

## **Devotionals for the Week of January 22, 2023**

Our devotional section provides additional spiritual input for helping you go further and deeper in your journey with the Lord. It is our desire, our hope, and our prayer that this devotional section will be a helpful Spiritual Life tool for you to utilize on a regular basis. Each day's devotional will typically consist of Scripture, commentary, and a prayer response. Current Devotionals can be accessed each day online at [www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals](http://www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals) or by using the Cape Cod Church App (select "Connect" on the bottom main page and then "Daily Devotional" on next page). Be sure to check Saturdays and Sundays for special postings (poems, stories, etc. -hopefully on a regular basis). Printed copies from the prior week are available at the Connection Desk.

### **Monday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Becoming Spiritually Whole - Confident of Your Death to Life Transfer**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Today we begin week four of a five-week Devotional Series entitled, "The Touch of the Master's Hand." When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is "the Touch of the Master's hand" that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference. This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us. This series is a compilation of separate weeks of Devotional material. They were selected and put together because they all contribute very nicely to this emphasis. This is truly a series to help the person who wants to explore, enter into, and consistently experience the "Deeper" Christian life. We hope the "Touch of the Master's Hand" Devotional Series blesses you and wonderfully guides you into a "Deeper" Christian experience.

This series has five weeks of Devotional material with two weeks having six Devotionals and three having five. This week has six devotionals (Monday through Saturday). Week One: Divine Adjustments. Week two: Communion with God. Week three: The Presence of God. Week four: Becoming Spiritually Whole. Week Five: Tale of the Soul. We begin week four: Becoming Spiritually Whole, with the following:

"The Touch of the Master's Hand"

*By Myra Brooks Welch*

'Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer

Thought it scarcely worth his while

To waste much time on the old violin,

But he held it up with a smile.

“What am I bid, good folk?” he cried.

“Who’ll start the bidding for me?

A dollar, a dollar ... now two ... only two ...

Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?

“Three dollars once, three dollars twice,

Going for three” ... but no!

From the room far back a gray-haired man

Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin

And tightening up the strings,

He played a melody pure and sweet,

As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,

With a voice that was quiet and low,

Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"

As he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars ... and who'll make it two?

Two...two thousand, and who'll make it three?

Three thousand once and three thousand twice ...

Three thousand and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some exclaimed

"We do not quite understand ...

What changed it's worth?" and the answer came:

"Twas the touch of the master's hand."

In answer to the question, "What changed," our poem proclaims triumphantly, "the touch of the master's hand." When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is "the Touch of the Master's hand" that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference. This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us.

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Today's Scripture uses the term "born again" which in our society is often very much misunderstood and maligned. It could be that those who malign the term understand it more than we think. The simple meaning of the term "born again" is "to be made alive again" and of course it is something that is spiritual and not physical. It does convey the idea that we are inadequate spiritually and in need of a total makeover or redo. Perhaps those who react to the term feel like they are being judged unfairly and viewed poorly when told they need to be born again. It may be that that they feel that no one has the right to tell them they need a total spiritual makeover or redo. If they could only get past the messenger and see themselves in this light before God alone

and accept the reality of being spiritually bankrupt, they would be halfway to where they need to get.

The other half of what is needed is what Christ has done to undo our spiritual bankruptcy. What a great description our passage gives us of what happens to those who recognize their spiritual bankruptcy before God and receive God's wonderful provision for reversing it. We are told that we are born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Christ, we have obtained an inheritance reserved in heaven, and we are protected or kept by the power of God through faith until then.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, thank you for your great mercy that has brought this wonderful gift to me. Deliver me from any sense that I am spiritually alright apart from what you provided for me in Christ. Awaken me fully to what it means to be made alive again spiritually. Fill me with great confidence and anticipation regarding my heavenly inheritance. Give me a boldness for life and my role in advancing your kingdom that fully relies on your powerful protection for keeping me wonderfully intact until the very end. Amen!

## **Tuesday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Becoming Spiritually Whole - Convinced that Jesus Christ Alone Redeems**

For a short time, Jesus was made lower than the angels, but now we see him wearing a crown of glory and honor because he suffered and died. Because of God's grace, Jesus died for everyone. God—the one who made all things and for whose glory all things exist—wanted many people to be his children and share his glory. So, he did what he needed to do. He made perfect the one who leads those people to salvation. He made Jesus a perfect Savior through his suffering. Hebrews 2:9-10

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

So often when it comes to the core understandings of redemption, we are like the person who relies on glasses but doesn't have them on and is trying to manage anyway. What a difference when one puts their glasses back on and sees again with clarity the world around them. Our Scriptures for this week serve as spiritual glasses that bring us the clarity we need for the core understandings of redemption. Try it out with today's Scripture. Read it again with the thought that what it says will help you see with clarity the core understandings of redemption.

