

**STORNOWAY**  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO  
THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS  
(1 TIMOTHY 1:15)

## April 2020 Newsletter



### WELCOME

### LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

### PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm

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## WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

If social isolation teaches us anything it is that we are created by God for social interaction. In the creation account, after God creates each thing, we read the refrain, “and God saw that it was good.” Yet, when God made man, the pinnacle of creation and an image-bearer of God, we are stunned to read that something was not quite right, or indeed we could say that it was not yet right. “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” (Gen. 2:18)

This statement is often aptly applied to marriages. However, it generally applies to our need for social interaction. Yes, there are times when we need to be by ourselves, to rest and recharge, but it is not good to go long time periods of isolation.

When it comes to the church, we are called to be a community, a family, an assembly. In these times when it is difficult to fellowship let’s try to think creatively. As I write this article, I am aware that Government advice is changing rapidly. But as of now there is no problem with people interacting outside as long as they maintain a safe distance from each other. If the weather is good perhaps you could visit with someone from the congregation in their garden. At the very least we can phone one another, text, or email. Let’s be thankful for these forms of technology and not be afraid to use them to fellowship together.

Every blessing,

Stephen

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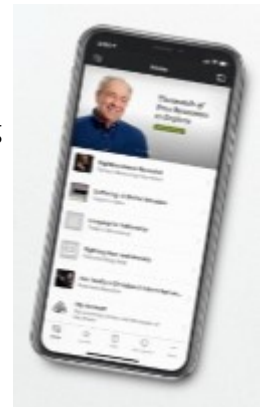
## NEWS & EVENTS

### ONLINE TEACHING RESOURCES

As a result of the global health crisis, church services have been cancelled and we are confined to our homes. The Minister is recording services from the manse and uploading them to Sermon Audio, in order for them to be made available at the usual worship times of 11 am & 6.30pm.

In order to supplement Lord’s Day services, you may be interested to learn that, in light of the unprecedented time we find ourselves in, Ligonier Ministries, founded by RC Sproul, have made their entire video library of hundreds of teaching series available to stream free, until at least 30 June, at [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org).

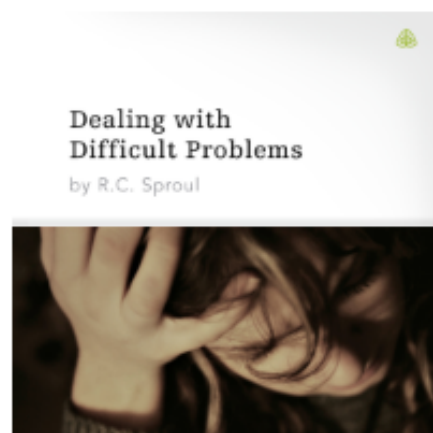
Not sure where to begin, try these series:



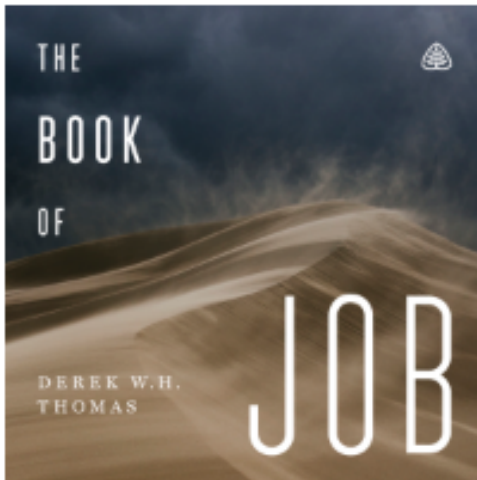
### *Dealing with Difficult Problems*

#### with R.C. Sproul

How will you respond when the news of the world causes great anxiety, when you lose your job, or when your spouse betrays you? In this series, R.C. Sproul addresses ways we can face life’s challenges with faith in the sovereignty of God and the sufficiency of Jesus Christ.



