

The presence of Christ (Quality: Average)

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- [0 : 00] The friction and bereavement which has come into the pathways of those that are normally here detains them and they cannot of course be among us.
- But it led my mind to these few words and it is though a few words and though a few simple words it holds the truth of which is absolutely essential to us.
- We have of course the word they supposed to have been in the company went a day's journey. I thought how solemn it must surely be to think that Christ was with them.
- Think that the Lord Jesus Christ, the twelve year old as they would understand him, that the Christ of God was there in bodily form though he was twelve years old as we would measure time and they supposed him to have been in the company.
- I do pray that we don't be found, we're not found in that apathetic and lukewarm condition as we come to the Lord's house, that we do not fail to ask that he may be here and indeed his presence is essential for if he's not here then there will be nothing profitable or good.
- [1 : 45] The feast of the Passover, the time of the feast of the Passover was seven days.
- It is recorded also by biblical scholars that quite probably the Lord Jesus went in other times to Jerusalem in that twelve years.
- But it is the feast of the Passover where both parents would have been. But then my thoughts and I hope exercise the spirit.
- I went to consider too what we are so told and may be encouraged and comforted by his presence.
- And I hope that hymn that we sang, it has various requests in it and so on. But the final verse is indeed agreeable to the first.
- [2 : 45] We ask to feel a union sweet. We ask a blessing on thy word. We ask that all our askings meet in this. We ask thy presence, Lord.
- And I believe, my friends, that is more, I say it very kindly, that's more important than congregations. And then we have, of course, the promise which is above that hymn, which is found in the 18th chapter of Matthew.
- And that's where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, there are mine and it's, and my friends, how often it is pleaded and prayed in our gathering in this house that the Lord Jesus himself be present.
- How important that is. What a sacred blessing, you know. I don't believe I can possibly put it into words how I feel this night that we might have the presence of the Lord Jesus.
- I think it's in Acts chapter 4. I just turn to the moment where the year apostles were in the times of much profit and increase in the church.
- [4 : 11] Many were added to the church in those times. But on the other side of that prosperity there was persecution and grievous things done against them.
- But this is what I want to just read to you. Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.

And they took knowledge of him that they had been with Jesus. I can't put it into words what that really means to us.

That the Lord Jesus Christ, the great head of the church, the second person in the glorious Trinity, should indeed be so gracious and condescending and merciful that there they were, apostles and preachers of righteousness.

But he was fulfilling his promise that he would be with them. Oh, may we never neglect that blessing to seek for, to want to know that the Lord Jesus is here in his house.

[5 : 29] Many empty saints. But my friends, the mercy will be if he is there. For we shall meet in his name then and we shall have his presence.

And where he is, we shall have his blessing. And there cannot be anything better than that. It matters not really, I suppose, what we may, what numbers may yet come to this house of God.

And seek that it may be so and pray that it may be so. And pray that there may be those who do not come to prayer meetings, but that may be constrained and graciously led so to do.

But all this blessing of blessings, the Lord's presence. I also felt too, as we so need the Lord's presence, that it is wonderful also to trace that he isn't bound to his house.

Though we long for him to be manifestly felt to be here, he isn't bound to four walls. He's not bound to any place or spot that we may describe as being the place where we would indeed seek to know his presence.

[6 : 51] And to feel that presence of Christ with us. Though you think of the times and the places, even in the word of God where the Lord Jesus was.

Before he ever went to Calvary, he had those seasons and times when he met with sinners. This man, and I don't believe my friends, we really know the mercy of such a word.

This man received sinners and eat his wisdom. This is the Son of God. This is the Son of God. This is the incarnate Son of God. This is the glorious head of grace.

This is he who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. But forever shall it be known that though he has no dealings with the ungodly in their ungodly condition, yet to those ungodly sinners called by grace, he will ever be with them.

They may not ever, they may not always feel his presence. They may not indeed, my friends, but we have this blessing.

[8 : 10] When he went to glory, when he ascended to glory, he left behind a promise. That promise was this, and lo, I am with you all my, all my, even unto the end of the world.

And I do believe this too, whilst the fear of God is in exercise, it matters not where we are. I say that very carefully because if by the fear of God, if we were not influenced by the fear of God, we cannot expect his presence.

