

GOSPEL/HERE AND NOW

A Gospel message by George Bates. The Meeting House. Randalstown. Co., Antrim. Northern Ireland. BT41. 3BE. UK.

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READING:- LUKE 9 : 51-56

“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village”.

This occurrence is like a valley between two mountain peaks.

Verse 51

“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem”.

*This event takes place directly after our wonderful Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ meets with Moses, who died 1500 years beforehand, and Elijah, that was taken up to Heaven in a whirlwind on the mount of transfiguration and speaks about "**His decease** (or exodus or departure) **which He should accomplish at Jerusalem**".*

Verse 31

“Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem”.

*And just before going to the old bloodstained rugged cross at Calvary, the Lord's ascension up into Heaven, via the cross, is the event that is in view here in verse 51 “... **He steadfastly**”.*

*You can see His determination of mind here, “... set **His face to go to Jerusalem**”.*

You can also see His compulsion of heart.

Now Calvary might not mean very much to you but He knows that He must lay down His life for us if we are to be saved by grace; and although He has a perfectly human nature, and everything in that nature would desire to live and not die, no one in their right mind wants to die, yet as Isaiah prophecies the Saviour's thoughts in :

Chapter 50 : 5 - 7

"I was not rebellious neither turned away back, I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting for the Lord God will help Me: therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed".

As a lamb goes to the slaughter, it doesn't know what lies ahead, but Jesus did.

Yet He was willing to go to death for your sake.

Now with the clear intention of going to His death at Golgotha, He sends His disciples on ahead of Him, to make preparations for His overnight stay, at a village belonging to the Samaritans.

Verses 52 – 53 “And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.”

Those awful words can be said of so many souls in hell tonight, who had the God given opportunity to receive the Saviour, when Jesus was passing their way; but religious bigotry prevented them from doing so and led to their rejection.

Not only of Jesus, but of their own poor soul's salvation.

"Because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem".

This explains their bitter behavior towards Jesus.

"The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" said the woman at Jacob's well.

"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain (Gerizim) and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place".

There was religious bitterness and strife between them, concerning the true place of worship so "if he isn't going to our place,

Are you all took up with so-called places of worship?

The indignation of James and John, (the Sons of Thunder), can be seen here in verse 54 “And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?”.

This is a strange suggestion for disciples of love and compassion and mercy to make.

Elijah is in their minds, because they have just recently had a look at this fiery, forthright servant of God, on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus.

*They knew, and were well aware just now, that their master and Lord, was superior in power and authority to Elijah, (if Elijah could do it then He could do it), because God Almighty had spoken to them from the excellent glory, and said **"This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him".** Matthew 17:5*

Now watch their correction in verses 55-56

“But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village”.

I want to focus your attention on the wonderful words of our Precious Saviour in that last verse

"The Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them".

*And I want you to realize that it really is mens **"lives"** that Jesus is referring to here.*

"Lives" than can be laid down, or destroyed, or cut short.

*I know that in **Chapter 19** of this Gospel account of Luke's and **verse 10**, the emphasis is on mans' "soul", when Jesus says, **"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"**, and that was His primary purpose, in coming into this world,*

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners".

*But He also came to save mens' and women`s **"lives"**, in this present evil world.*

Here is a much neglected aspect of the Gospel message that I hear being preached in these days:

How Jesus Christ, and His great salvation, relates to mankind's "here and now," not only to "This day and age", but to each and every individual, and their immediate circumstances.

I don't want anyone to misunderstand me, for I know and fully believe that the eternal benefits that are secured by the finished work of Christ, for every redeemed believer, far outweigh all the potential joys of this present transient world.

Troubled mind, He gives us peace with God our creator, and settles the sin question in our lives for all time; and for eternity.

*The only place in the entire universe where a soul can find peace is at the cross. For He hath **"made peace through the blood of His cross"**.*

*He gives to us eternal life and we shall never perish, neither can any power pluck us out of His or His Father's hand. We have eternal security in Christ.
(So I'm not depending on me keeping anything up for He's keeping me).*

He brings God's pardon to us, and mightily delivers us, from the punishment and torments of a raging, burning hell, that we so richly deserve.

Through His forgiveness and imputed righteousness, He makes us recipients of all the blessings, and promises of God in the Holy Scriptures.

