

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 16 January 2023

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email, being the first after a long break. Welcome back.

At the outset, let me draw your attention to the anniversary yesterday of the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr (the American Baptist minister and civil rights movement leader) on 15 January 1929.

Almost 1900 years before that date, the apostle Paul wrote, **'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good' (Rom. 12. 21).**

Breathing much the same spirit, Martin Luther King declared in 1967 (the year before his assassination):

*'I have decided to stick to love ... hate is too great a burden to bear
Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.'* (*)

Yes indeed, only good/light/love can overcome evil/darkness/hate.

You will find below the main 'Musings' for today. Additionally, I am attaching a short devotional document that focuses on the garments of our Lord for which soldiers gambled at the time of His crucifixion.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(*) Martin Luther King, Jr., *'Where do we go from here?'*, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches*, pages 250 and 594.

(i) Scripture.

If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that He has borne concerning His Son.

Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son. And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.

1 John 5. 9-15 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'When ... you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord' (Deut. 6. 11-12).

'This is a danger in every age, but especially in ours. The trend is that the more we **get**, the more we **forget**'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, *'The Irony of Getting and Forgetting'*, Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 30 November 2022.)

Divine protection 'round about'.

(i) "Have you not put **a hedge round about** him?" (Job 1. 10).

- (ii) **'The angel of the Lord** encamps round about them that fear Him' (Psa. 34. 7).
- (iii) 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so **the Lord** is round about His people' (Psa. 125. 2).
- (iv) 'I will be to her, says the Lord, **a wall of fire** round about' (Zech. 2. 5).

The Samaritan woman of John 4.

He asked from her a **drink of well-water** for Himself (John 4. 7) and gave to her a **whole well of water** for herself (John 4. 14).

'He first asks her for a drink – a drink of cold water! – considered the very poorest and meanest gift which this world contains.

'See how the Lord humbled Himself! Among the Jews it was considered the depth of degradation even to hold any communion or converse with the Samaritans; to be beholden to them for a favour would not be tolerated by them. But here we have the Lord of glory asking for a drink of water from one of the worst in the city of the Samaritans! ...

'This gift of the Holy Spirit in us (which is Christ's to give) is to be in the believer a well – always living water – not a pool, which, though full, may be liable to be dried up, but a well that cannot dry up'.

(J. N. Darby, *'The Woman of Samaria'*, Collected Writings, Volume 12, pages 3-4.)

'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2. 5).

'There is an area in which Christ cannot be our example. We cannot copy His redemptive acts. We cannot suffer and die vicariously. It was He, He alone, who was able to satisfy the divine justice and bring His people to glory.

'But with the help of God we can and should copy the spirit that was basic to these acts. The attitude of self-renunciation with a view to helping others should be present and should grow in the life of each disciple'.

(W. Hendriksen, *'Philippians: New Testament Commentary'*, page 103.)

'Their works they do for to be seen of men' (Matt. 23. 5).

The desire to do good to others can easily become a desire to look good in the eyes of others.

The 'full assurance' of understanding, faith and hope.

(i) '... to the end that their hearts may be encouraged, being united together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God' (Col. 2. 2).

(ii) 'We desire earnestly that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end' (Heb. 6. 11).

(iii) 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water' (Heb. 10. 22).

God's peace and God's promises.

'The key that unlocks the treasure chest of God's peace is faith in God's promises'.

(J. Piper, *'Good News of Great Joy'*, page 42.)

'If we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And ... we know that we have the petitions which we asked of Him', 1 John 5. 14-15.

'Do you feel a trifle disappointed and discouraged by the qualification, "according to His will"?

'Perhaps you feel disappointed because, on the face of it, these words impose a severe limitation on God's promise; disappointed that He has not signed a blank cheque. Perhaps you feel discouraged because you can see little point in praying at all if God promises to grant only those requests which form part of His own will.

'On reflection, however, we should be immensely grateful for the qualification. It is there, in part, for our protection. It is not some kind of 'small print' let-out clause; it is a most gracious and necessary safeguard.

'For if God promised always to grant every request we made, exactly as we made it, we should be afraid to pray. Unlike God, we are not all-wise—and such a means of having our every wish fulfilled would be far too dangerous an instrument in our hands. We have to acknowledge that we do not know what we should pray for (Rom. 8. 26).

'Many of us have occasion to look back later and to thank God that He did not grant us our requests—even though they were well-intentioned at the time. Paul recorded one such experience in his own life (2 Cor. 12. 7-10)'.

(*'Day by Day: Bible Promises (Precious Seed Publications)*', page 356.)

Washed! (Quotations from J. N. Darby's 'New Translation'.)

(i) 'To Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood' (Rev. 1. 5).

(ii) 'These are they who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb' (Rev. 7. 14).

(iii) 'Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the city' (Rev. 22. 14).

'The city lies foursquare ... the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal' (Rev. 21. 16).

'The cube is symbolic: there is only one cube in the Old Testament, and that is "the Most Holy Place" of both the Tabernacle (Exod. 26. 34) and the Temple (1 Kings 8. 6), into which only the High Priest could enter once a year, bearing blood for his own sins and for the sins of the people (Heb. 7. 27).

'Now the entire city is the Most Holy Place, where all of God's people are perennially in the unshielded splendour of His glorious presence'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 1, meditation for 30 December—slightly modified.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

1. Old Henry Carruthers was applying for Pension Credit to supplement his basic State Pension. The application form clearly stated, 'Age of father and mother (if living)'.

Henry wrote down 112 and 109 in the spaces provided.

'Wow, are your parents really that old?' the interviewer asked Henry.

'Of course not', Henry replied, 'but *they would be if they were still living*'.

2. Angus was a wholesale merchant from Scotland. He ordered a consignment of goods from Spain but, instead of the goods, he received a very quick email response.

'We are sorry', the email read, 'but we cannot process your order until the previous order has been paid for'.

Angus emailed straight back, 'Then please cancel my order. *I can't wait that long*'.