But rather his frown. And it being a child of grace, we should also expect his chastening. But if in the fear of the Lord, you are in places and spots and circumstances, I feel this is so, my friends, we have the Lord's presence.

I remember, I expect I've said this, but I was talking to a minister once and he dropped in to where I was and he was off to preach to two people.

And I knew that's all that was going to be there. So I said, well, how many do you reckon will be there tonight? And he said three. And I knew who the third person was.

[9 : 34] And I said, I trust it will be so. Then it will be a good time. It will be a gracious time. But then my friends, where you and I are to be found along the pilgrimage journey, if we shall be so blessed with grace in our soul and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, what spots and places we might come into.

Before he suffered, of course, we have a very sweet promise. And that was this, that you now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again.

And your heart shall rejoice. And your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day you shall ask me nothing.

Well, what would be the joy that was in their heart? Was it not the Lord Jesus Christ? In the presence of Christ, that's the joy of the believer, you know.

But then, of course, the circumstances might be so of adversity. And the time I was brought to my mind yesterday evening of those particular days that are recorded in the Word of God by the wise man.

[11 : 03] And they are days like this, days of prosperity, days of adversity. And the 118th Psalm, the Psalmist there speaks about this is the day which the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. But just for a moment, thinking of those days of adversity.

When things are going contrary, just as it was with the dear apostle, you remember his voyage and that dangerous condition and place he was in in that voyage.

In fact, all that was in the boat with him was certainly in great straits as to whether they should ever get safe to land.

And then we have the word of the apostle. And just to read just a few lines. And I exhort you to be of good cheer.

[12 : 15] For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not all.

Well, my friends, there couldn't be much more dangerous than such a situation as that. I stood by me this night, the night seasons. Oh, it was so dangerous.

We read that sun nor stars for many days appeared. And all hope of being saved was removed. And you think of your pathway and the pathways of the Lord's people.

At times of adversity, times of affliction, times of rejection. Go again to those words in the second epistle of Paul to Timothy in the last chapter.

And he said that all men forsook me. Nevertheless, the Lord stood by me. I feel, my friends, it is so important, a blessing to seek for, and it is such a blessing to possess.

[13 : 34] Because the circumstances of the trial or the difficulty or the affliction, however hard the case may seem to be, however impossible it may be to our natural mind.

And it may be that we don't understand it and others do not either. But you know, that's no bar to the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's no bar. Those who have been hospitalized, gone into hospital for operations and such things.

And such blessings and such mercies have been felt. Not so much in due course that the Lord has been merciful and restored and healed.

But they've been seasons of blessing because the Lord was there. Hospital walls do not hold, do not prevent the blessing of His presence, you know.

[14 : 43] And there's another example of His presence, which is the Calvary's tree. One of the Gospels speak of the crucifixion of the thieves.

The one on the right hand and the other on the left. And Jesus in the midst. That, my friends, is the most wonderful account of Jesus Christ, surely.

Once again, His company was sinners. And one of them was lost. And the other one was saved. Jesus in the midst.

That account I'm only rehearsing. I know the Scriptures of Truth is the purpose of it all. To prove that the Lord Jesus Christ indeed, in His mercy and compassion, visits His people in all their extremities.

When those two walked to Emmaus, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. And I thought in two of this chapter, which is all about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

[15 : 59] And I thought too about that man, Simeon, that spoke about in verses 25 and down to verse 34 or 35.

But even in that account of the offering to the priest, that which was according to the law, And that satisfied the law because Christ Jesus did.

Went to the end of the law for righteousness. But that dear man, Simeon. And what a wonderful grace that must surely be. The grace of faith and understanding and revelation to His soul.

And what was it about, my friends? There lay the child Jesus. And He saw in Him His salvation. Then took He Him up in His arms and blessed God.

And said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. There He was, but a little child.

[17 : 14] No doubt in the arms of Mary. But the eye of faith. And that revelation of Christ made over to that good man, Simeon. He saw in Christ the Savior.

The blessed presence of Christ, though contracted to a span as the poet reminds us of. Well, my friends, they found Him not, we read.

They turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And then surely, we cannot leave out the path of providence.

Whatever the path of providence may bring. Whatever decisions that have been made and may be made.

