

# When the Song Begins

by J.R. Miller

---

*The song of joy begins when we surrender our lives to God and live a life of self-sacrifice in His service.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 100:1

**Topics:** "Joy in Suffering", "Self-Sacrifice"

---

## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes that true joy in life begins when we surrender ourselves to God, paralleling the joy found in the Song of Solomon with the act of self-sacrifice. He illustrates that joy is not dependent on circumstances but rather on our relationship with Christ and our willingness to serve others selflessly. Miller points out that even in suffering, believers can find joy by trusting in God's plan and purpose, as exemplified by biblical figures like Job and Paul. He encourages Christians to embrace their burdens and challenges as opportunities for growth and deeper faith, ultimately leading to a life filled with song and joy. The sermon concludes with the reminder that the song of the Lord begins when we offer our lives as a living sacrifice to God.

---

## Transcript

When the Song Begins

J. R. Miller, 1905

### PREFACE

The chapters of this little book are intended to help people in learning how to live. They are meant to translate the teachings of the Christian Scriptures--into the language of the common days and the common experiences of life so that even a child may understand them. Such a book as this may not be called fine literature, but if it helps some people to live more beautifully, more victoriously, more usefully--it will have served its mission--and made itself worth while.

1. When the Song Begins
2. The Mystery of Suffering
3. The Blossoming of Our Thorns
4. More White than Black

5. The Master and the Doubter
6. It Is Well
7. The Joy of the Cross
8. The Quest of Happiness
9. Obedience That Pleases Christ
10. Friendship with Christ
11. The Unrecognized Christ
12. Living up to Our Prayers
13. Finishing Our Work
14. What are You doing Here?
15. Courage to Live Nobly
16. The Blessing of Work
17. Into the Desert
18. His Brother Also
19. The Fragrance of the Ointment
20. Under the All-seeing Eye

#### When the Song Begins

They have a saying, that in Oriental countries--the birds never sing, the flowers have no fragrance, and the women never smile. Heathen religions put no sweetness into life, kindle no joy in the heart, start no songs. They do not comfort sorrow nor wipe away tears. But the religion of the Bible is one of gladness. It teaches us to sing, not only on the happy days, but on the dark days as well. The Old Testament has much music in it. Then the New Testament is full of song. It opens with an overture by a great choir of angels. The first message to the shepherds, announcing the birth of the Savior, told of joy for all who would accept it. Christ marked out the way of joy in all His teaching. He offered rest of soul to all who would come to Him, take His yoke upon them and learn of Him. He said He would give His own peace to those who would let it into their hearts. He expressed a desire that His joy might be fulfilled in the lives of His friends. He bade His followers be of good cheer, because He had overcome the world.

Then after the Resurrection and Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit--we find the church a company of rejoicing people. "They took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." They met persecution and suffering, but nothing could silence their songs. Their joy was quenchless. Paul, the greatest sufferer of all, was likewise the most joyous of all. No chains, no dungeons, no scourgings, no losses, could stop his singing. Out of his prison life he wrote to one of the churches, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!"

But what is the secret? When does the song begin? What is it, that gives to the believer in God, this quenchless joy?

In the record of the opening of the temple by Hezekiah occurs a sentence which suggests the answer. The sacrifices were ready for offering. At the same time the great temple choir was waiting, ready to break forth into song. But not a note was heard until the sacrifices began to burn upon the altar. The record is, "When the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also." The moment the offering was laid upon the altar and the holy fire began to consume it--the great choir began to sing.

These ancient burnt-offerings were an expression of personal devotion and consecration to God. It is when this surrender of our lives to God is made, and not until then, that the song begins in our hearts. Yet somehow a good many people seem to think a pious life cannot be a joyous life. They get the idea that it is a life of self-sacrifice, but they cannot think of self-sacrifice as joyous. One man said to another, referring to something they were talking about, "I suppose it must be my duty, because I hate it so." That is the way many people think about duty. But really there is no other life so full of deep, abiding joy--as the life of self-sacrifice in the service of Christ.

It is well worth while for us to learn this lesson. Work is immeasurably harder if we do it only as task-work, because we must. No one can ever make much of his life--if he works reluctantly, perfunctorily. Joy gives strength and skill. And the lowliest tasks may be made a delight, if only we think of them as part of God's will for us. No doubt Jesus was an enthusiastic carpenter. He went out each morning to His day's tasks with a song. It ought to help other carpenters and all of us in our common vocations to work gladly--to remember that our Master toiled too, wrought with His hands, and did it cheerfully, sweetly, songfully!

