

# Christ's presence making matters well (Quality: Average)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 20 May 2010

Preacher: Cottingham, Peter (1947 - 2014)

[ 0 : 00 ] . Seeking for the Lord's gracious and merciful help.

I'd direct your thoughts to the chapter we read, or the portion of the chapter we read in the second book of Kings. Chapter 4 and verse 26.

The second book of Kings, chapter 4 and verse 26. Run now, I pray thee to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee?

Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. Perhaps you've been expecting with the last hymn that is on the hymn boards, that the minister has to choose, now reading, that I would come with this particular verse.

A word, now to our sins, you have heard preached from many times, and many blessed truths that brought forth from it.

[ 1 : 30 ] But the word of God never wears out. The word of God. unto those sinners, then feel their needs of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the application of the shed blood to cleanse them from all sin.

The word of God is very precious to them. Especially so, when by the Holy Spirit, it has been sealed eternally upon their soul.

When the Lord has favoured them, a sinner that has known what it is to cry, to plead, to beg, as one that feels the weight of the Lord, as one that indeed feels that within them there dwells nothing good at all.

And when the Lord is pleased to speak, to grant blessed assurance that it is well with them.

How precious that truth is. And oh, what it is to have the truth renewed.

[ 2 : 54 ] Perhaps even at this moment here, there is one that you've begged for this. Oh, for the time of refreshing that you have said, where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?

Where is the soul-refreshing view of Jesus and his word? That time when you were favoured in your soul, the time of your first despirals, the time when the Lord favoured you.

I had a reminder this evening our opening hymn. Oh, what a blessed hymn that was made to me when the Lord spoke those words of peace into my soul.

times of times of times of times of times of inward conflict, times of grieving over what is found within my own soul, times when I've known that the Lord has hit his face from me, when there's been darkness, it's been for a reason and for a purpose, nevertheless afterwards.

And there have been those nevertheless afterwards in my pathway. Yes, and those times of chastening, when one said, no, no chastening for the present seemeth to be good, profitable, right, but grievous.

[ 4 : 32 ] Nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. And oh, what a thing it is to have then true exercise in whatever situation that we are found of what the Lord's purposes are toward us.

What do we deserve? nothing good, nothing right. Condemnation is what we deserve.

What do we find? Grace, peace, pardon. When we think of the woman that was taken in adultery in the very end, and be very sure of this, that the Lord Jesus Christ was not condoning in any way at all her actions, her sin.

What did that woman expect to find? Condemnation, judgment. Yes, those that brought her in, she should be stoned, should be put to death.

death. And what did our Lord say? Oh, how he knows how to speak that word, whether it is to those who would seek to snare him, or to snare his people, with wisdom and with grace.

[ 6 : 11 ] He who is without sin amongst you, let him cast the first stone. And I do not know if you have ever noticed this, but the word puts it very clearly, being convicted in their consciences, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest.

Yes, as we get older, what do we find within? More and more that we have to grieve over. And we have to say with Paul, and then when he knew the inward conflict within, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, I thank God through Christ Jesus.

It is well. He knew the conflict, he knew what it was, then there when he would do good, evil was present with him. What an acknowledgement, what a confession this was.

was that he knew by precious grace, by faith, by trembling hope, by sweet and blessed assurance, that Christ died for him.

What was my concern in prayer? that I might be helped to preach Jesus. And there, Lord, his grace, his example, his love, his compassion, and the times of Christ they are found throughout both the Old and the New Testaments.

[ 8 : 05 ] Gospel liberty does not lead to licentiousness, to sin. Gospel liberty brings a soul to cry unto the Lord for mercy.

mercy. But gospel liberty brings a sinner lost and vile indeed to see the Lord Jesus Christ, their hope for glory.

It's the one here that trembles. It's the one here that fears. is the one here that Satan has cast many times, not upon the word, but upon what you have trusted that the Lord has done for your soul.

God is the Shunammite woman. Would not Satan have suggested to her, it's all up with you, it's all over.

There you were given that son, and he's been taken from you. Satan might have suggested in this way, you've idolized him, and the Lord is punishing you for it.

[ 9 : 46 ] she could say it was well, with that groundwork of faith in her soul, and the assurance that God had given to her, that whether that child should live or die, it should be well.

Oh, how was it with David with thee? the son of his adultery that was born, that was sick.

God gave him that assurance that with that child, with that babe, it was well. I shall go to him, he shall not return to me.

I do not know if there are any of you, whether it is in your own particular family, or quite close, you've known what it is for a little child to be taken by the hand of death.

Some have known it. We've known it with a little nephew of ours, an aunt quite two years old.

[ 11 : 08 ] And I'll just relate this to you. I was preaching at Colnebrook during the day, and one of the London hospitals, this little child was very, very ill.

