

Matthew (Quality: Good)

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Date: 19 October 1977

Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [0 : 00] In dependence upon thee, Lord, for all needed help, I will venture to draw your prayerful attention to Matthew chapter 28, verses 5, 6, and 7.
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- And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
- He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.
- And behold, he goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see him.
- [1 : 30] Lo, I have told you. How very dark all appeared to these dear women.
- Yea, it was literal darkness, because we read in another gospel record that while it was yet dark, but as the scriptures tell us in this gospel, as it began to dawn, the literal sun began to rise and cast its light over the dark earth.
- So this light of the gospel, of the revelation of a risen Christ, was to turn the darkness of these dear women into light.
- It was to turn their sorrow into joy. It was then, to them, still, a time of darkness.
- It was a time of danger. And yet, it was a time of devotion. Dangers there were, as a company, just these few women came early that morning to the sepulcher.
- [3 : 39] There was difficulty who will roll away the stone. There was danger the soldiers that would be standing on guard.
- But there was devotion because, my dear friend, though their darkness was great, their sadness was great, their dangers were real, yet how deeply they loved Jesus.
- And so the Sabbath, now being passed, early, so very early, they came to the sepulcher.
- Oh, my friend, how we feel ashamed to think of our sluggishness and slothfulness.
- O that the Lord may kindle such love in our poor hearts to Jesus Christ, that even our first thoughts in the day may be to think of him and pray to him.
- [5 : 05] They came then to the sepulcher, and though their dangers were great, and though they did not know who or how the stone would be rolled away, yet they found that the difficulty had already been removed by this, that the stone was already rolled back from the door.
- But upon that stone sat an angel from heaven, and what a sight that afforded to these women, for his countenance was like lightning.
- None can stand before the glaze of lightning. His countenance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow.
- Nothing could be whiter. Nothing could be so pure and holy as this. So, my friend, as we consider it, they then saw this angel.
- But what effect did it have? First, upon the keepers. I have no doubt whatsoever that they were, what we would say, hand-picked men.

[6 : 54] The enemies of Jesus Christ, the enemies of the cross, spared no pains whatsoever to set this watch, having the authority given by Pilate.

And they did not forget, though they derided, the words of Jesus when he said that he would rise again on the third day.

Now, the appearance of the angels calls that these men, these soldiers, these keepers, did shake and became as dead men.

They were paralyzed with fear. they could not move, they could not go forth, they could not touch or harm or hinder these women who came so early to the sepulcher.

Let us in passing observe this, that if the appearance of an angel from heaven was such as indeed it was, that it was so glorious, so heavenly, and that it was so overwhelming more than man could bear, what must we say of the Lord himself.

[8 : 34] but the angel speaks and there is a word not for the enemies of the cross, not for these keepers, but a word, a word from heaven, a word of comfort, a gracious hear not to these dear women who came so early in such love, with such devotion to the sepulcher.

Now, it may be thought that such a blessing as this, such a manifestation as this, such a message as this of the angel to speak to the women is something that is far and away beyond the experience of any believer today.

My dear friend, I feel we need to consider this word and I hope that the dear people of God here and those who well, who look to Jesus and come to Jesus may find that they after all are not entirely a stranger to such a blessing as this.

We observe in passing the ministry of angels how that they foretold the birth of Jesus and they announced his birth and ministered to the Lord Jesus and strengthened him in the garden of Gethsemane and announced here his resurrection and were witnesses of his ascension and spake of his coming again.

But what are we to understand by an angel? Well, an angel and certainly we believe in these ministering spirits, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.

[11 : 02] They are the messengers of heaven. They come to do God's will. Now, we read in the word of God that God's servants, his ministers, the preachers of the gospel, are likened to angels, not that we are sinless as they, but that we are messengers.

As the Lord speaks to us, so we speak God's word to his people, especially as we consider the setting of this text, those who love Jesus and those who seek Jesus, are you one of?

Are you one of? But then, we have something very remarkable here. I have named it before, maybe in your hearing, I know not, but my friends, we need the word to be, at least I do, spoken to my heart again and again.

It's like that word in the psalm, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. I understand it means something like this, keep saying it, Lord.

Keep telling me of thy love, keep telling me of that salvation, so that I may say, yes, he loved me and gave himself for me.

[12 : 56] Well, the point here is this, that the angel answered and said unto the man. Well, if we answer somebody, it signifies that that person has already spoke.

a question has been asked, something has been expressed, but there's no record here of any question being asked.

Now, let me lay this straight. Certainly, as we have said, as the women came to the sepulcher, they did ask a question among themselves, who will roll away the stone?