The most simple illustration really, my friends, if you are gracious, must surely be this. Whatever it is, is the Lord in the matter.

[18 : 14] Will His presence be known in those times of providence too? Will He who so softens the hearts of His people by reminding them that foxes of holes and the birds of the air have nest, that the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

And yet, He so blessed His people with all the comforts we have. Oh, you that have, indeed, each of us have a home.

And each of us, my friends, I believe in hope and trust, are truly thankful for it. Pray often that He may be in that home. Pray often.

The unseen guests, the secret prop. Oh, His blessed presence. So, makes the place a sacred place, indeed.

It is like Bethel to Jacob, you know, when he laid his head on that stone for a pillow and shut his eyes out there under the stars, the Lord drew near.

[19 : 27] And that wonderful description that he saw that ladder from Earth going to Heaven, Heaven to Earth. My friends, it described the most wonderful blessing that man was to have for many a long year.

The Lord was there. Well, if you read these few verses then that we have this night, where they supposed Him to have been in the company, may you be able to, indeed, seek that His presence may always be felt by you.

In your going out and coming in, may He be with you. In the adverse times and situations of your lives, when you might feel forsaken and alone, you might feel that He is with you then.

But then, my friends, the matters of your own soul, and indeed the salvation of your soul, for the sake of His people, in love for, love to His people, He went to Calvary and there died, in their place and room, instead, taking upon Himself the sins of His people.

It caused, my friends, much blessing and mercy to the Church of Christ and into the eternal glories of Heaven.

[20 : 58] And then, too, my friends, if you've known His presence, you will mourn His absence then. The poet said in that hymn, My earthly joys are from me torn, and oft and absent God I mourn.

My friends, there again, you can only mourn when you've known the presence of someone. If you've never known it, you can't mourn over it.

Every believer shall know the presence of their Lord and Master. And when He withdraws Himself, what it is, a most distressing and dark season in the soul.

But remember the promise, I will see you again. Oh, those times when He draws near, those times when He makes Himself known.

I heard Mr. Wood many a time using the word of Scripture in prayer, and he says this, and it was noise that He was in the house.

[22 : 03] He was in the house. There's a lot who isn't in the house, but this is the blessing of His house. The four walls don't make the blessing. The history of the calls don't make the blessing.

And if we are gathered together to worship, it doesn't make the blessing. My friends, the blessing of Christ is here. And that is the blessing that we may pray for and long and know, but then too, you know, if the way before you is dark and dismal and distressing at times, it surely will.

If you know afflictions' path or tribulations' way, what better blessing, my friends, is what He Himself has said. In John chapter 10, He says, when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.

So, my friends, we have a blessing here in these few simple words, which, oh, do seek for, do pray for, do long for.

You may walk pathways alone and feel to be alone, but, my friends, the blessing is, if it is a pathway He's appointed, it will be a pathway where He shall be.

[23 : 21] And they supposing Him to have been in a company when today's journey, and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

In John chapter 6, we find those words where they travelled across the lake, seeking for Jesus.

It is a wonderful account, really, this, because there's nothing more heard of Him till He is 30 years of age.

There is the distance between the, His holy birth, and this time when He was 12 years old, and then the Scriptures are silent.

It doesn't matter what people say happened, and what He did, it doesn't mean to say anything. That's not important. But the Scriptures are silent, that He showed Himself, and that was when He was 30 years of age, and His ministry begun, and it concluded that public ministry within three years or so.

[24 : 37] Well, the Lord bless His own word. The Lord grant you, and I this blessing indeed, wherever we go, and whatever we do, in the fear of God, may we find His blessed presence.

I know a man who rented a house once, and He was a gracious man, and He was a praying man, and He walked round the house, looking up to the Lord in silence, to know what to do, and the Lord spoke, and He said, here will I dwell.

And He said, if you dwell here, Lord, so will I. Amen. We will now sing hymn number 1101.

Jesus, lead me by thy power, safe into the promised rest, hide my soul within thy arms, make me lean upon thy breast, be my guide in every peril, watch me hourly, night and day, else my foolish heart will wander from thy spirit far away.

Hymn 1101. Lordoki Chachala Eint. And forever balances out with my eyes, even by thy breath, up to my heart, that I am a descendant, dative for the Queen of Christ.

[26 : 31] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.