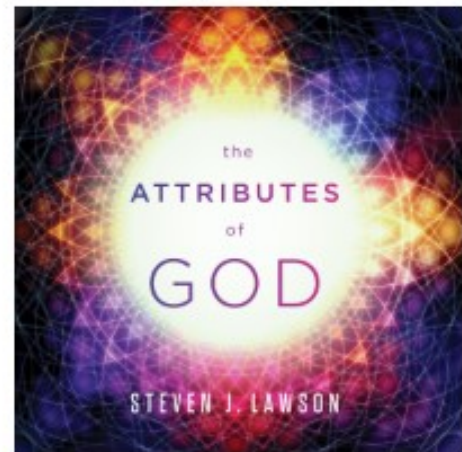
## **The Book of Job with Derek Thomas**



Why does God permit suffering? It's a question all of us have asked, and the book of Job points us toward the answer. In this series, Derek Thomas walks us through the book of Job and considers what the Bible says about our darkest moments and how we can learn to trust God in every trial.

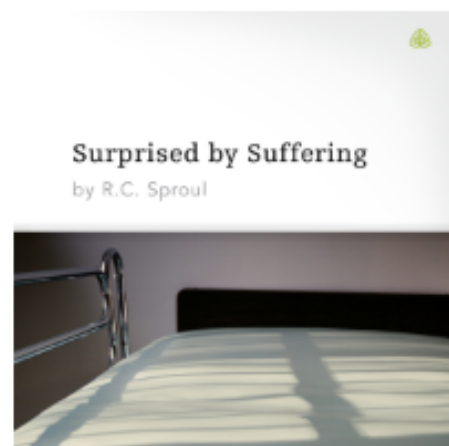
## **Attributes of God with Steven Lawson**

It's the most important question we can ask: Who is God? In this series, Steven Lawson articulates the attributes of God as the Lord has revealed them in His Word, exploring how a right understanding of God affects every aspect of our lives.



## **Surprised by Suffering with R.C. Sproul**

One moment, we're healthy, comfortable, and happy. The next moment, we find ourselves ill or injured, struggling, and distraught. Suffering tends to catch us by surprise, and we're sometimes tempted to question God's character amid our confusion. In this series, R.C. Sproul outlines how God relates to our pain and how He helps us to stand in times of trial.



## GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

THE WORDS OF THE PREACHER, THE SON OF DAVID, KING IN JERUSALEM (ECCLESIASTES 1:1)  
(READ ECC.1:1-7)

Ecclesiastes is from the Greek. It parallels the Hebrew Koheleth, which means a leader who gathers and addresses an assembly. "Preacher" is thus a reasonable translation. The connection with Solomon is unmistakable: the Preacher is "the son of David," a king in Jerusalem over the undivided kingdom of "Israel" (v.12), with "great experience of wisdom" (v.16). Professor Richard J Young considers the connection to be that wisdom is "presented as embodied in a person, and that person is Solomon" (An introduction to the Old Testament, p.348). Ecclesiastes exhorts us to practical godliness in our world of mixed experiences.

The words of the Preacher come as a challenge from God. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" strikes a chord in all, even hardened sinners. The emptiness burdens Ecclesiastes, compelling him to address our human condition by spiritual exhortation to transform heart and life.

The message of unprofitable labour is unwelcome. It pricks the bubble of man's false optimism with the uncomfortable reality: "for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). We put so much effort into life to get it to work, but what is the gain? If we look only at things under the sun, what hope is there?

As one drives to the delivery room, the hearse from the retirement home is heading to the graveyard. The Preacher, like the graveside, has a message men would rather forget: "for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14). You die, but the local scenery remains the same.

Our scientific age is preoccupied with the physical universe but misses the important lessons from the world around us. Look at "the sun" (v.5). It "hastens" to its place with mechanistic and tiring activity, like the treadmill character of human life. Look at "the wind" (v.6). Its arbitrary fluctuations result in no lasting change as it whirls about continuously just as you do. Look at "the rivers" (v.7). They maintain a continuous motion in a fixed direction without altering the status quo.

