

Wednesday, 8th April 2020



THE CANDLESTICK

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift (II Cor. 9:15)

During these times of widespread worry and concern, what is the one sure message we have which the world does not? It is our confident and steadfast assurance, “All my hope on God is founded; he doth still my strength renew”. ... Despite our natural weaknesses, we are strong in Him for His grace is the foundation upon which our faith is constructed. Therefore, when ‘the rains descend’, and ‘the floods rise’, and ‘the winds beat ferociously against us’, we stand in the strength of the Lord Who saved us and keeps us.

Indeed, what a wonderful salvation we have! Nothing can destroy it or steal it from us. Throughout the centuries and millennia, it has withstood all the trials and struggles as it witnesses to God’s enduring goodness. So, let’s take a few moments to stop thinking about the coronavirus and consider what we have and who we are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Firstly, this salvation is not of ourselves, lest any of us would dare boast. Neither is it because of any so-called ‘works of righteousness’ for nothing we can do produces our salvation ... We are saved by simply and obediently coming to saving faith in the Lord Jesus. It is a work solely and completely all of His grace. It is God’s gift we receive through believing in Him. We cannot earn it. We don’t deserve it. We would *never* achieve it if it depended upon our efforts. And the reason it is beyond our natural reach is because we are not worthy of it for we don’t deserve anything good from God ... and yet He sent His only-begotten Son into this world to die in the place of sinners! ... *That’s God’s grace!*

He knew the price of our salvation was infinitely more than we could pay. We could never afford it but at Calvary God the Father exacted from His own Son the full amount He required to purchase us for Himself, “My sin, - oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, - My sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more; Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!”

We have been fully paid for! ... Bought, purchased, the debt eternally settled, and there is nothing more owing! *Paid for* by the blood of the Son of God, our Saviour! He took my sins and my sorrows, and He made them His very own. He wept for me in the Garden of Gethsemane. The sweat poured out of Him like drops of blood. In the midst of it all, He prayed for His burden to be removed, - it was so heavy to bear,

- but He knew it was His Father’s will that He would be sacrificed in my place and He bore my burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone. ... That was the *price* He paid for our salvation ... and He paid it in full!

On the cross He was the Victim, and that was where He paid the price ... but then we see how the *price* became the *prize*, and how the *Victim* became the *Victor*. ... Yes, His blood was shed. He was mocked and mauled and mangled more than any man. He suffered separation from His people, His family, and His Father ... and He died the cruellest death on the cross ... and then He was wrapped in the garments for a dead man, - for that is what He was, - ... but on the third day, out of the tomb He arose!

The greatest danger this world faces has already been dealt with. The coronavirus is a terrible and fearful affliction. Sadly, it has taken the lives of many people, but we are also grateful to the Lord many more have recovered from it. We are thankful to how He has used the medical staff and those who work alongside them. However, the greatest threat to this world is *not* the coronavirus. The coronavirus destroys the body, but sin condemns the human soul to a lost eternity ... and nothing can cure it, except one remedy. This remedy has been sent from the Creator Himself for there is only one lasting treatment for sin and it is by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Salvation is of the Lord, as the Psalmist wrote, Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation (Ps. 62:1) ... Aren’t you glad you are saved! Unless the Lord returns, we shall pass through the valley of death ... but the *price* of our salvation has been paid and we are already confident in the *prize* of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). *That* is far more precious than gold that perishes, - wrote Peter, - for in Christ’s appearing we have the promise we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Peter 1:8).

This will be a different Easter for us, - we have never lived through one like it. We won’t be meeting around the Lord’s Table on Thursday evening, or for the Good Friday meeting, or for the services on Sunday to celebrate Christ’s resurrection ... We’ll not be in a church building, nonetheless, we belong to the holy temple in the Lord, as Paul describes ... we are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22) ... And therefore, in the midst of all the fear and uncertainty, here is our encouragement ...

Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child and forever I am.