He gives us His infallible unbreakable word, that He has gone to prepare an actual place for us in Heaven, and that He is coming back to take us there, to live with Him forever.

I could go on and on and on setting out the eternal issues that cannot be numbered.

I firmly believe and rejoice in that.

Allow me to say also, that I am not propagating some kind of slick, American style, prosperity Gospel either.

But there is, nevertheless, a very relevant and vital side of the Gospel message of our Glorious Lord Jesus Christ's; that I believe we could fail to fully understand, dear unsaved one. (Maybe it hasn't dawned on you).

I remember thinking, "you have made your bed down here and you'll have to lie in it".

We preachers need to make it simple and get right down to grass roots, and tell out how that God's Wonderful Risen Son Jesus, affects your immediate circumstances tonight. Right now! (It's not all pie in the sky when you die).

This is important I believe because at the end of the day; when all is said and done, we are creatures of time and sense, and it is natural that we should give our foremost consideration, (in our unsaved days), to the bread and butter issues that affect our daily living. (these are the things that your mind is taken up with daily).

Our Saviour had a message for the present moment every time He preached.

He talked about worry and how to find relief and peace from anxiety.

He spoke about clothes and the things that we put on.

He promised to answer our prayers and guide us throughout life and give us purpose in living.

When He actually preached His Gospel message in the synagogue at Nazareth, He promised to

***"Heal the broken-hearted and set the captives free"**.*

(There are none of these in Heaven! These are here and now conditions).

Mark 10 : 28 –30

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life".

Dear unsaved soul listening to my voice just now, I hope you are beginning to realize what my subject is, this evening.

It is the HERE AND NOW side of Christ's Wonderful Salvation.

You know as well as I do that it is "Here and Now" that you need it.

Your life is in a terrible mess and your mind is in a turmoil.

Listen poor soul it's not the Lord who steals, kills and destroys: it's sin and Satan, that scars and mars and ruins and wrecks mens lives, and women`s characters.

And just as our Lord Jesus and His great Salvation, effects our lives down here on earth for good, so also sin and Satan corrupts our lives on earth for evil, as well as going on to damn our never-dying souls.

Allow me to give you some examples.

We read in Galatians 6 : 7

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap".

If you plant lettuces you won't grow spring onions, if you plant cauliflower, you wont grow rhubarb.

You'll always pick what you plant.

What goes around, comes around.

Now that always happens exactly the same way, that's why we call it a law or a rule, or a principal!

Its something that has been established by authority.

In this case the authority of God has established that everything bears fruit after its own kind.

But it's not just a law in the vegetable world, but also in the Spiritual Kingdom.

If you sow goodness then you will reap a peaceable existence (if you give then it shall be given unto you).

If you sow evil, then look out, for you are going to reap a whirlwind (Be sure your sin will find you out).

Now that's not God's way of Salvation, it's just a Spiritual Law.

Let me take you on a step now.

If you break the law of the land, then you have to pay the penalty, don't you?

If you break the Highway Code and keep going through red lights - then you will crash, won't you?

But if you break the Law of God, then you will pay the price also.

There is always a price to pay.

When you see a homosexual with AIDS he's paying the price now in this world!

And it's only a picnic compared to what he shall suffer in hell, if he doesn't repent and receive Christ as his Saviour.

It's the same with the drunkard who has ruined his liver, or the harlot who is diseased, the smoker with lung cancer, or the drug addict with his destroyed brain cells.

There is "a cause and effect" principal at work.

This is why my own life, eventually became a living hell on earth, before I repented and received the Saviour. I was driven by the spirit of fear and oppressed by the devil continually (fear hath torment).

I used to wonder if there was a curse upon me of some sort.

Do you ask yourself that question?

The answer is yes. You are under the curse of the broken Law of God.

Why am I telling you this?

Because I want you to realize the devastating effect that sin has, on your everyday existence, as well as on your eternal soul.

Oh how I wish that somebody had told me that God's Word was for real.

I thought that the Bible, was just an ancient old book of platitudes, and poetry, that nobody could either prove, or understand (and that's a lie of the devil).