Do not be depressed by Ecclesiastes's worldview, but use it like your spectacles cloth to remove the accumulated dust in your heart and gain a clear view of life.

**Roy Mohon (A minister in the Presbyterian Reformed Church)**

### COMFORT FOR THE AGED

"Now that I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God!" Psalm 71:18

Old age and its infirmities will creep in on us; and with old age come weakness, pains, and fears. But an aged Christian should be a happy person; for he has proved the Lord to be faithful so many years, he has had answers to prayer so many times, and the God of his youth stands pledged never to leave nor forsake him. Will the Lord forsake an old servant? Never! Will the Father of mercies forsake one of His children when compassed with the infirmities of old age! Impossible! No, no! The Lord, who has borne with us so long ~ will bear with us to the end. The Lord, who has glorified Himself in our life ~ will get glory to Himself in our death.

4 As the God of all comfort, He will comfort us on the bed of languishing, and will make all our bed in our sickness; and when heart and flesh are failing ~ He will be the strength of our heart, and our portion forever!

Aged believer ~ doubt not, fear not! God has given you His Word ~ trust it. He has confirmed His Word by the death of His Son ~ therefore exercise confidence in Him. He has been a Friend and a Father to you for many years; and He will be your Friend and Father to the very last!



Be much with Him in prayer. With all the simplicity of a little child ~ let your requests be made known unto Him. He has grace for old age as He had for youth; and He has grace for a dying bed, as He had grace for all the conflicts of life. Believe His word, rest in His love, expect His blessing to the end, and you shall be more than a conqueror through Him who loved you. God never loved you more than He does now in your weakness, pains, and old age; and, sweet thought! He will never love you less! His love is infinite, everlasting. Having loved you, He loves you to the end!

Father in Heaven, I thank You for the mercies of my life. Help me to trust You through to the end of my life , in spite of my weakness and human frailty.

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime, until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" (Isaiah 46:4)

### **James Smith (1802 - 1862)**

#### SUFFICIENT GRACE

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me (2 Cor. 12:8)

Many Christians have problems that will not go away -- often in the form of bad health. God is able to remove the problems but sometimes He doesn't. In Paul's experience this prevented pride coming to the surface. God hates pride. He has promised to give you sufficient grace to endure the suffering. Let us rejoice in the grace given and not complain of our problem. Praise will often overcome pride and held ease the pain.

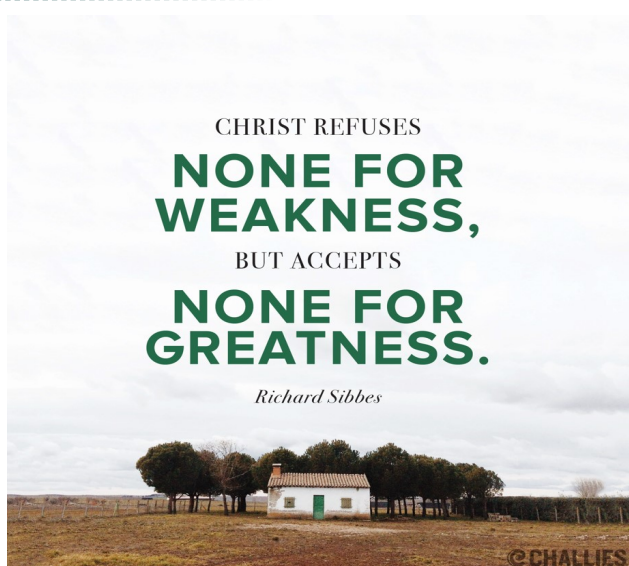
### **Brian Russell**

#### HIS WORD ALONE

And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful. (Exodus 1: 6 - 7).