But that had already been wonderfully attended to. But I feel what is set forth here is unspoken questions.

The inward language of the heart, the anxieties of the mind, and inward fears.

[14 : 16] I believe it's very clear. As much as to say, the angels speaking vast to these women, and with such a word, fear not you, but you see, friend, they must have been afraid.

They must have been full of fear. They must have been very anxious, as indeed they were and full of sorrow. For I know that ye seek Jesus.

So what comfort there is in this word for those who come yes to God's house or to his word or to the throne of grace or in meditation maybe not expressing audibly their fears, not speaking to the minister of their exercises, but coming to God's house with many a secret fear, many a hidden sorrow, and many a burden, and many a distress, and the angel answered.

Now this is very sacred. This is a blessing indeed when an exercise of your soul, you in your burdens and sorrows and fears and anxieties come to God's house and the angel answers.

That is the messenger. And the messenger is nothing, not in that way. He bears, he's the vessel carrying the word.

[16 : 09] And when that word comes right to your heart, when it's just as though somebody had told the minister all about your secrets, your secret religion, your secret fears, your temptations and your trials, your sorrows and your distresses.

How sweet this is. Do you know something of such a part? fear and the angel answered and said unto them, fear not ye.

Oh, my dear friends, you do not this little ye, won't you? It's not directed to the keepers, it's to these seeking women.

And as to the seeking women, so also to all who seek Jesus, long for Jesus, love Jesus, and come to Jesus, for such are the sheep and lambs of his fold.

And Jesus says, fear not little flock, it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[17 : 34] this is a blessing indeed when the word is made so powerful, so comforting, so soul supporting, when your fears are hushed, when instead of the storm that rages, it's peace be still, instead of sorrow, a little joy, instead of darkness, a ray of light, instead of feeling that you're beginning to sink and nothing is under you, you prove that underneath are the everlasting arms.

Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine, fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousness, and what of this precious word, fear, for I, the Lord, thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee, and as the Lord comes with this promise, with the I will, so our fears dissolve as the mist before the sun, our heart is comforted, we have a solid support, a real foundation, in the

Lord himself, I love that word, hold, O love, that will not let me go, kept by the power of God, fear not ye, for I know this as revealed to the angel from heaven, yet as we think of the Lord himself, oh, he speaks to the comfort of his dear children, and says, I know, he knoweth our frame, this has been a comfort to me, when in weariness, when my friend feeling to need such added strength, to think that he knows all about your body, my body, he knows how weak and weary we are, and ready to faint, beautiful is that word, when Elijah was under the juniper tree, and an angel came, there was the provision, arise

Elijah, eat and drink, the journey is too great for thee, and he touched him again the second time, he knew all that was before the servant of God, and the Lord knows all that is before you and before me, and he's promised my friend, that he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no mind, he increaseth strength, as thy day, so shall thy strength be, he knows, he loves, he cares, nothing this truth can dim, God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to him, and what about this word, something you don't know, but God does, he knoweth the way that I take, when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold, perhaps your way, friend, is a very dark way, and it may be a very perplexing way, it may be like, as we read, the wind is contrary, and the night is dark, but he knoweth, he knoweth, all to rest, casting all your care upon him, for he careeth you, but then come another step,

I know their sorrow, he knows all that you pass through, the secret heartbreaks that you may have, lacerations, wounded spirit, heavy burdens, secret fears, thorns in the flesh, temptations of the devil, he knows it all, and he's the man of sorrows, named as such here on earth, and he knows it all, and not only does he know it, but my friend, he'll sustain you in it, he'll comfort you in it, he'll support you in it, and he'll bring you throne, yes he will, and I know my sheep, and I'm known of that, for I know that ye seek Jesus, is it true, is this true of you, what is the witness in your son, are you seeking

[23 : 32] Jesus, I have a hope that, your presence in the midweek service would give some indication of this, some hope of this, and may I speak to you dear younger friends for a moment, could this be true of you, or do you just come to chapel because you like to please father and mother, now you go on and please father and mother, and you still come to chapel even if that is the case, but does it stop there, does it stop there, do you come seeking, seeking Jesus, now why do you seek Jesus, why do you need Jesus, well if you come seeking for Jesus, I'll tell you this, that you've been shown something, you wouldn't seek for