There are transforming motives if only we can get them into our hearts. Love has power to transfigure the dreary tasks, into delights.

You have seen a young girl, light-hearted, care-free, with scarcely ever a serious thought in her mind. She seemed to think only of herself. She was self-indulgent, never denying herself anything she wanted. She never sacrificed her own comfort for another. By and by you saw her a mother, with a baby in her arms. Now her life was altogether changed. Love had blossomed out and possessed her. She cared now for her sister with intense and self-forgetful devotion. She thought no longer of her own ease or comfort. There was no longer in her, any spirit of self-indulgence. Then she did everything, the dreariest task, gladly, joyously. There was no complaint, no fretting. Love had taught her the lesson of self-devotion, and her heart sang as she wrought!

There are men who once had little interest in their work, who did it only because they must, who were indolent, self-indulgent, extravagant. By and by they became heads of little families, for whose needs they must provide. Then all was changed. They went to their tasks with a new zest. Love put energy into their spirit, strength into their arms, skill into their fingers. They never had known such happiness before. "When the burnt-offering began--the song of the Lord began also."

Men do not know how much of their enthusiasm in bearing their burdens, in enduring their struggles, in meeting obstacles, in overcoming difficulties--is inspired by love for the dear ones in their homes, for whose care, comfort, and protection they are responsible. It is this love that puts the song into their hearts.

It is not the fashion to idealize fathers. Mothers are idealized, and rightly so. Of all holy human passions, mother-love is most like God's love. Mothers everywhere devote themselves to the care of their children

and sacrifice their ease and strength with complete self-abandonment, that they may give these children what they need. They lose their rest. They give up their own comfort. They pour out their very life in love's ministering.

No one needs to ask the motive of this holy serving and self-sacrificing. It is found in the sacredness of the home, in the little child's sick-room, in the nursery, where there always are tasks and needs. God bless the mothers. They deserve highest honor. They go through all love's services and sacrifices, with a gladness that never fails. Who ever heard a true mother complain of the burdens or the cares of love? She does all cheerfully. When the self-sacrifice begins, the song begins, too! And as the burdens grow heavier, and the need for self-denial grows greater--the song becomes louder and richer in its melody!

But though there is, perhaps, less poetry in father-love, there is much in it that is very sacred and oftentimes heroic. There are fathers who live with their children with noble self-abandonment. There are men who have made a splendid success of their lives, building up a fortune, growing to honor in their profession, rising to noble character and influence; the secret of all their energy, skill, and achievement, being found in the quiet homes to which they hurry each evening when their work is done. As the responsibility of love came upon them--the song began, and they went each day to take up the growing burden with increasing joy in their hearts. Love makes true men laugh at hard tasks and exhausting toil.

Human love is a marvelous transfigurer of dreary things, difficult duties, dull tasks. It wakes up the best that is in life, and calls out its sweetest songs. But there is another love which has still more wondrous power--love for Christ! "Whom not having seen--we love." If only we can get this mighty motive into our hearts--it will change everything in life for us. It surpasses all earthly love in its power to inspire service, sacrifice, and song. If we have not learned to sing at our work, to make monotonous duty a delight, to find joy in self-sacrifice, we need but to look at the face of Christ, remembering His love and its infinite sacrifice for us. Then think that these things which seem so dreary, so hard, so costly, in self-denial and sacrifice, are simply His biddings, bits of His will for us; then, as we think, love will spring up in our hearts, love for our Master, and all will be transformed, transfigured!

A singer told the story of how all had been changed for her. She sang only for ambition, because she hoped to gather fame and wealth. But one Sunday she went to sing in a prison, after the minister had preached. Among the convicts was one with strangely sad and hungry eyes. "I sang to that one man," the singer said, "and as I sang, a power that was never mine before, was given me. The tears rained down the man's cheeks as he listened. Faces all about him began to soften." It was a holy moment for the singer. She had risen out of mere professionalism, and her soul had been touched and thrilled by the love of Christ. From that day--all was new for her.

When does the song begin--in time of sorrow? "Ah," someone says, "I cannot sing then. Surely it is not expected that I shall sing when my dead are lying before me."