*Unsaved souls are blind to God's truth and in darkness of soul, stumbling through this old world in sorrow, but God's Word (the Bible) is a **"Lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path"**.
Psalms 119*

*Listen to the Son of God Himself speaking in **John 3:18**, **"He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"**.*

*Unbelievers don't need to wait for some final judgement after death to see where they stand before God, for they are, **"condemned already"**, (the Saviour wants you to know that).*

That's a here and now thing, that you dear unsaved ones need to grasp.

God has condemned you already.

Even those of you who are "religiously inclined", because you have not made Jesus Christ your own, in reality.

***"You have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"**.*

*Now listen to John the Baptist speaking, as he reaches the conclusion of his message, in **John's Gospel 3:36**, **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: (they have it here and now as a present possession), and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; But the wrath of God abideth on him"**.*

Now that is deadly serious.

The wrath of God is already abiding on the head and life of the unsaved soul, and if they don't get saved it will go on, in an increasing way, to abide on them forever.

*God's Word says that we are by our very nature, **"children of wrath"** **Ephesians 2 : 3**.*

Listen, I know from my own experience and from God's Word, that it's a terrible thing to have the curse and the wrath of a Holy Sin-hating God upon you, even while you live, and go to work, and carry on your earthly existence, and then to be lost forever in hell.

It's a very real thing, this wrath of God, what exactly is it?

It is God's active revulsion of sin, and all that offends His Holy character.

*Some people would argue with you and say that there is no such thing as God's wrath, but **Job 36:18** says, "**Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with a stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee**".*

There is no second chance. If God damns your soul then its forever.

Let me read a Scripture that has lain heavily upon my heart, while considering these things.

*Paul the apostle is writing to redeemed believers in **Colossians 3:5-7** (READ IT)*

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetness which is idolatry for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them".

I just want you to see that the things that come upon us in life, are sometimes no accident. Our Saviour told a woman who had been taken in the very act of adultery, and who was now forgiven,

"Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee".

That's the here and now of her life, isn't it?

Ah, but the wonderful Salvation that Jesus Christ has wrought for you, has a "here and now" side to it also.

Whenever Almighty God our Heavenly Father sent His Only Begotten Son down to earth, to be born of a virgin, and in His Sovereignty took Him eventually to the death of the cross; Christ died to give His life for you: to save you from the penalty of sin, and the awful judgement torments in hell, that we so richly deserve.

But He rose again! out from among the dead, to give His resurrection life to you and to live His life in you, and work mightily through you!

He imparts His life to us, by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God, and we actually enjoy a moment by moment fellowship with "The Almighty", (as our Gracious Heavenly Father) and with Jesus Christ our Lord, being continually filled with the Holy Spirit! and this is merely the normal Christian life.

"To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons and daughters of God".
John 1 : 12

That's what here and now Salvation is.

*Jesus said, "**The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly**".*

The earthly Christian life, is "the abundant life experience", and our God and Saviour wants us to enjoy what he has created us to be, while we are here on earth, and then "go on" to rejoice in the full manifestation of it in eternity forever.

But I would be a deceiver and a liar if I didn't tell you that God's Great Salvation is for the here and now.

He has saved my soul and healed my broken heart and I give Him the glory that He righteously deserves.

He saved my life and my marriage and my sanity and my family.

He has miraculously provided the very house in which I live for us (as a free gift) He has given me my wages for 20 years.

Ah, but even in this present world, He has done much more than that.

"From sinking sands He lifted me, With tender hands He lifted me, From shades of night to plains of light, Oh praise His name He lifted me".

The only ones that ever lifted me beforehand were the police!

"Happy is that people whose God is the Lord" Psalm 144:15.

The devil would love to be able to convince you that God's redeemed people are a miserable lot.

(Illustration:- "Neddy you're the finest looking Christian I've seen all day").

You know in your heart the things that have already come upon you, as a consequence of your past sins, don't you?

Praise God there is a great ransom that can deliver you tonight.

Jesus Christ wants to be your Redeemer!

Gal 3:13 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree".

The old rugged cross makes a miraculous difference.

Peter the apostle says, "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the Precious Blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot".

"Nothing can for sin atone, nothing but the blood of Jesus".

He is able to deliver you, right where you sit.

"Jesus my Saviour on Calvary 's tree, paid the great debt and my soul set free".

I sat at the computer recently, looking at the "here and now" things that the blood and power of Christ redeems and delivers us from.

Just think about it and rejoice!