Jesus unless you had a felt need of Jesus, and what is it that brings a poor sinner to have a felt need of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit in that bringing to us our knowledge of sin, conviction in our heart, not just that we've always known that we have done wrong and sinned, brought us to see our lost state, and have you been led in this path, have you been led to see Jesus, can't you go somewhere else, isn't there somebody else that can help you, you say it's Jesus only, I know no other, and my hope is there, I come to Jesus just as I am, I know that ye seek

Jesus, then you would know just a little perhaps, I know our older friends would know much more than this, but I'm speaking to those young seekers, you know what it is then to come as a leper, you see yourself now as you've never seen yourself before, you know yourself now as a sinner full of sin, and it's to Jesus, you have to say unclean, unclean, and yet to come to him, and ask him to wash you, make you whiter than snow, you come, I'm not putting this into your mouth, but you must bear witness in your soul if it is true of you, as the dear woman who had the issue of blood, and it was for 12 years,

I suppose at first it wasn't very serious, doubtless she thought, well it's only just started, and it will soon disappear, it will soon be better, but it didn't go, and then she becomes more anxious, and seeks the earthly physician, and spends all that she has, and she's no better, we try sometimes, and say, well I'm going to really do better, I'm going to, what if I may use an expression, turn over a new leaf, as they say, and yet we find all our resolves, whilst we don't despise resolves, we don't despise doing battle with sin, we don't despise, seeking that we may not give in to besetting sins, but we do need the

Lord's help, don't we, and my friend, with all this we find we're still sinful, we're still defiled, and so, with nothing, but a poor body that is so, yes, the issue of blood, just comes as she is, under the law and plea, comes to Jesus, if I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall behold how she touched, immediately she was made whole, Jesus said, and I often think of this sanctuary on that one word, somebody, see there were ever so many people there, but there was a somebody, somebody that had a real need of Jesus, ever so many thronged him, but only one touched him in need, virtue went out of him, now, you may say, well that's a long way off your text, well I don't think so,

[28 : 53] I know that she seek Jesus, but let us look at the next ones, I know that she seek Jesus which was crucified, Jesus and the cross, Jesus and his precious blood, Jesus and the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, Jesus, this so great salvation, Jesus and those words, it is finished, to Jesus and him crucified, my faith would lock, my feet of faith would run, my hand of faith would lay hold, and my arms of faith would embrace, and my heart of faith would receive, why do you seek

Jesus and him crucified, because again you say I'm such a sinner, and there's no salvation outside Jesus Christ, it's in what he has done, it's in that finished work, it's in that triumphant cry, it is finished, and seeking Jesus and him crucified, yes, seeking him, knowing this, he's borne the punishment instead, knowing this, that there upon the cross, he drank that cup, knowing this, that the sword of divine justice fell on him in the sinner's place, knowing this, that the dear Savior said, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, Jesus and him crucified, is the preaching of the cross there, isn't that music,

I say that reverently, isn't it good news to your soul, doesn't it bring hope, doesn't it draw you sometimes to Jesus, and you see dear friend, as you're drawn to Jesus, it's like this, the preaching of the cross, it is, unto them that perish, it's foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it's the power of God, so if my soul is drawn to Jesus, and he's finished, well, there's the power of God, there's salvation, and as the dying thief was received, so will poor sinners be received, for he says that all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, let us have this straight, if we come to Jesus and come to the cross, you know, it must mean we turn our back on the world, let us therefore go unto him without the can,

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ Jesus thy Lord, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world, and let us be clear here, and it certainly does not mean that the Christian is finished as far as the world is concerned, the Lord Jesus never prayed that, he did not pray that they should be taken out of the world, that is, until their life was, their course was run, but that they should be kept whilst they were in it, but the vital distinction is this, that we're in it, but not of it, and that we love Jesus, and we can't love the world, we seek to do the good we can, but do you seek Jesus which was crucified, and as you think of those sufferings so great, that agony, that ignominy, think of the crown of thorns, think of the visage marked more than any man's, think of the back that was lacerated with scourges, think of the hands and the feet that were pierced, think of that face upon which, into which man spanned, my friend, was it for me, was it for you, and under such love, you'll say, on such love, my soul still ponder love so great, so rich, so free, say whilst lost in holy wonder, why, oh God, and it's this such love to me.

he is not here, for he is risen, as he said, come see the place where the Lord lay, now take first these words, he is risen, here is the foundation then of our hope in the sufferings of Christ upon the cross, the empty tomb is the witness of heaven, of the full satisfaction of the Saviour's death at Calvary, it is the witness that death's power is broken, oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory, it is also this witness that as Christ is ascended to glory, so one day his people will be with him, as so he is risen, he entered into heaven this same

