

“Daily His Delight”

“Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.”
—Proverbs 8:30

THE WORDS OF OUR

opening text speak of Jesus, the Son of God, during his prehuman existence, as he joyfully labored together with his Father in the great creative works preparatory to man’s dwelling upon the earth. In this setting, we note that Jesus was a “delight” each day to his Creator. This relationship between the Son and the Father has continued, including the time of Jesus’ earthly life and ministry, and subsequent to that as the resurrected and glorified Christ.

The Son of God, throughout his existence, has deemed of utmost joy and his highest motive the privilege of being a daily delight to his Father, and of bringing honor to his name. For the Christian, seeking to follow in the Master’s footsteps, daily devotion to the Heavenly Father should also be of highest importance, and a similar privilege. In our lesson, we will examine seven aspects of our walk

with God, in which we might be considered “daily his delight.”

DAILY BREAD

The first of these “daily” aspects of our Christian life is referred to in Matthew 6:11: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Bread is used, in both secular and sacred writings, to cover all the necessities of life. We speak of one going forth to earn his bread, meaning to provide the necessities of life for himself and for those dependent upon him. In the Bible, we find similar use made of the word bread. In Genesis 3:19, we have the words spoken by God to Adam: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” In other words, only by laborious toil would man provide for his necessities. The word bread is used to cover all the basic needs of this life.

Looking at Matthew 6:11 more closely, it is a special kind of bread that is spoken of here. The verse speaks of “us” and “our,” denoting that this bread belongs especially to the Christian, as the children of “Our Father” who is in heaven. This thought is seen by referring to verses 5 and 7. Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray, and he makes a distinction between them and others. He says: “When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites. ... When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen.” The children of God, taught here by Jesus how to pray, are contrasted with the world in general. It is not the bread of all men for which we are taught to pray. It is for “our” bread, the children’s bread. This covers all the needs of the consecrated life, especially that which is needful to us as footstep followers of Christ Jesus.

The words “daily bread” are also of great importance in our Lord’s words. In an earthly family the children daily sit down to the table, yet they do not ask their parents how they obtained the means to feed and clothe them. They do not fret when they awaken in the morning, wondering whether their parents have made provision for them. Thus, we are taught to recognize God as the provider of all that we need, and go to him in prayer each day, in confidence, for the supply of our daily bread. In so doing, let us lay greater stress upon our spiritual needs, knowing that if we “seek first” the kingdom of God, all other needful things will be provided to us.—Matt. 6:33

DAILY CROSS

In Luke 9:23, these words of Jesus are recorded: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Taking up our cross “daily” is another important part of each day for us as Christians. A critical step in following the Lord is designated in the Scriptures as sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1) The cross symbolizes this sacrifice, which will not terminate until death.

It is the sacrifice of our wills which is at the core of cross-bearing. Our wills must be given joyfully, and without reservation, else our sacrifice will not be acceptable to the Lord, and all subsequent cross-bearing will not be to our advantage. Our Master’s expression respecting the daily surrender and sacrifice of his will to do the Father’s will is found in these prophetic words: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”—Ps. 40:8

We, too, must delight to have God's will done in us, and delight to surrender, or sacrifice, our own wills. Let us see clearly that if there is anything lacking in respect to the sacrifice of our wills, it must receive our first attention. Those who have completely sacrificed their will to do the Lord's will have gained a great victory at the start, and are enabled to faithfully "take up" their cross daily, as they tread the narrow way.

The Master's cross-bearing did not consist of fighting the weaknesses of the flesh, for he had none. It involved the day by day doing of his Father's will under unfavorable conditions. In doing the will of our Father in heaven we, like Jesus, will have opposition. In letting the light of truth shine out as our Master directed, we, too, will endure persecution.

Our cross-bearing comes when we find that the Truth, so beautiful and so beneficial to us, is doubted and denied by others. It draws upon us their ridicule and opposition, just as it did upon the Master. Faithfulness in bearing our cross daily includes not compromising the Truth under any circumstances, and our willingness to defend it, meekly but firmly. We must be prepared to do this, whatever the cost.

Cross-bearing is made necessary because we are living in this "present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) The spirit of the world, under the control of Satan, is contrary to the Spirit of the Lord and his righteousness. Having consecrated our all to God, with the sentiments of our hearts finding expression in the words, "I delight to do thy will, O my God," let us continue to bear our cross day by day. If we do this we shall, in due time, be found faithful, for it is

written: “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Rom. 8:17

DAILY SEARCHING

Another “daily” privilege we have is that of searching the Scriptures. Particular reference is made to this in Acts 17:10,11: “The brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

True nobility implies reasonableness and readiness, as opposed to prejudice. Paul and Silas were pleased to find the Jews in Berea ready to receive the Truth. They were “more noble” than others because they had been searching and studying the Scriptures daily, to examine, investigate and see whether or not the things they heard were in harmony with the prophetic statements respecting Messiah and his work.

