

Christ is Victor

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“The Lord sets the prisoners free”

‘The Lord looseth the prisoners’ (Psalm 146:7).

I recall visiting a prison some years ago. A certain prisoner who was sentenced to death was awaiting the execution of the sentence. When I entered into a special high security block, a signboard read: ‘These men are condemned to die.’ Those were terrible words and soon I passed cell after cell with prisoners. Their faces were a picture of death itself.

The cell to which I was taken was no less than the anteroom of hell. The inmate, a man who had killed his wife, was beside himself. The memory of his wife’s murder seemed to prey upon his mind. I could hardly speak to him, for he was in no condition to understand. But outside his cell I stood and prayed for him. Later I came to know that the Governor had stayed his hanging and had commuted his sentence to life imprisonment. There came a marvellous change in that prisoner’s life too. I came face to face that day with the fear, terror, mental anguish and hopeless remorse in the minds of those who had to meet death, in a day or two, with a guilty conscience.

What a relief the commuting of his death sentence must have been to him. The Bible tells us emphatically: *‘The Lord looseth the prisoners’ (Psalm*

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“Prayer changes things”

‘And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints’ (Revelation 5:8).

The prayers of saints are never lost. The sweetest thing to God is the thought that rises out of a cleansed heart, which is in accord with His own thought. Who is a great poet? He is one that gives us new thoughts, beautifully expressed. God rejoices when our thought rises to the level of His thought.

The book that gives us the highest thoughts is the Bible. It has high thoughts. It has new thoughts. It has hallowing thoughts. It has creative thoughts and God’s thoughts. A praying man rises higher and higher in his thoughts. A praying man who is resurrected with Christ will think God’s thoughts. A cleansed man rises higher and higher. *‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord’ (Isaiah 55:7-8).* The Bible challenges man. It calls him to rise higher and higher.

If you read worthless books, they will pull you down, down, and down till your thoughts are filthy.

When your thoughts rise to the level of God’s thoughts, your prayer rises like sweet incense into the presence of God.

The prayer of the publican was, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.’ That is the beginning of prayer. Jesus was always on the level of God’s thoughts. In Gethsemane, we see Him rise higher and higher. As the weight of sin was crushing Him, and blood was oozing out of His pores, He prayed, ‘Thy will, not mine be done.’ That is the highest prayer. When you pray the prayer of God’s thoughts, it is the sweetest incense to God. If a desire which is God’s thought for you has captivated your will, it is the most precious thing that can happen to you. When your thought is God’s thought,

your prayer will grip you. You will be lifted and those around you will also be lifted. When your heart is thus lifted into heavenly places, your will and flesh are lifted too. You will live on a higher plane. *‘Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice’ (Psalm 141:2).*

Prayer is the greatest joy young people can experience. *‘Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people’ (Isaiah 56:7).* Wherever you go, you must prepare yourself a house of prayer. Your humble prayer out of a broken spirit is a weighty sacrifice. When your prayer takes hold of your will, it will mobilise all your potentialities for God’s high purposes.

When you place your whole personality on the altar, you must know what you are doing. You are putting your whole life in the safest place. When a father gives his child a precious toy, the child plays with it and when going to bed, he gives it back to the father to keep it for him. He knows it is safest with the father. When we come to know God our father, we spontaneously love and trust Him. We know our potentialities are most secure with Him. *‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God’ (Romans 12:1-2).* Your prayer is a renewal of your mind so that you cannot conform to this world. Until you are renewed and come to the perfect will of God, you are not safe. The kingdom will be given to those who do the perfect will of God. Pray that God may lift you and hallow you and keep you on the highest plane. He will make us happy in the house of prayer.

—N. Daniel

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“Into the light of Christ”

Light in the Bible

Masood Ahmed Khan was born in northern Pakistan in 1951 to an Ahmadi family. At a young age a desire for the truth grew in him.

When Masood obtained a Bible, he was told: ‘The Word of Life is free to all who seek it truly. Take it and read it carefully, Masood, and it will water your soul.’ He began to read it attentively.

One Sunday, Masood questioned Mr. Vincent, a pastor, after a church service. How could it be, for example, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God? The Bible had an answer: ‘His [God’s] Son, Jesus Christ our Lord ... was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the SON of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead’ (Romans 1:3-4).

One evening, Masood read these words: ‘And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name’ (John 20:30-31).

The words hit Masood’s need, but he could not easily accept Christ’s deity. Yet studying on, it became clear that miracles were as natural to Jesus as breathing. ONLY GOD COULD DO MIRACLES. Christ did miracles. Did he dare to conclude that Christ was God?

Masood’s heart trembled in prayer and he wept, praying to be shown the straight path. God accepted his prayer and spoke—for when Masood looked down at his Bible and took it up, he saw: ‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.’

For the next week, Masood continued to study the miracles recorded in the Bible. He saw that Jesus had all power from God but did not use it to save His life and destroy His enemies. While the Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament had declared, ‘God says this...’, Jesus always said, ‘Truly, truly, I say unto you...’