Yes! the Christian is always to sing. "Rejoice always," means on the day when death-crape is on the door--as well as on the day when all is bright within. Some day we shall know that every sorrow in our lives, held a secret of joy for us. The song begins only, however, when we submit ourselves to God in our grief, acquiescing without question in His will and opening our hearts to receive whatever blessing He has sent to us in the sorrow. Job had learned this lesson when he said, "The Lord gave--and the Lord has taken away." The words imply perfect trust, and at once the song began in the patriarch's life, for he added, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" So always, even in the deepest grief, when we can say and

mean it, "May Your will, not mine, be done," the song begins.

One of the worst perils of Christian lives, lies in the line of self-indulgence. We take too good care of ourselves. We keep ourselves back from hard tasks and stern self-denials. We choose the easy things. Consequently, we do not find the joy that is possible in Christian living. Some Christians seem never to learn the lesson at all. They go through a course of formal service, but they are never happy in it, are never enthusiastic followers of Christ. The trouble is, they have just a little religion, enough to make life harder in the way of restraint and limitation, but not enough to start the song. They measure their piety, they calculate their service, they know nothing of full abandonment to Christ. They always go the one required mile--but never go the second mile of love. There will never be any song in such Christian living. Only in entire surrender and devotion to Christ--can we learn to sing the new song. If we would find joy in our religion, we must abandon ourselves altogether to Christ.

Many of us serve Christ so daintily, so delicately, with so much self-reserve and withholding of ourselves from sacrifice, that we never learn the reality of the joy of Christ. When we devote ourselves to Him wholly--the song will begin!

### The Mystery of Suffering

The why of suffering, has ever been among the most serious problems of life. When Jesus showed sympathy with a man who had been born blind, His disciples started the question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" They were quite sure that somebody had sinned, and that this blindness was the result. That was the common belief of those days. It was thought that anyone who suffered in misfortune or was overtaken by calamity, had sinned, and that his misfortune or calamity was visited on him because of his sin.

The old question, why the godly suffer and the wicked escape suffering--is to many a perplexing question. Only the other day a brilliant literary woman who has fallen into misfortune, wrote, "A depression blacker than you can conceive is now upon me. I know I never can write again. And both my sister and I are penniless--worse, in debt. I write this to ask you, in view of this irremediable disaster, what you think of God." This pitiful cry is from one half-crazed by misfortune--but there are many others who, more sanely than this poor woman, persist in asking the question, in time of great trouble, "What do you think now of God?"

A sorrowing father, after watching by the dying bed of a beloved child, said, "Had it been in my power to bear her pain for her, how gladly would I have done it! I could not bear to see her suffer; how is it that God could?" The problem of the why of suffering, presses on every life, on every heart, in some way, at some time.

We remember that even Jesus, in one terrible hour on the cross, asked, "Why have You forsaken Me?" in the awful mystery of His own suffering. Faith did not lose its hold, however, for it was still, "My God, my God," even when the bitter cry was, "Why--why have you forsaken me?"

There is no one of us who may not some time cry out in the darkness, asking, "Why this pain, this suffering, this mystery of trouble?" It is a relief for us to know that the gospel has its answers for the question. Jesus gave an answer to His disciples that day on the street.

First, He told them plainly that their beliefs were not true. He said, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents." He did not mean that the man and his parents were sinless. He meant that the misfortune of blindness had not been brought on him by sin. Nor did He mean that sickness, blindness, and other diseases and calamities are never due to sin. Many times they are. Sin does, indeed, bring curse and calamity to many lives. But Jesus here guards His disciples against supposing that always, that as a rule--suffering comes from sin. It is a fearful mistake to say to everyone who has trouble--that he has committed some sin and that his trouble is in punishment for it. Nor should a godly man say, when he is visited by affliction, "I wonder what I have done--that God is punishing me so."

Jesus did not merely say that the old belief that sin was the cause of all suffering was untrue; He gave a wonderful solution of the mystery of trouble. He said that the blindness had come upon this man, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." We are not to speculate and guess about the cause of any man's trouble, wondering whose fault it was--but are to set about at once doing all we can to relieve his suffering or heal his hurt. This man's misfortune became an occasion to Jesus for a miracle of mercy. If it had not been for his blindness, this opportunity of manifesting this work of God, would have been missed. Every time we come upon a human need, suffering or sorrow in any form, there is an opportunity for us to manifest the works of God by showing kindness, by giving comfort, by helping in whatever way it may be in our power to help. If one is sick in your home or among your neighbors, it is a divine call to you to do the gentle offices of love, to minister in self-denying ways, to do the work of God beside the sick-bed. That is why the suffering is permitted.