Professing to believe all that was written in the law and the prophets, and thus looking for Messiah, they welcomed the servants of God, who sought to draw their attention particularly to the things written aforetime. With readiness of mind, they began to search, to see how well Paul’s presentation was supported by the testimony of the sacred text.

All of us are leaky “earthen vessels.” (II Cor. 4:7) Unless we are imbibing the Word of God day by day, we leave ourselves more open to the attacks of the Adversary. The Christian course is not covered by fits and starts, but by “patient continuance.” (Rom. 2:7)

The same is true with our study of the Truth. It is not to be done sporadically, only once a week, or perhaps even less often. Daily, rather, we should search, examine, investigate and meditate upon the Scriptures.

As we do this, we obtain clearer insights and a deeper appreciation of God's wisdom, justice, love, and power. Let us daily meditate upon these eternal truths, and come more into harmony with them. By so doing they will become an essential part of our existence. As we read in Jeremiah 15:16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

Something more, however, is necessary than merely a readiness of mind to hear and understand the Truth. Jesus refers to some who receive the Word gladly, but who have no depth nor root. Consequently, when the heat of tribulation arises, they wither, losing their Christian vitality. (Matt. 13:20,21) It is not always those who receive the Truth most favorably that continue to hold it and bring forth fruit. Trials and tests will often cause a line of demarcation to be drawn between those who have depth, and others who do not—between those who really love the Truth, and those who merely have a dutiful head knowledge thereof. Let us day by day search the Scriptures, so that we might have a proper appreciation that the divine Word is to be a "lamp" to our feet, and a "light" to our daily path.—Ps. 119:105

DAILY DYING

The fourth aspect of our subject, daily dying, is referred to by the Apostle Paul. He says, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our

Lord, I die daily.” (I Cor. 15:31) In another place, Paul shows the kind of dying being mentioned: “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” (II Cor. 4:10) It was the daily dying of Jesus for three and a half years, pouring out his soul unto sacrificial death, to which the apostle refers.

The whole world is dying, but, in general, mankind does not die “in Christ Jesus.” There is a vast difference between being dead in Adam and being dead in Christ. Quoting again the Apostle Paul, we read, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3) Jesus’ death was a sacrificial one, and not the result of any inherited imperfection or sin from Adam.

Henceforth, if we are “in Christ,” from the divine standpoint, we are counted as “new creatures.” The “old things” of our human nature have passed away, and through the begetting power of God’s Holy Spirit we have “become new.” (II Cor. 5:17) We have new and heavenly hopes and aims. We also have the privilege, day by day, of “bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” (II Cor. 4:10) Thus we share in the likeness of his death.

Concerning our Master and pattern, we read in Acts 10:38: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good.” Jesus laid down his life daily in doing good, and in proclaiming the message of truth. The Christian’s life is to be the same. We, too, are to lay down our lives in the same manner, going about doing good, and proclaiming the Gospel. —John 15:13; I John 3:16; Gal. 6:10; Matt. 24:14; Rom. 10:15

We are to do this, whether the time of our ministry be three and a half years, thirty years, or whatever the Lord might provide. We are to do this until the Father's due time for the end of our earthly sojourn. Let us, then, continue in this daily dying, knowing that if we are dead with Christ now, we shall live with him in the future.

DAILY RENEWING

Daily renewing is also spoken of by Paul. Referring to the Christian life, he states, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (II Cor. 4:16) The Greek word here translated "renewed" means to "make new" or "renovate." The apostle explains the matter further in Romans 12:2: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing [making new, or renovating] of your mind." The reason for this is that we "may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

While it is true that our consecration to God might be considered an act of a moment, yet the proving of what is good, acceptable, and in harmony with the will of God, is a gradual work. Indeed, it is a life work, going on day by day. It is the daily bending heavenward of that which naturally bends earthward. The Apostle Peter alludes to the contrast between that which is heavenly and the sinful elements currently in the earth. He says that it is by God's "exceeding great and precious promises" that we can become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world."
—II Pet. 1:4

The daily renewing of the mind, from earthly to heavenly thinking, is the beginning of the change of nature referred to by Peter. Our old nature would have us be conformed to this world by submitting to its influences and its spirit. Let us, rather, submit ourselves to the will of God, to the Holy Spirit, and thus be transformed by the heavenly influences emanating from the Word of God. We should ask and answer the following question: To which influences am I submitting? We know that the daily renewing of our minds leads to sacrifice, but the end result will be glorious.

We call to mind a few phrases from the third chapter of Colossians: “Seek those things which are above.” “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” “Mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are upon earth.” “Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication.” “Put off the old man.” “Put on the new man.” “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” “Above all these things put on charity [love].”—vss. 1,2,5,8-10,12,14

No wonder the apostle wrote in another place, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Phil. 2:12) It is a life’s work, made up of daily renewing. Daily there is to be a renewing of the mind; of setting our affections on things above; of putting off the old man and putting on the new; and above all, the putting on of the quality of love.