Our passage says that Jesus was made lower than the angels for a while. This means that God the Son left his exalted state in the splendor of heaven to take on human form here on lowly earth. Next our passage tells us that we see Jesus now back in the splendor of heaven wearing a crown of glory and honor. During his time away from heaven and here on earth Jesus became the Savior

of the world who suffered and died for everyone. Notice the words: “He did what he needed to do.” Jesus and Jesus all alone could be the Savior of the world and so our Heavenly Father did what needed to be done to make that a reality. He gave us Jesus and Jesus as the Savior of the world needs to be seen with full clarity.

Our passage also says that our Heavenly Father “wanted many people to be his children and share his glory.” We have just seen the fullness of what was done to provide the world with the Savior. These measures would not have been taken if they were not absolutely necessary. Here’s the point: we are not God’s children and we do not share his glory without a Savior and unless at some point while we are here on earth, we embrace Jesus as our Savior and him alone, that’s the way it will be forever. The fact that we need a Savior to save us from our sins and that we are in eternal trouble if we don’t, needs to be seen with full clarity. Even as believers we get to the spot where we no longer see the core understanding of our redemption with full clarity. May we see with fuller clarity than ever before the absolute gift Jesus our Savior is and the absolute need we have for Jesus our Savior.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, things get a bit murky sometimes for me. Please help me to see you and myself with full clarity. Help me to stand firm on the reality that there is one and only one way and that is through Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Help me as well to stand firm on the reality that I would be lost forever without my Savior and that I am found forever because of him. Amen!

### **Wednesday - The Touch of the Master’s Hand - Becoming Spiritually Whole - Awakened to the “Fullness of Christ” Blessing**

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. Ephesians 1:18-20*

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

In today’s Scripture the Apostle Paul tells the Ephesian believers how he prays for them. He begins by saying that he prays that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.” The Scriptures open the eyes of our “understanding” so that we grasp with clarity what it means for Christ to be the Savior of the world and why we absolutely need Christ as our Savior from sin. However, there is no opening of the eyes of our “understanding” in these ways without the opening of the eyes of our “heart.” For those who have truly come to Christ for Salvation, the Holy Spirit did

the wonderful work of opening their hearts and minds so that they understood and embraced Christ and received the glorious gift of redemption.

In praying that the eyes of his reader's hearts will be enlightened, the Apostle Paul is asking God to help them come to know, both in their understanding and experience, the fullness of Christ and all that is theirs because of the relationship they have with him through redemption. Fullness is the key thought here. The Ephesian believers have already received the gift of redemption in Christ. Paul is praying for a further work of the Holy Spirit so that they may enter more deeply and fully into all that they have in Christ.

As believers in Christ this is our need as well. Read the passage again and note the things that we have in Christ. Come before the Lord in Prayer and say each item you found in the passage (ex: "the hope of his calling") and ask God to open the eyes of your heart in regard to it. Continue on in quietness before him and let God help you with both your understanding and experience of it.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Write out a description of your prayer experience today. Come back to it somewhere down the line and assess how God has been at work helping you enter more deeply and fully into all that you have in Christ.

## **Thursday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Becoming Spiritually Whole - Staying Dependent on the Gift of Christ's Righteousness**

As it is written, "there is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." Romans 3:10-12

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Today's Scripture is a quote from Psalm 53:1-3. The Apostle Paul chooses to quote it here in his epistle to the Romans. He does so because it clearly states the "bad news" that is absolutely necessary for each and every person to receive and accept so they can then receive and accept fully the "Good News" of redemption through Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Just before our passage, verse 9 says, "all are under sin" and after our passage, verse 23 says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." All of this makes for a pretty strong statement of "bad news" that is true of every single person bar none.

We have already said that it is absolutely necessary for "bad news" to come before "Good News." Perhaps what we are addressing this week all boils down to this: We don't grasp as fully

as we should how bad the “bad news” is nor do we grasp as fully as we should how good the “Good News” is. Verse 19 that follows our passage gives us some insight as to why it is crucial that we grasp how bad the “bad news” is. The verse says, “so that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be accountable to God.” Verses 24 and 26 give us some insight into why it is vital to grasp how good the “Good News” is. These verses say that we are “justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus .... for the demonstration, I say, of his righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I see how important it is for me to stay aware of how bad the “bad news” is, not so I feel bad, but rather for how it helps me stay aware of how good the “Good News” really is. How amazingly good it is to be redeemed forever because of your mercy and grace. I bow before You in worship, adoration, and praise. Help me to have a lifestyle of worship that guards me from self-righteousness and helps me spread the “Good News” of redemption in Christ and Christ alone.