The Israelites flourished as a nation long after Joseph's generation died. When they were oppressed, God multiplied them. When they were mistreated, He sustained them. When they were enslaved, He delivered them. God's promise to make them a great nation wasn't based on others -- but on His word alone. Are circumstances not in your favour? Is what you had hoped for gone? Trust God - the giver and keeper of promises. He will multiply, sustain and deliver as you look to Him.

### **Deborah Manera**



## MINIMISING THE GREAT COMMISSION

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20)



W. Robert Godfrey noted that one of the tendencies of the modern church, borne out of an essentially good desire to see the church revived, is to be persuaded that the way to advance evangelism is to pursue a minimalist Christianity. The motive, he says, may be commendable, but it is a fundamental betrayal of the Great Commission. He states, “the Great Commission was not, “Figure out the minimum number of things you can say about me and get people to believe those.” The Great Commission was, “Teach them to obey all things I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). There’s maximization to the Great Commission.”

### A NEGLECTED COMMISSION

The Great Commission is something that is largely neglected today, despite the fact that it is one of the most referred to and preached upon passages in all of Scripture. Typically, when we think about the Great Commission, we instantly think of evangelism. It is certainly true that the Great Commission calls us to evangelism, yet we make a great mistake if our understanding ends there. The Great Commission is neglected as the Church has lost sight of its fullness.

Jesus Christ gave his marching orders to the eleven remaining apostles, in a mountain in Galilee, regarding the spiritual conquest of the whole earth. The Great Commission is primarily about discipleship, as the imperative or command is to “make disciples.” The way the Church is to make disciples is to go, baptise and teach. However, the modern church has reduced this in an attempt to attract the masses into the church by offering them what they want, and by removing much of which is deemed offensive. Steven Lawson comments, “step into the average church these days and you will likely see that the services are designed to remove the fear of God than to promote it.”

Nowadays, it is difficult not to conclude that the most neglected element of the Great commission is the teaching to observe all things He has commanded us, as Godfrey rightly noted. A cursory glance at the Ecclesiastical landscape of Scotland will reveal a variety of churches who vary greatly in their emphasis of the teaching aspect of the Great Commission. Some would seek to faithfully teach the observing of all things, whereas others would place little to no emphasis on teaching what we have been commanded. However, there are also those who have a great history of seeking to faithfully teach the observing of all things, but have gradually watered down much of what they once taught. It is now consigned to the dusty shelves of confessed but neglected teaching.

### A NEGLECTED LORD’S DAY

A specific example is that of the Lord’s Day. The confessional standards of our churches, summarising Scriptural teaching, emphasise the Lord’s Day, as a day “to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q.60). This falls very much into the category of confessed, but neglected, in the sense that it forms part of the churches confessional standards, but it is seldom, if ever taught from the pulpit.

One particular minister in recent years stated, “I don’t preach about the Sabbath.” How at odds such a comment is in comparison with the men of old, whose words, if uttered today, would either make many of us uncomfortable or be lambasted by much of the church. For instance, Robert Murray M’Cheyne once preached, “and we may boldly say that a man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ who does not love the entire Lord’s day.”

Could it be said that the church's abandonment of the Lord's Day, to a confessed but neglected teaching, is to make life easier for evangelism? Much of our worldly entertainments are to be found on the Lord's Day, such as football, athletics and concerts. The world wants to do what it wants, when it wants, without hearing about such restrictions, for a day each week. Therefore in an effort to attract the world into the church, the message the church portrays is that it doesn't matter if you keep the Lord's Day or not. This in turn has had the effect that the vast majority of the churches in our land does not keep the Lord's Day, or are even aware of the Lord's Day, something that was intended for our benefit, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