[35 : 00] Jesus, a man that is a real man with wounds still gaping wide, from which rich streams of blood once ran, from hands and feet and side, and I feel my friend as a poor guilty sinner, I may go to the throne of grace, because Jesus is there, because he's seen in the place of sinners, is he instead of me is seen when I approach to God, or the lamb in the midst of the throne, as it had been slain, he is risen, and oh look at this, that this same Jesus shall come in like manner, as ye seen him go into heaven, so he is risen, as he said, he is alive, and behold, he liveth for evermore, he is not here, he's not in this place of death, he's not in this grave any longer, he is risen, because the powers of death could not hold him, and so his resurrection is the pledge to the church of that full satisfaction on the cross, and so the comfort of every believer,

I know that my redeemer liveth, he is not here, and we like Mary Magdalene so often are looking in the place of death instead of looking for life, if dear Mary, and if these dear women, and if the dear disciples, and if dear you, and dear me too, had more faith, we lose sight of these three words, as he said, we forget the word of the faithful Jesus, he who is a friend, a friend indeed, one that is above all others, well deserves the name of friend, his is loved beyond the brothers, costly free, and knows no end, they who once his kindness prove, find it everlasting love, come see the place where the Lord lay, yes just look here, look and you'll see for yourself, and you know this is very sacred, when we commit to the earth, the mortal remains of those who die in the Lord, we are reminded of such a word as this, come, see the place where the Lord lay, that the sepulcher yonder is empty, that the

Lord is risen and is in heaven, so one day, the earthly resting place of the redeemed dust, of the saints, that will be empty, for the bodies of the redeemed are of course all wicked as well, but I'm speaking now of the church and time doesn't permit enlarging this point, I'm speaking the dead in Christ shall rise, thus my friend, what a resurrection that will be.

A dear minister I knew once standing in a corner of a cemetery where quite a number of our dear people have been buried, he said, what a shout there be, what a shout on the glorious resurrection more, oh my friend, wherefore, comfort one another with these words, and then, and I must come to the close, and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, have you had to tell the disciples anything about Jesus, you young people, I'm not pressing you, I would never do that, I would encourage you, I would pray that the Lord's power may be upon you, and older ones too, and under the constraints of his love, your mouth may be open to tell perhaps father and mother of something that they may well hope for but don't know yet, of how you have to pray to Jesus, and how that the

Lord has blessed you, then I pray that the Lord will lead you further, and enable you to come and tell the church about it, and to profess your faith, and show your love in following the Lord, if he love me keep my commandments, and this do in remembrance of me, and you see friend, the authority hears, go ye therefore, and teach all nations, make Christians of manifest disciples, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, of the Holy Ghost, go quickly, the Lord touches your heart, and opens your mouth, don't make any delay, I heard of a case many years ago, of a dear young friend that was much blessed, he was in lodgings away from his home, but blessed under the ministry, of a dear pastor, and he told this pastor, he had to write to his own pastor to tell him, and this dear pastor gave him good advice, said you write and don't delay the post, don't delay the post, the case was real, we need to be kept my friend from emotionalism, but when the

[40 : 27] Lord comes with a real blessing, then go quickly, and you know there's this blessing here that as they went and told the disciples, Jesus met them, confirmed he is risen, and blessed them and spanked them, just a word then, and behold, you're looking down, you're cast down, you have many fears, but look, behold, look up, behold, he, he, goeth before you, I know this is literally, at this time was into Galilee, but this is true of the church of God, the good shepherd goes before his sheep, he goeth before you, he's gone before you into heaven, he's walked this earth, he goeth before you, he knows all your path, so take it all to Jesus, and may it be with you and myself, who is this, that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved, and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, lo, that is, look up, behold, take note of this, don't be too cast down, don't be too afraid of the future, but look,

I have told you, as we noticed before, and I'm as close with this, as he said, but what has he said, exceeding great and precious promises, right through the word, my friend, and not one of them will file, lean hard upon them, plead them before the throne, as he said, and what has he said, let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me, in my father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also, there shall ye see him, time does not permit me to enlarge on the manifestations of the risen

Jesus of Galilee, you may meditate upon it, but we look beyond even that, there shall ye see him, yes, thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, behold the land very afar off, then shall your eyes with rapture view the glorious friend that died for you, that died to ransom, died to raise, to hymns of joy and songs of praise, and when I shall be satisfied, when I see him in his glory, when I shall awake in his likeness, there shall ye see him, and I close the line out of the saintly hymn, but it's so sweet, and when by his grace I look on his face, that will be glory, be glory for me, amen.

Amen.