And I had arranged then, the parents were there, this was the Lord's day, and I had arranged then, in the afternoon, I would travel over, and go and see them, pray with them.

And as I was journeying, and it was before the days when we had mobile phones, and the communications that we have now, as I was journeying, these words dropped into my spirit, the Lord is in need of him.

Went up to the ward, and in the particular intensive care unit that this little babe was in, it was empty. Find a nurse, and they inquired who I was, and I said, well, the family, and also minister, and said, well, the child died earlier on.

You have to be careful in these things. Oh, to know what it is, parents to pray for their children, what a burden, concern, and exercise that is.

[ 12 : 39 ] what a burden and concern it must have been to the Shunammite woman. We can believe that there was that work going on in her soul, because she saw Elisha going to and fro.

She called him in, gave him refreshments, and then she perceived that this was a holy man of God. She sought to do what she could for him out of love to one of the Lord's servants.

And I've known what it is. I believe I can say wherever I've gone. The expression of love and concern and tenderness, seeking whatever way then, little ways then, the dear friends can make one more welcome evermore, at home.

And I'm thankful for it. I'm thankful for him coming in here this evening and the love and kindness shown to me. But what I want to say is this, that woman sought to do whatever she could, but because of that, she did not say it is well because of her deeds.

No, that was a fruit. of that grace within her. It was a fruit of that work. Oh, you may be naturally kind and tender and loving, but is it not done first of all to the Lord?

[ 14 : 22 ] In whatever way it is, I'm not necessarily saying to the Lord's servants, but I'm thankful for it. Whatever way you can to the household of faith, to those about you, to show in those actions that you're bought with a price, that you're one of the Lord's people, that the Lord has touched your heart, that the Lord has shown that love to you.

Is it not the love of Christ, to know that we might know it more within? Sometimes we have a wrong spirit within us, don't we?

It rises up. You do it so easily. Something can stir us up. I think I can say as the years have gone by, feeling, yes, the love of Christ, but feeling my need more and more of that love.

The Lord has given me more of a tender spirit to my fellow creatures, and also to the Lord's people, and especially to them.

You see, I do not know, but the Lord knows, how each one of you have come this evening. And so I come with this word, in tenderness, in affection, in love, with this question that is so vital, is it not a vital doctrine?

[ 16 : 05 ] Is it well with thee? Is it well with thee? Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband?

Is it well with the child? And by the Holy Spirit, you might be able to say, it is well. It is well.

The assurance that only the Lord can give unto you. however good my intentions might be, I cannot and I must not deceive any one of you or put you upon a false hope.

Only the Lord can speak this unto yourself. May the Lord be pleased to grant it to you this evening. Many words that I might be helped to drop in this way.

Run now. We have the example of Abraham's servant that was sent to fetch her wife for Isaac.

[ 17 : 22 ] He ran to meet her. And how vitally important this is and to have that spirit of prayer. We believe that yes, he may have been given some sort of inkling in that way.

He saw the example that Abraham his master exercised in the whole household we might say. It had that influence upon him whether it was for good or not, we do not know.

But on that particular instance he was going about Abraham as his master's business and he sought that the Lord would be with him. he prayed, he sought and we know then he ran to meet her.

And the only way that one of the Lord's servants can run to meet their hearers is when the Lord is pleased to guide and direct whatever they might say into your path and into your case.

And oh how blessed it is when the Lord is pleased to answer your prayer. Oh, answer that concern within your soul. Then there you may even have had that question of late, is it well with me?

[ 18 : 39 ] Is it well in my life? And will it be well when I come to die? What a vital, vital question that is.

Going back to this Shunammite woman then, she sought to do all that she could. She was given that child and the child died.

And Satan is saying to her, it's all gone. It's all over with you as he said that to you recently. It's all over.

And there are those times when the Lord in his mercy does hide his face. But I tell you something, if then hope is true and right within you, you'll be like one that is spoken of by Solomon in his song.

I believe it is in the third chapter, and it is in this way. by night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.

[ 19 : 53 ] I sought him but I found him not. Oh, rise now and go about the city in the streets and in the broadways. I will seek him whom my soul loveth. I sought him but I found him not.

Blessed be his name that he drew that one, drew by those coins of love, by hiding his face for a season.

The watchman, and this has often affected me, the watchman, me, one of the Lord's servants, the watchman that go about the city found me, to whom I said, saw ye him whom my soul loveth.

I think it is in the fifth chapter. Then the watchman, the seventh verse, the watchman that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

There are those times when we might say the wrong thing. I trust not when we're resting upon the Lord for all that we need, but it might be in conversation afterwards words or in whatever way.