Moreover, Jesus had consistently spoken of Himself, unlike any mortal: ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’, ‘I and the Father are One’, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me’, ‘All power is given unto Me...’, and ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life...’. His tomb was empty and many had seen Him taken up into Heaven.

Light in a dark place

To an elderly Christian, Mr. Massey, Masood could bring a query about salvation. ‘We Christians,’ came the reply, ‘believe that “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We cannot save ourselves by works of righteousness, for there is only one Name under heaven by which we can be saved. Of course, that is Jesus our Lord. That is the only way to know the grace of God that brings salvation.’

On another occasion, Masood was struck by the fact that the Qur’an never said that Jesus sinned, and in the Bible the Lord Jesus could ask his enemies: ‘Which of you convicteth me of sin?’ The Qur’an did not show a sinless Muhammad. Moreover, Christianity presented a radically different view about women and divorce (Matthew 5:31-32).

Masood sat silently reflecting. Just then, the breeze blew open the pages of his Bible to: ‘Come out of her, my people,’ he read, ‘that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive none of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities’ (Revelation 18:4-5). Masood trembled inwardly. And then in contrast to the Muslim teaching about Paradise were also Jesus’ simple words: ‘For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in Heaven’ (Mark 12:25).

Masood wept and cried out to God.

God kept him thinking about the truth, and he kept comparing. Christian truths were so different, for example, ‘God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:24).

God Himself gave Masood understanding on the issue of Christ’s crucifixion. The belief that Jesus was crucified, died, and ascended to Heaven seemed absolutely crucial, and all traditions agreed with these occurrences. Moreover, Jesus had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. He closed his books, his research at an end. What next?

Into the light of the Son

On Sunday at church, Masood saw a vision of himself, having left all to search for the truth but now caught between two opposing forces. Looking back, he saw the distress and legalism of Islam. In front, he heard Christ say: ‘Follow me and I will give you rest.’

One morning, a few Bible verses on the radio spoke to Masood’s heart: ‘Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... [F]or 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’. Masood had been fearful of the results of ejection by his hosts.

That day, Masood took three days’ leave from work. ‘Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?’ These words came to him from a passage in the Gospel of John (John 14:5-9).

God was waiting to admit Masood into His school, but he was afraid. Then in sudden panic he wondered if he were in danger of testing Him too far? Overwhelmed, he burst out weeping.

Suddenly, a light flashed in the room, and an incident from the Gospel appeared before him. Thomas was sitting with the other apostles,

upset and doubtful. Then Jesus appeared in their midst and said, ‘Peace be unto you.’ He said to Thomas: ‘Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.’

Thomas fell at Jesus’ feet and said: ‘My Lord and my God.’ At that, Jesus took him by the hand and raised him to his feet: ‘Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.’

The scene faded away. Like Thomas, Masood was sceptical and unbelieving, and now Jesus had shown that He loved him still and invited him to follow Him.

All at once, Masood felt a great sorrow. ‘He was at the door of my heart, and I did not open to Him.’

Yet slowly the light dawned and he cried out on his knees: ‘Oh Lord, I do believe. Forgive my stubbornness and scepticism and receive me.’ A gentle voice then said: ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent’ (Revelation 3:19).

When Masood arose, he was changed; the peace of mind, rest, and security that he experienced that night was supernatural. More than two years of research and study had found their fulfilment in the revelation to his soul that Jesus Christ was his Lord and his God, to the glory of God the Father.

The very next day, Masood went to see Mr. Massey. ‘What doth hinder me to be baptised?’ (Acts 8:36) he asked.

‘You know what this may mean, Masood?’

‘I understand,’ came the reply, ‘And God will help me.’

‘What about death, Masood?’ asked Mr.

Massey urgently, “‘Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service’” (John 16:2).

But God’s peace was very real.

‘Even then I will remember Christ who said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”’ (Luke 23:34).

Masood had come into the light of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

—See Steven Masood, *Captive of the Christ*

Reality Check!

**FOR THE GRACE OF GOD
THAT BRINGETH SALVATION
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SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST
(TITUS 2:11-13).**

“The Lord sets the prisoners free”

146:7). Yes, He the King of kings has the power and the authority to loose the prisoners. And He is releasing them now.

When I sit closeted with men in heart-to-heart talks, when the veil is drawn away and they reveal the truth about themselves, invariably I find that in some quarter of their lives or some part of their personality they are prisoners. Then they tell me of their efforts at self-improvement and their desperate longings for release.

Some speak of booze and alcoholism, others of drugs which were too easily accessible in the hospitals where they worked and they were hooked; yes, even doctors were hooked. Still others speak of a long struggle to shake off tobacco; some tell of strange fears and nocturnal oppressions; many speak of sex-perversions of a seemingly infinite scope and variety; an increasing number of people have problems in their marriage; suspicion and strife is just killing them.

Most people have some measure of longing for release but when they look around them, they are convinced that there is simply no other way but to live with this inner bondage. Then to cap it all, they see some religious people too floundering miserably and putting up a false front of apparent well-being. Forthwith fatalism becomes the shrine at which they worship. ‘This is my fate, I must endure it,’ they say, and thereafter they seek no deliverance from their misery, heartache and tears.