## **Friday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Becoming Spiritually Whole - Knowing Christ Experientially on a Daily Basis**

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith. Philippians 3:7-9

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

The key to the Christian life is found in ceasing our efforts to achieve it. Just as redemption is by grace, so is the Christian life. Deeply embedded in our human nature is the drive to perform and accomplish and this is what makes it very difficult for us to walk by faith and not by law. How readily we twist our Christian faith into a list of do's and don'ts. The Apostle Paul excelled at achieving the requirements of the Jewish law. We have our Christian law, and we plod along foolishly trying to measure up to it. In today's Scripture, the Apostle Paul says he counts all such things as loss and rubbish. Why does he do this? Because he has seen something infinitely better and in reality, the only thing that works. He has exchanged a system of rules for the person of Jesus Christ.

Paul says the law and his own personal list of achievements in regard to it are no longer the way he operates. He speaks of the surpassing value of knowing Christ and the necessity of gaining him, being found in him, and having a righteousness which is through faith in him. Paul boldly declares that the righteousness (the Christian life) which comes from God on the basis of faith is the only way it will ever happen properly. Spend some time meditating on today's Scripture and come up with your own expression of how the Christian life comes from your own direct connection with Christ and not by measuring up to whatever Christian system you have adopted for yourself. Tomorrow's Scripture and devotional will be an expression of this that you can use to help you further with this all-important consideration.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I recognize that I have a lot to learn about walking by faith and letting my Christian life somehow flow from my relationship with you. Teach me, change me, and mold me. Lord, I bow before you in surrender, worship, and expectation. Amen!

### **Saturday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Becoming Spiritually Whole - Trusting Christ to Live Life for Us**

For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the Law, I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly. Galatians 2:18-21

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

When God brought the world into existence, it was everything he wanted it to be. However, it wasn't very long before the world became something very different than he created it to be. Ever since, it has been God's purpose to change the world and bring it back into harmony with himself and the good intentions he had in mind for the world from the beginning. God's plan for changing the world is centered in his Son, Jesus Christ, who is doing an amazing work of changing the world one person at a time.

When someone comes to initial faith in Christ the expectation of God is for that person to become a totally changed person. It begins with the provision of Christ's forgiveness and cleansing of sin that makes it possible for Christ to live in their hearts through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. It then involves his work of actually changing them from the inside out into the person he wants them to be and then using them to reach others that he will be able to change in the same way.

True change only comes from Jesus Christ himself (The touch of the Master's Hand). It does not come from our own efforts to conform to the expectations we think God has for us. This is what today's Scripture is all about. Just like a person must give up on there being any way to be right with God except through the forgiveness and cleansing of sin through Christ, they must give up on any way to live the Christian life except through Christ living it in and through them.

Faith in Christ that saves us must lead to faith in Christ that changes us in this way and this way only. If we resort to law keeping (trying to conform to God's standards) then we are bypassing God's plan or if we just go with the flow of the world, then we are ignoring God's plan. Either way it is forgiveness without a truly changed life and we are missing links in the plan God has for changing the world. The startling conclusion of our passage is that for such cases, "Christ died needlessly."

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, Jesus, thank you for loving me and giving yourself up for me. I declare that I love you and give myself up to you and your wonderful plan. May you have me fully so that you can live in and through me however you desire. Change me and use me for your honor and glory. Amen!

***Note:***

Personal help, encouragement, and support are available for your "Deeper" Christian life journey.

At the beginning of the week the following three things were said:

- (1) When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is "the Touch of the Master's hand" that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference.
- (2) This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us.
- (3) This is truly a series to help the person who wants to explore, enter into, and consistently experience the "Deeper" Christian life.

Each week of our five-week devotional series gives you a lot to consider and respond to. Help, encouragement, and support are a vital part of the "Deeper" Christian life experience!

So, I want you to know that I am available to help, encourage, and support you. Please feel free to email me at [kenhart5273@gmail.com](mailto:kenhart5273@gmail.com) anytime with questions, thoughts, or concerns and I will

gladly interact with you. Do not click on my email address. Just write it down and use it in your own email program. I can also be available by phone when needed. Just email me and I will email you my number. Blessings! Ken Hart