## NEGLECTED WORSHIP

This principle of neglected teaching extends to many other areas. For instance, the issue of how we ought to worship God in public worship comes very much to the fore here. The thinking of the modern church is simply that worship in the church is dictated according to the preferences of those in attendance, or of those we would seek to draw into the church. The thinking is often, if you offer a worship style that suits those out with the church, your evangelism is far more likely to yield results of increased attendance. However, unbeknown to many today, again due to a neglect in teaching, God has not left His church free to invent our own worship, but has provided specific directions in Scripture (Deuteronomy 12:32, Matthew 28:20). The Shorter Catechism explains that this forbids the worshipping of God by "any other way not appointed in His Word" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q.51). The Regulative Principle of Worship, which the modern churchgoer is on the most part totally unaware of, briefly put is what is not commanded is not permitted in worship. On the surface, in our day and age, this may seem restrictive to some, even many, but it is difficult to see why anyone who values the authority of Scripture would find such a principle objectionable. After all, are we not called to live the whole of our lives according to the authority of Scripture?

## NEGLECTED DISCIPLESHIP

Finally, one of the greatest, and most neglected tools for discipleship in the modern church is the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. They have, for hundreds of years served as the doctrinal foundation of the reformed churches. For instance, children learned the Shorter Catechism from start to finish by the age of twelve, as an invaluable guide through life and as a means of having the main truths of Scripture at ready access. In years gone, catechists would remain in one place till they had taught a number of people to repeat and understand the Shorter Catechism in some measure, and in turn one member of a family would then be in a position to teach other members of the family. Nowadays, few professedly reformed churches emphasise the Westminster Standards, and it is to the detriment of the discipleship of the church.

Given that the Great Commission relates to discipleship and teaching, with a view to observing all things that He has commanded, what better tool to use for instruction than these Biblically based documents? They were written at a time when the church was at a far more spiritual state than our own day, and address, in a summary form, the main teachings of Scripture. Few in the church today are familiar with the Westminster Standards, and perhaps one of the reasons is that the church is pursuing a minimalist Christianity, where in an attempt to fill the pews, little effort is required by its members to understand and observe all that He has commanded us?

## CONCLUSION

In an attempt to attract the world into the church, much of the church in Scotland, and further afield, has pursued a path of minimalist Christianity and has become more like the world. This has seen a fundamental betrayal of the Great Commission, and a watering down of Biblical teaching, which has led much of the church to gradually lose its moorings. Martyn-Lloyd-Jones put it aptly as he said, "When the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first." Ought not the church return to the old paths, to be absolutely different from the world, and to strive to teach and observe *all things*, which He has commanded us, as we seek to fulfil the Great Commission?

## ARE YOU WEEPING OVER OUR EMPTY CHURCHES?

Almost all churches have become empty overnight. The public worship of God has been removed across many nations. If you are kept from attending public worship, are you mourning over that as David did (Psalm 42:2-5)? Why should it cause so much distress? Worship is the highest activity we can engage in and God places special emphasis on public worship (Psalm 87:2). What is more important than the public worship of God? This is the purpose for which souls are brought out of spiritual darkness (1 Peter 2:9). The intention is not to make people feel guilty because they are prevented from attending public worship. Sometimes there are things beyond our control that stop us. The crucial question is: are we weeping over such an extraordinary and solemn removal of public worship across the face of the earth?



Some will say that they can worship privately at home and this can make up much of the loss. Connecting distantly as a spectator to an empty building is not the same as public worship. Private worship is a great privilege and benefit, it can bring us much edification. But, by definition, it is not, public worship. It is there that we most want to praise God (Psalm 22:22&25). Thus, the Westminster Confession says that God is to be worshipped “more solemnly, in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calleth thereunto” (WCF 21:6). The Lord promises a special blessing for public worship (Exodus 20:24). David greatly desired that and so should we (Psalm 27:4; 63:1-2).

What about the public glory of Christ? The public glory of Christ is vital—His glory in the Church and in society. One great means of this is public worship of God (Psalm 29:9). God is more glorified by public worship than any other worship. It is possible for us to glorify God in the secrecy of our hearts and the privacy of our homes. Surely we want God’s glory manifested publicly as well as privately? Usually this is what is meant when we read in Scripture about the glory of the Lord being revealed. We want as many people as possible to see that glory and to join in praising God together (Psalm 96:1-3; Psalm 66:1). “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together” (Psalm 34:3).