DAILY EXHORTATION

Let us now consider our sixth daily responsibility—exhortation. This is referred to in Hebrews 3:13,

where we read: "Exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The word here translated "exhort" is the verb form of the Greek word *parakletos*, meaning a comforter, helper, or strengthener. Daily we are to exhort, comfort, help and strengthen one another. Here is a form of service in which all Christians can be engaged.

There is a false idea about exhortation, in which it is thought to be divorced from doctrine. Indeed, we can hear exhortations concerning the moral and devotional truths of the Bible spoken by ministers of the various churches and denominations. However, do we hear them speak of the Abrahamic Covenant or of God's purpose to bless all the families of the earth through the long-promised seed of Abraham, Christ and his church? Do we hear the teachings concerning restitution, based upon the ransom sacrifice of Jesus? Do we hear the discussion of prophecies that speak of the ransomed of the Lord returning, coming to Zion to obtain joy and gladness, their sorrow and sighing having fled away?—Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16,29; Acts 3:20,21; Isa. 35:10

Many of those who exhort, speak and write about the moral and devotional truths of the Bible have sorely missed the foregoing clear teachings of the Scriptures concerning God's plan of salvation. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the vital importance of considering all the teachings given in the Word of God, including doctrine. He says, "All scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for that discipline which is in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for ever good

work.” (II Tim. 3:16, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) We cannot properly exhort one another as Christians apart from true doctrine. Neither can we speak of the doctrines of the Bible without exhorting one another. Hence, we cannot divorce exhortation from doctrine.

In this, as in all things appertaining to the Christian life, we have Jesus as our example. We recall the wonderful discourse Jesus gave to those two disciples on the way to Emmaus: “He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—Luke 24:25-27

That was a doctrinal exhortation, proving from the Scriptures that Christ must suffer, and then enter into his glory. We know the condition of those two disciples before Jesus spoke to them. They were saddened, because they thought that Jesus of Nazareth, who had done mighty things, would be the one to redeem Israel. However, he was crucified, and although there were rumors that he had been raised from the dead, they could not confirm that such had happened. (vss. 17-24) Were these sorrowful disciples exhorted, comforted and strengthened by the doctrinal talk Jesus gave them? Hear their joyous response: “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”—vs. 32

Some today may say that we should have unity, and ignore doctrine, suggesting that it does not really matter what we believe. The Scriptures clearly teach

otherwise. Jesus prayed that his followers would be sanctified, or made holy, by the truth, not by error. (John 17:17) Paul instructed Titus to “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine,” and to hold fast “the faithful word,” that “by sound doctrine” he would be enabled to exhort others. (Tit. 2:1; 1:9) It is only the truth of God’s Word by which we can daily exhort, comfort, and strengthen one another as we journey towards our heavenly home.

DAILY PAYING OUR VOWS

Our seventh and last consideration is that of daily paying—or performing—our vows to the Lord. This is referred to in Psalm 61:8: “So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.” The carrying out of our vows to the Lord is of utmost importance. God’s law to Israel stated: “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee.” (Deut. 23:21) Surely, if God required natural Israel to pay their vows to him, how much more will he require it of spiritual Israelites.

More than a century ago, a “faithful and wise servant” of the Lord penned the words which became known as “My Morning Resolve.” Many Christians continue to daily consider its sentiments, using it as a help and encouragement in the fulfillment of their consecration vows. We herein quote its meaningful and guiding words:

My Earliest Thought I Desire Shall Be: “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord [for grace to help].

I will pay my vows unto the Most High.”—Ps. 116:12-14

Remembering the Divine call, “Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice” (Ps. 50:5), I resolve that by the Lord’s assisting grace I will today, as a saint of God, fulfil my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I may attain unto the Heavenly inheritance in joint-heirship with my Redeemer.

I will strive to be simple and sincere toward all.

I will seek not to please and honor self, but the Lord.

I will be careful to honor the Lord with my lips, that my words may be unctuous and blessed to all.

I will seek to be faithful to the Lord, the Truth, the brethren and all with whom I have to do, not only in great matters, but also in the little things of life.

Trusting myself to Divine care and the Providential overruling of all my interests for my highest welfare, I will seek not only to be pure in heart, but to repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement.

I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord’s providence may permit, because “Faith can firmly trust Him, Come what may.”

Let us, then, keep these seven “daily” aspects of our walk ever in mind, that they might find their outward expression in our lives each day. May we always remember that our hearts have responded to the love of God in Christ Jesus, so that we receive not this grace of God in vain. Finally, let us faithfully carry out our vows of consecration, day by day, to know and to do the will of God. Thus we will be “daily his delight,” both now and forevermore! ■