Him as to a parent or friend.

“God,” he prayed, “You know what that water means to us. The wind had blown it away. It is in Your power, God, to send back that rain. It’s nothing to You, but it means life to us. God, the wind is Yours. You own it. Order it to blow back that rain to us who will die without it.”

The wind did not change—yet the receding curtain of rain stopped where it was, and then, ever so slowly, started back toward the men, against the wind! The squall moved back “with majestic deliberation”, as if a great, omnipotent hand was guiding it across the water.

The men could again collect a water supply and relish the cool deluge. Many of them had shed skin three or four times by then, and had raw spots and ulcers.

The coming days were the worst yet. Alex had died shortly before the miracle, clothing was disintegrating, and the men were suffering from pain, heat, weakness, delirium, and blinding light.

On the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth days, the men were dealt such crushing blows that had it not been for the fortitude built up in the hours of prayer, Whittaker later believed that they all would have abandoned hope. He was sure that his newly found faith in God sustained him. A plane was spotted on the evening of the 18th—yet it droned by. On the 19th, the plane came twice. On the 20th, the rafts separated to increase the chances of being spotted.

On the 21st, the second miracle happened for Whittaker after some palm trees were spotted on the horizon and he began to row to shore. Less than 250 yards from shore, however, the boat went out of control. Racing back out to sea, a wild current held them. Whittaker remembered the miracle of the rain on the 13 day, other answers to prayer, and his God! He cried out for strength, lifted the oars, and rowed.

Whittaker’s final prayer then was “God! Don’t quit me now!” Strength surged back into his arms and shoulders; he slashed at

man-eating sharks around the raft, and rowed. As the raft rolled steadily through the foam, hands other than Whittaker’s guided the oars. Through the treacherous surface, amid the sharks, and in the face of a buffeting rain squall, they moved forward. On 11 November 1942, the men in Whittaker’s raft reached a small island.

All seven men were rescued. Whittaker lived to tell the story of the rafts, how during those blazing days out in the ocean he found his God.

—See James Whittaker, We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing

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