

21 – In the Name of Jesus

The Present Truth : December 9, 1897

A few points in the fifth chapter of Hebrews, in addition to what we had last week, can still profitably claim our attention, but as we had the text before us then, with questions upon it, we will not repeat them. That which is of special interest is what is said of Christ in verse 7. This may well be taken in connection with Hebrews 4.16

We are exhorted to come boldly unto the throne of grace. But how shall we come? “What are our recommendations?” Can we come presenting what we have done as a recommendation to favor? No; for what we have done shows us deserving of death. The criminal dare not come boldly into court, claiming freedom on account of his crimes. We have nothing of our own with which to appear before the King.

Neither can we claim anything by virtue of what we promised to do. We have made promises too often, and broken them, to have any confidence placed in them. Our promises are worthless, because however good the intention may be to perform, we find in us no good thing with which to fulfill the promise. “Man at his best state is altogether vanity;” so that we have nothing in ourselves, whether past, present, or future, to give us boldness in coming to the King on His throne with our requests.

But we have better promises than our own, even the King’s own promises. And we have a warrant from the King’s own Son: “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall w ask anything in My name, I will do it.” John 14.13, 14. Now the only thing we need is deliverance from sin; when we have that, we have everything worth having, both in this world and in the world to come. We know that Jesus was delivered from sin, for “in the days of His flee he when He had offered up prayer and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death,” He “was heard.” Hebrews 5.7. Although in the flesh, “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8.3), as weak as the weakest man that ever lived, for no man can be weaker than to be able to do nothing of himself (see John 5.30),—yet He was delivered from all the sins of the flesh.

But what has that to do with us? How is it that we can ask anything in His name, and for His sake? This is the question, which reaches to the very core of the Gospel. It is the “mystery,” over which the unbeliever stumbles, calling it folly and injustice, because he does not see the vital connection between Christ the only-begotten Son of all mankind. “The Word was made flesh.”

Who's flesh?—"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." Hebrews 2.14-16. He took your flesh, my flesh, the flesh of all mankind, sinful flesh, so that He was in all things made like unto His brethren. We are partakers of flesh and blood: "He also Himself likewise took part of *the same*."

Whatever we have, He had, even the self-same things. John pointed to Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away (bears!) the sin of the world." There is not a temptation that has oppressed any human being, and overcome him, that did not press in with all its might upon Jesus, without overcoming Him. But the temptation was nonetheless real. People seem to think that the fact that Jesus never sinned is proof that He was not tempted in the same way that we are. As much as to say that if He had been tempted as we are, He would have sinned! Or, in other words, the same as saying that there is no possibility of successfully resisting temptation. Those who would separate Jesus from the fullest share in our human nature do not realize that in so doing they are laboring to deprive mankind of all hope.

It was our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. 1 Peter 2.24. And it was our sins that He bore in the garden of Gethsemane and in the wilderness of temptation. It was our sins (He had none of His own) for deliverance from which He spent whole nights in prayer. But He "was heard in that He feared." Ah, thank God for that. What? Why, Jesus of Nazareth, in the flesh, in the weakest human flesh, with your and my sins upon Him, was delivered from them, He gained the victory over them. Isn't that joyful news? Believe it, accept it, and pass it to others.

"Let us therefore hold fast our confession?" What confession?—"That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, in our flesh; that "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." He is still "*touched* with the feeling of our infirmities." Whatever affects us, also affects Him. "He ever lives to make intercession" for us. That is, He prays for us now as He did when on earth; and as surely as He was heard them, so surely will He be heard now.

So we come in His name. It is "not I but Christ." Christ in me is making petition to be delivered from this sin. I do not ask for my own sake; I have no personal claim in the Lord; but I ask it for His sake. Can there be any doubt that the prayer will be heard?—Certainly not; for it has already been heard, and answered. This very sin from which we are praying to be delivered, your own personal sin, and mine,—has been agonized over and conquered! The

victory, then, is ours, is it not?—Most assuredly. “Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Gospel in Unselfishness

Can you not see that even in personal conflict with sin, the fundamental principle of the Gospel—self-forgetfulness—comes in? “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” This was true of Christ on the cross. The same must be true of us; and the same spirit of absorbed interest in others, and self-forgetfulness, must be in even our most earnest prayer for personal help, if we would pray the prayer that is certain to be answered. When we come to the throne of grace absorbed in the thought that it is Jesus who is pleading to be delivered from the sins that oppress us, that it is He and not we who are appearing before God, and we lose sight and thought of ourselves in our interest in His mortal struggle with sin, then we are saved. Our personality is lost in His; we lose ourselves in Him; and then comes the thrilling thought, He was heard! He gained the victory over this very trial! Human words cannot describe the joy of the thought, because it is “the joy of the Lord.” And the joy of the Lord is our strength. Nehemiah 8.10

Jesus was “made of the seed of David according to the flesh” but “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. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the demonstration of the fact that He was the Son of God with power. It was impossible for Him to be held by the grave, because He had done no sin. But being raised from the dead, He was raised to the right hand of God, from which place He sends the Holy Spirit to all, thereby coming to dwell in all who believe. So we read, “being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” This is a parallel to what we read in Christ’s prayer. John 17.1, 2: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You hast given Him.”

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” Do you know Him? If not, make haste to become acquainted with Him as the Son of God and the Son of man.

Christ “Glorified not Himself”

An important lesson is to be learned from the first portion of the fifth of Hebrews. If every one who professes to be Christian would learn it, there would never be any seeking for place, any striving for the mastery, in the

church. No one would ever put himself forward for a position of prominence or supposed honor.

No more honorable position than High Priest was ever known. If ever any position of responsibility and honor was to be coveted, that is the place. And no one more worthy of all honor than Jesus Christ ever lived. He was in every way worthy of the position. Therefore if anybody in the world could ever plead his own claims to any position, Jesus might have sought the office of High Priest for Himself. But what are the facts?

“No man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee.”

The Lesson for Us

What is the lesson—Just this: Since Jesus, who was in every way worthy, and perfectly fitted for the position of High Priest, would not and did not put Himself forward for the place, there is no human being who can ever with any grace lay claim it. No; not with any grace, for just to the extent that any man pleads his own cause, and seeks a position, does he show himself ignorant and destitute of the grace of Christ.

Because Jesus humbled Himself, therefore “God also hath highly exalted Him.” Philippians 2.9. His modesty, His humility, the utter absence of self-glorification, are the marks which showed His worthiness. Let every member of the church get this portion of the Word of God indelibly fixed in his mind. We may not advance ourselves, we may not plead our fitness for any place, nay, we may not even in our own minds canvass the ground and think ourselves worthy of the place. Love “seeks not her own.” We must not only be silent before others, but we must not exalt ourselves to the place, even in our own thoughts. Therein lies all the danger. If we exalt ourselves even in thought, we are putting ourselves ahead of Christ, for He did not exalt Himself. Thus we would be showing our oneness with the “man of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2.3, 4) instead of Christ.

“A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.” John 3.27. And whatever God designs a man shall have He is fully able to see that the right man has, instead of another. “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”