[ 21 : 31 ] Yes, I feel the weight and the solemn responsibility that rests upon me. But going back to the third chapter in Solomon's song, and here we have the fourth verse.

it was, it was, but a little, that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him and would not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

It was, but a little, I passed from them. no dependence there upon man. Yes, if your soul has been blessed through one of the labours and ministry of the Lord's servants, you will love and esteem him for the work's sake and for the Lord's sake, but not for him, but what the Lord has done for your soul.

The eunuch, when he went on his way rejoicing, the spirit had caught away Philip, he saw him no more, blessed be his name. He went away rejoicing in what the Lord had done for his soul.

It had the application of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah upon his soul through the preaching of the word, and he preached unto him Jesus, of whom speaketh the prophet thus, of himself or of some other man.

[ 22 : 51 ] And Philip beginning at the same scripture, preached unto him Jesus, that he must need suffer, lay down his life for sinners, there that soul can say it is well, when they view Christ in his sufferings.

To see him, but you say, I often hear of these things. These things are often spoken of.

I've never seen them. I want to know it. This Shunammite woman had laid her son dead upon the prophet's bed, and yet she could say it is well.

Where was her hope? in her God. And she sought in that means that it was available to her to go and run and make all haste to the man of God.

And so it is for the sinner. Yes, their hope might have died within them, but oh, with all haste, where do they run?

[ 24 : 11 ] they run to one that understands. They run to one that knows. They run to Jesus. That is where they run to.

Nowhere else. Their cry is with those that cried out in the gospels, Jesus, the son of David, have mercy upon me.

whether it was those that were blind or whatever situation they were in. And you'll be like the woman that came regarding her daughter.

Then she cried after the Lord and the Lord answered her not a word. And the way he did answer her, perhaps Satan has said to you, yes, see how he answered you.

He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the children of Israel. Truth, Lord, when he said that the meat, the bread, the food, the abundance should not be given unto the dogs.

[ 25 : 20 ] Truth, Lord, yet even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Blessed be his name. O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thy will.

Daughter is made whole from that very hour. only in this instance that the man that was sick of the palsy, are we very specifically told that man was blessed in his soul.

What was the first words that Jesus spoke to him? Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto man, those sins be forgiven them. Who is this that forgiveth sins? The Pharisees and others said.

And to show that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith, unto the man that was sick of the palsy, take up thy bed a wolf. But oh, that vital, important matter.

I've often thought that man, the Lord knew the burden of his soul. Then there he'd been content to lay upon the bed of affliction for the rest of his life, but oh, I need to know that his sins were pardoned, fully forgiven.

[ 26 : 36 ] But how many of those others that were healed, the Lord knew the burden of their soul. Whether they'd been a long time in that case, bowed down for all those years, whatever it might be, blind, born blind, yes, it is well, one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

Hold that fast. Is it not that pearl of great price that the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon you by his great grace?

Oh, that love of Christ unto sinners, and how, how is it made so manifest? That love of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ unto sinners, in the words of Jesus himself, greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Yea, are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. him. Well, I know that there are failures here, because there's one standing at the desk here.

Oh, we fail. His grace doesn't, his love doesn't. Renewed, his mercies, are they not new every morning?

[ 28 : 12 ] Have we not the evidences of it constantly? I see the time is going, and just very briefly, these questions, three questions that were put to the Shunammite woman, is it well with thee?

And so we find the vital, important matter first of all, is it well with thee? But where there are loved ones concerned, you see if the Lord has shed abroad in our hearts his love and that hope through grace.

There is a concern if there is loved ones, whether they are husbands, wives, children, or parents, whoever it might be, that do not show any of that evidence of the work of grace within, that concern for them, that they might know the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts, that they might know the pardon of their sin, that they might know that hope for glory.

Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with thy wife? Is it well with the child? Is it well with the parents?

And this answer, it is well. We know that parents pray for their children. They may not see any evidence of that work of grace within, but they cannot give up praying for them.

[ 29 : 51 ] Even perhaps when they leave the house of God, they have to pray for them. For the Lord has given them that precious gift.

Run now, I pray thee to meet her and say unto her, is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, it is well.

Now, how can we answer that question? How can we answer that question? only in this way what the Lord has been pleased to do for your never-dying soul?

Because there is one thing that we will need when we come to die, not some vague, uncertain notion or hope.

But then the Lord himself, the Lord of life and of glory, laid down his life, shed his blood, suffered, and oh, what agonies he suffered there, but what great love was shown.

[ 31 : 10 ] He died for such as us. Well, may the Lord, by the Holy Spirit, seal it upon each of our hearts. We're so much in need of it, aren't we?

Amen. have we go to what mud to water to water .

can help the love is