The ostrich method of escaping from its pursuers by burying its head in the sand seems to have become the universal method of escape for men today. ‘Try to forget your worries, shake off that cancer in your mind by the movies or by burrowing deep into the seat before the television. Or seek some variety in your sex life,’ the devil and his friends tell you.

But the Bible says, ‘The Lord looseth the prisoners’.

Then I see men who are blind with hate. They are prisoners of hatred. Hatred is their religion. They hate the Lord Jesus, they hate men like me who speak to them of love. Hatred is the theme and ruling passion of their lives. [...]

One of my listeners, who had chanced upon our broadcast, wrote: ‘Will you pray for me, here are my problems. I know that most broadcasters broadcast for money. I was a communist but I have turned to Christ...’

I wrote him: ‘We will love you and pray for you even if you are the poorest man in the world.’ Here is a fine, thinking young man beset with sorrows and problems. He had been tutored into thinking that all this service is done for money. If such were our motive, there would not be that blessing of God upon this broadcast.

What it costs me in terms of strength, time, prayer, thought and even money amidst my heavy schedule, people cannot know. Yet one soul liberated from sin and uncleanness is worth more than the greatest treasure on earth. Remember, to

release a prisoner a ransom has to be paid or a Redeemer has to be found. I cannot think that anyone would like to take another’s place at the gallows or on the electric chair. But Jesus took your guilt and sin and your death upon Himself. Then why do you lie in irons still? The Bible says: ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered’ (Joel 2:32). Yes, that ‘whosoever’ includes you.

Call on the Lord Jesus and put Him to the test. Is this all just a piece of commercialism or is Jesus true and as good as His word? Souls, bound and chained and even incapable as it were of sane and balanced thinking, blinded by pride, hatred and prejudice, were released in a moment, when they turned their eyes upon Jesus and believed Him.

This loving Saviour waits now for you to release you. [...]

Dear listener, the Saviour and liberator Jesus stands by you, He wants to be your Saviour too. Open your eyes and see His love now. Open your heart and kiss Him in. ‘The Lord looseth the prisoners.’ Bow your head and let us thank Him.

Lord Jesus, you came to release us from our inmost bondage. We thank you for your love.

—Joshua Daniel

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“Eternity: where shall it find me?”

A young French nobleman, suffering an extraordinary depression of spirits, went to London to consult an important doctor. He had wealth, rank, love, and esteem, but nothing could dispel the deep gloom hanging over his spirits.

The doctor at last posed one question: “What subject most frequently occupies your thoughts?”

“You are approaching a matter which I hardly like to speak of, doctor,” replied the nobleman, sharing his atheist background. ‘I do not believe in revelation’—and yet one belief haunted him.

‘For the last three years,’ he admitted, ‘these words have haunted me, **“Eternity, where shall it find me?”**’ A vision of the last judgement is constantly present to my mind. The end of all things seems to have come, and the great white throne is set up. There is One seated on the throne, whose look of stern justice terrifies me. I try to escape from His penetrating glance, but Heaven and earth have disappeared, and I am left alone. Every moment I expect to hear the awful words, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

‘What makes you fear such a sentence?’

‘Well, in the eyes of men my life is deemed irreproachable. ... but in the presence of such dazzling glory—such spotless purity—my very best actions appear black and hideous. I feel guilty and condemned, and long to find some spot where I can hide from His presence.’

This was the cause of the gloomy sadness. ‘I cannot get rid of the terrible vision,’ said the nobleman.

‘Ah!’ the doctor replied, ‘I am afraid you have come to the wrong physician.’

‘Is there no hope for me?’ cried the young man. ‘I walk about in

the daytime; I lie down at night, and it comes upon me continually, “Eternity, and where shall I spend it?”’ He desperately desired help.

The doctor then informed him that he had once been in the same condition, and, taking down a Bible, said, ‘I have by me an Old Book, which contains a remedy for your disease.’ He turned to Isaiah 53. “‘Who hath believed our report?’” he read, “‘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.’”

‘Of whom do these verses speak?’ asked the nobleman.

‘Of the Lord Jesus Christ whom God sent into the world, that by His death He might make atonement for sin.’ The doctor continued reading: “‘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. ... 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.’”

‘What does that mean, doctor?’

‘That the Son of God took the sinner’s place, and bore the punishment due to the sinner.’

‘Is it possible, doctor? What divine beauty and simplicity! The guiltless dies for the guilty!’

The doctor read on. ‘Do you believe this,’ asked the nobleman, ‘that He voluntarily left Heaven, came down to this earth, and suffered and died that we might be saved?’ Yes, the doctor did; he preached Christ and His salvation, with the

result that the nobleman could do what the doctor had done, substituting ‘my’ for ‘our’, and say: ‘He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities: the chastisement of my peace was upon Him; and by His stripes I am healed.’

The question of eternity and where he should spend it became a settled one. He found ‘joy and peace in believing’.

—See Hy. Pickering, 100 Thrilling Tales

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