It may be the divine purpose--that we ourselves shall be benefited by our trouble. No human life ever reaches its best possibilities without pain and cost. One tells of visiting a pottery shop, and seeing a vessel whose pattern was blurred and marred, the design not brought out clearly. He asked why it was, and was told that it had not been burned enough. It would have been well worth while for the vessel to have had hotter fires and to have stayed longer in the furnace--in order to have the pattern wrought out in greater clearness and distinctness. May it not be that many of us miss much of the finer possibilities of spiritual attainment, because we are not willing to suffer?

Sometimes we are called to suffer for the sake of others--that they may be made better. The highest honor God gives to anyone in this world--is to be a helper of one's fellows. There are those whose lives shine as bright lights among men. They are usually quiet people, not much heard of on the streets. But they carry the marks of Jesus on their faces, in their characters and dispositions, and they are unselfish helpers of others. The weary come to them, and the sorrowing, the tired, and the hungry-hearted. They seem to be set apart by a holy separation, as helpers and comforters of others, as burden-bearers, as counselors and friends of those who need such aid.

Who does not crave to hold such a place of usefulness, of influence, among men? But are we willing to pay the price? No life can become strong, quiet, helpful, a rock in a weary land, a shelter from the storm, a shadow from the heat, without the experience of suffering. We must learn the lesson of beautiful life--in the school of self-denial--the school of the cross.

One writes of a poet whose pen was facile, who wrote many brilliant lines. The world listened and was charmed--but not helped, not inspired to better things. The poet's child died, and then he dipped his pen in his heart's blood and wrote--and then the world paused and listened and was blessed and quickened to more beautiful life.

Before we can do anything that is really worth while in helping our fellow men, we must pass through a training of suffering, in which alone we can learn the lessons that will fit us for this holier service.

Another mission of suffering is for the honor of God. Satan said Job's piety was interested piety. "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him. You have blessed the work of his hands. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has--and he will renounce You to Your face." Job was left in the hands of the Adversary to disprove this charge. His sufferings were not because of sins--but that the reality of his religion might be proved.

When we are called to suffer, it may be as a witness for God. We do not know what may depend upon our faithfulness in any time of stress or trial. It may seem a small thing, for instance, to complain and fret when we are suffering, and yet it may sadly blur our witnessing. God wants us to represent Him, to illustrate the qualities in His character which He would have the world know. A Christian in a sick room, is called to manifest the beauty of His Master in patience, in trust, in sweetness of spirit. A Christian in great sorrow, is called to show the world the meaning of faith and faith's power to hold the heart quiet and at peace, in the bitterest experience of grief and loss. We are witnesses for God in our sufferings, and, if we would not fail Him--we must show in ourselves the power of divine grace to keep the song singing in our hearts through pain or sorrow.

There never can be any gain in asking "Why?" when we find ourselves in trouble. God has His reasons, and it is enough that He should know why He sends this or that trial into our life or our friend's life. There is always mystery. The perplexed and heartbreaking "Why?" is heard continually, wherever we go. We cannot answer it. It is not meant that we should try to answer it. The "Why?" belongs to our Father. He knows; let Him answer and let us trust and be still. God is love. He makes no mistakes.

### The Blossoming of Our Thorns

"To keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud." 2 Corinthians 12:7

A bit of autobiography tells the story of Paul's thorn in the flesh. What this was, we do not know. It was given to him, however, that he should not be lifted up in pride. He had been caught up to the third heaven, where he heard unspeakable words. A man who had had such an incomparable privilege, was in danger of boasting in it. Some people cannot stand great honor. A little promotion turns their heads. And spiritual pride is a withering experience. It makes a man forget his own nothingness and unworthiness. It cuts him off from God and from dependence upon God. It unfits him for being of use to men. Anything is a blessing, whatever it may cost--that keeps a man humble.

We do not know how much of Paul's rich, beautiful life, his deep interest in divine things, and his noble work for his Master--he owed to his thorn. We do not know how much we are indebted to the sufferings and sorrows of godly men and women. The best thoughts, the richest lessons, the sweetest songs that have come down to us from the past--are the fruit of pain, of weakness, of sorrow. We cannot forget that our redemption comes to us--from the cross of the Son of God. The fruit of earth's thorns may seem bitter to the taste--but it is the wholesome food of human souls.

The old legend tells how all through Passion Week the crown of thorns lay upon the altar--but upon Easter morning was found changed to fragrant roses, every thorn a rose. So earth's sorrow-crowns become garlands of heavenly roses--in the warmth of divine love.