Scripture never envisages the removal of public worship as being anything less than disastrous (read Psalm 74 for just one example). It is no light thing, it is not “just one of those things” that are unusual and regrettable but nonetheless merely “unfortunate”. Many interpreters have concluded that the beginning of gathered public worship is described in Genesis 4:26. It would be solemn to look back and identify the present moment as a time when people began not to call on the name of the Lord, because of the removal of public worship.

The book of Lamentations is for just such a time as this. It brings events into perspective. Jeremiah witnessed the destruction of everything. He pours out his heart and sorrowful prayers before the Lord. His tears flow freely, especially concerning the spiritual losses such as the destruction of the temple. “The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate” (Lamentations 1:4).

It is noticeable that he traces it back to God’s warnings through the prophets that this would take place. Thus, it is ultimately the Lord who has “cast off his altar” and sanctuary. He has “violently taken away his tabernacle... destroyed his places of the assembly” and “caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion” (Lamentations 2:6-7). The following is an updated extract from David Dickson’s exposition of that verse.



### 1. GOD REMOVES HIS PROTECTION

Another point of his lamentation is that God has taken away the hedge of His protection from His Church. It is as if a man would pull away his hedge from his garden and let all the beasts in. He has taken away His tabernacle, as any would pull away his hedge from his orchard. He has destroyed her places of assembly, so that they did not have a place to meet in. He has caused their solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten, that is, there is no memory left of public solemnities. The fact that God violently pulls away His tabernacle shows us that there is no place so holy that God is held to unless it is visited in a holy way. Although He said of Jerusalem, “this is the place of my rest forever,” (1 Kings 8:13 and 9:13) yet when they abused it He forsook it.

### 2. GOD REMOVES HIS PRESENCE

Jerusalem had this promise, yet God removed His presence because His worship was abused. How will then any place without such a promise affirm that God is held to it? There never was a place that God was more strictly held to than Jerusalem. Yet when they abused it He left it, for He is a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity (Habakkuk 1:13). Let no one think they will enjoy the Word and gospel unless they walk in the light of it. Will the Lord expose His Word and ordinances to mockery and cast His bread to those that are not hungry?

But seeing the Lord is pleased to maintain a tabernacle among us, let us not defile the place of His rest by our sins. Do not stir up our love till He pleases (Song of Solomon 2:7). Do not provoke Him to be driven away from us and go His way. For if we do, although we may be dear to Him and also as near to Him as the signet ring of His hand (Jeremiah 22:24), He will pull us off and cast us away. He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), but will do to us as to His Church in former times.

### 3. GOD REMOVES HIS VISIBLE PRESENCE

God “destroyed the places of the assembly.” This shows that the sins of professing Christians will provoke God to remove the face or outward appearance of a visible church. If we do not make better use of our meetings in the church, God will make them like filthy lavatories. There was no visible church on earth except Jerusalem, yet when it was abused by idolatry, He scattered it. Although some stones here and there were reserved for a new building, the face of a visible church was abolished. It is as great folly to say there will always be a visible church in a place, as to say that a church cannot offend God.

Judah’s solemn feasts were the equivalent of our communions. If we do not make use of our solemn meetings, frequent preaching and communions, they will go out of remembrance. The public ensigns (i.e. military flag) by which we should follow our Lord will cease to be displayed.

### CONCLUSION

These are truly solemn considerations that we must take to heart. They are very applicable to our own time. It is easy for us to take public worship for granted until we have it removed. Have we treated it as we should, have we benefited from it as we ought? Have we been too glib in assuming that God would not cast off the professing Church in the west? Could it be that (as with Old Testament Israel) we have actually corrupted God’s worship to suit ourselves rather than His commands and therefore God is taking it from us?

[www.reformationscotland.org](http://www.reformationscotland.org)



## PASTORAL MINISTRY AND PESTILENCE

In the midst of the current worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, an account about the pastoral ministry of B.M. Palmer in the midst of a yellow fever epidemic came to mind. Yellow fever is extremely contagious and far more deadly than Covid-19; yet, Benjamin Morgan Palmer viewed the fulfilment of his pastoral ministry as of greater importance than his own safety. In *The Life and Letters of*



*Benjamin Morgan Palmer*, Thomas Cary Johnson recounts Palmer's autobiographical, third-person account of a meeting he had at the deathbed of a young man who had contracted yellow fever. He wrote,

“During the epidemic of 1867, a pastor in the city of New Orleans was just leaving his study to attend the funeral of one who had fallen a victim to the pestilence. A crumpled note was placed in his hand requesting him to repair immediately to the couch of a dying stranger. Promising to obey the summons as soon as released from the service then present, within an hour he turned sadly away from the cemetery, where the solemn words, ‘dust to dust,’ had just been pronounced, to look again upon Death, struggling with his prey, in a retired chamber.

“A single glance revealed the form of an athletic young man, with a broad and noble brow, upon which the seal of the grave was visibly set. Sitting upon the edge of the bed, and taking the sufferer's hand kindly in his own, the preacher said, ‘Mr. M., do you know how ill you are?’

“‘Yes,’ was the quick response; ‘I shall soon pass the bourne whence no traveller returns.’ “‘Are you, then, prepared to die?’

“‘Alas! no, sir,’ fell upon the ear like the knell of a lost soul.

“‘Will you, then, let me pray for you?’ and with the assent given, the knee was bowed before Him who alone has power to save. In two or three terse sentences, uttered with a tremulous emotion, the case of the dying sinner was laid at the mercy-seat.

“The moments were shortening fast; very soon the last sand would disappear from the hour-glass. The conversation was promptly resumed, as follows:

“‘Mr. M., I am told you are the son of pious parents, and have been reared in the bosom of the Church; you do not need, therefore, that I should explain to you the way of salvation—for which, indeed, there is now no time. But you know that the Bible says, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Only believe *now* in this Saviour, and you are saved.’

“‘Oh, sir,’ was the reply, ‘if God will only spare me this once I promise that I will live very differently in the future than I have lived in the past.’

“‘My dear friend,’ rejoined the minister, ‘this is the last device of Satan to destroy your soul. I tell you faithfully, there is no future for you in this world; you are now passing, whilst I speak, through the gateway of Death, and what you do, you must do at once, or be lost forever.’

“To this appeal the only answer was a deep groan, whilst the beads of moisture, gathering upon that ample forehead, and the swollen veins, drawn like a dark seam across it, betokened the anguish of a guilty spirit, shrinking from the presence of an angry God. A few seconds of awful silence intervened; but a last effort must be made to pluck this soul from the lethargy of despair. ‘Mr. M., do you remember the story of the penitent thief upon the cross? His time was short, just as yours is; but one brief prayer, not longer than a line, expressed his faith, and was enough. So you see that it is never too late.’

“At this the closed eyes were opened, and the first word of hope fell from the parted lips: ‘No, it is not too late; thank God, it is not too late.’

“Mr. M.,’ said the pastor, ‘do you trust now in the Lord Jesus Christ?’

“Yes, I do. He is my Saviour, and I am not afraid to die!’ rung out upon the startled listeners, as though a note from the song of the harpers had fallen from heaven into that chamber of death.

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*“Mr. M., do you remember the story of the penitent thief upon the cross? His time was short, just as yours is; but one brief prayer, not longer than a line, expressed his faith, and was enough. So you see that it is never too late.”*

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“There was another silence of a few seconds—this time a silence of wonder and joy; it was broken by the dying man, as he turned upon his side and whispered to the minister, ‘Will you write to my father?’

“Yes, certainly: but what shall I tell him?’

“Tell him I have found Jesus, who has pardoned my sins, and I am not afraid to die. He will meet me in heaven.’

“It was his last utterance, for in the next moment the soul, that had passed through this fierce struggle into the second birth, winged its separate flight, and stood before the throne.

The whole interview thus described was shut up within the limits of fifteen minutes, from the moment of entrance into that darkened chamber till the tenantless body lay in its cold sweat, to be shrouded for the tomb.

“Sad, yet sweet, were the pastor’s thoughts as he walked to his home, beneath the stars, through the streets of the silent city—thoughts of the vast solemnity and preciousness of his office, as an ambassador for Christ—thoughts of that blessed family covenant by which God remembers the prayers of a believing parent, and looks at the tears in his bottle—sometimes even upon the death-bed of the child—thoughts of that unutterable love which saves, even to the uttermost, and makes it *never too late* to pluck the brand from the burning.”<sup>1</sup>

What a powerful and motivating story of the way in which pastors should be willing to put themselves in harms’ way for the sake of the salvation of others. Palmer did not love his own health more than he loved the souls of those God had entrusted to his care. Pastors must face the dangers of pestilence with a fervor for the eternal well-being of others. May the Lord give His ministers a burden for the salvation of those around them—even in a time of uncertainty and fear about unknown pestilence.

**Rev. Nick Batzig, [www.feedingonchrist.org](http://www.feedingonchrist.org)**

**1. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Benjamin Morgan Palmer* (Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1906) p 298.**

# Children's Corner



Dear Children

Last month I told about a young girl from North Korea and her dilemma. Now I'll tell you the rest of her story.

She spent two weeks wondering what she should do having discovered a Bible hidden in the house. She knew why it was hidden and she knew what would happen if the government officials were to find out it was there.

In the end she decided to ask her father about God and God's book and then to ask him if he believed what was written there. Whilst it was brave of her to ask, it was equally brave of her father to tell her. He wasn't to know but that she would tell on him. What a difficult situation to be in!

Her father explained to her how God created the world and all that is in it including Adam and Eve. He told her how they sinned and how, as a result of their first sin, every person in the world is a sinner. He then explained to her the Good News of salvation, how God sent His Son into the world to be the Saviour of sinners and that those who put their trust in Him are saved from their sins and will be able to spend eternity with Him in heaven. All this was very new to her but it was very good news. She eventually came to believe the Gospel and accepted the Lord Jesus as her own personal Saviour. Her mother taught her to memorise Bible verses, something which is very important if you can not have a Bible of your own. Her grandfather taught her how to pray to God every day asking for His help and for His teaching. She also tells how her father discovered that one of those meeting with them to read and pray was in actual fact a spy who had been ordered to watch them. Her father had visited this man as he was dying and it was then that he confessed to him why he was in their gatherings. This man, however, could not bring himself to tell on them. Possibly what he was hearing of the Gospel was touching his heart and, in actual fact, he asked her father how he too could become a Christian. It was indeed a very happy occasion when her father was able to lead this former spy to the Saviour and to put his trust in him before he died.

I found this story very moving as I thought of this young girl choosing to follow Christ even though she knew how dangerous it was. Can you remember someone else in the Bible who chose "to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin." ? Look up Hebrews chapter 11, verses 24 – 26. What about yourselves? Are you willing to give up the pleasures of this world in exchange for the riches that the Lord Jesus gives? Are you willing to follow the Lord Jesus like this young girl in North Korea? You are not in danger of being killed or even being sent to a concentration camp but she thought that Christ was worth all that suffering. I assure you that life with Christ is more than worth it.

Remember the texts that I quoted in last week's story? Learn them by heart and always think of the rewards of following the Lord Jesus and of not being afraid of letting others know that you are one of His children. His children are very special to Him and they have the promise of spending eternity with Him in heaven. Isn't that something to look forward to?

May the Lord bless you and help you to serve Him all your days.