There is not one of us who has not his own thorn. With one it may be a bodily infirmity or weakness. With another it is some disfigurement which cannot be removed. It may be some uncongeniality in circumstances, something which makes it hard to live beautifully. One young man finds his place of work unendurable. The men with whom he is associated are as wicked as they can be. He is the only Christian among them, and they make it very hard for him to retain his integrity and to go on faithfully. But it may be that God wants him just where he is--that the man needs just this uncongeniality in his surroundings to bring out the best that is in him. Or it may be that Christ wants his witness in just that place. The consciousness that he is the only one the Master has there, puts upon him a grave responsibility. It may not be his privilege to leave his place; it may be his duty to stay where he is, to endure his thorn, whether it be for the purifying of his own life or for the witness he may bear for his Lord.

The Master told Paul that his thorn was necessary to him--to save him from becoming proud. We may think of our thorn, too--as something we need. In place of allowing it to irritate us or to spoil our life--its mission is to make us sweet, patient, loving. Many people beseech the Lord to take away their thorn. Yet it may be that the prayer is not answered, will not be answered, should not be answered. It may be that the thorn is necessary to keep them low at God's feet.

Prosperity may lead us to forget God. Even in spiritual things, the enjoyment of great privileges, sometimes makes men proud and draws them away from humble dependence upon God. We are all in danger of settling down into a spirit of ease and self-satisfaction.

We have been living pretty well, we say. We have been rather good, as people go, even as Christian people go. We have done many pieces of Christian work, which people praised. We seem to be helpful to others, and God is using us to be a blessing to many. This is right. It is glorious to be able to live nobly, victoriously, usefully. It is a high honor to be led up by the Master to some mountain-top of transfiguration, and to see heaven opened above us, to have God use us to achieve great things for Him, to have Christ honor us by putting His Spirit in us and enabling us to witness for Him faithfully and effectively before the world. To have the Holy Spirit dwell in us, sweeten our life, transform our character, and make us a blessing to many--this is the highest honor that God confers on anyone in this present world.

But the peril comes--when we ourselves become conscious of the goodness of our own lives, of the brightness of our faces, or of the sweetness of the work we are doing for our Master. Moses had been forty days with God on the Mount, and when he came down to the people, they saw his face shining. The people saw it--but he did not. "Moses knew not that his face shone." That was the secret of his greatness--his humility, his unconsciousness of his own radiance of face. If he had been aware of the glory which others saw, the glory would have faded.

There is no sin of which active, earnest, godly, and useful Christian people are so much in danger--as this of spiritual pride. If it gets possession of our hearts--it will blight everything beautiful in us. When a man comes to know that he is good--his soul is in peril. When a useful man becomes aware of his great usefulness, he has passed the zenith of his worth. When a devout man, a man of prayer, knows that he is devout, that he has special power in prayer--a large part of his power is gone. The strength of godhness lies in the absence of self-consciousness.

As we think of this, it is easy to understand Paul's danger after his remarkable spiritual exaltation. It is no wonder a thorn had to be given him, a torturing trouble to balance his spiritual elevation, to act as ballast to hold him close to earth. Let us not be surprised if to us likewise, after we have been greatly blessed, there

is given something to keep us humble and lowly. It is well that God loves us too much to see us become inflated with spiritual self-conceit, and not interfere to save us. Let us not chafe, when, after being greatly blessed in some way--a hindrance comes, a disappointment, a trial, a thorn--to break our comfort and spoil our ease. Let us accept it quietly, reverently--it is God blessing us.

Paul tells us here also--that he rejoiced in his thorn. He did not at first. He cried to heaven to have it removed. But when his Master told him that he must keep it, that he needed it, that it had in it a blessing for him--he chafed no longer. Indeed, he made friends with it quickly, accepted it, and stopped complaining about it. That is the only right and sensible thing to do with any disagreeable, uncongenial, or painful thing we find we cannot have removed. It is God's will that it shall be in our life--for some good reason which He knows. We should get the victory over it--by taking it to our heart, by receiving it as coming from Christ. No matter how it hurts us, if we accept it in this way--it will leave benediction in our life. God sends some of our best blessings to us in our thorns, and it will be a sad thing if we thrust them away and miss them.

The pitiful weakness which Paul thrice besought the Lord to remove in order that he might continue his usefulness-- Christ took, filled with His own strength and inspired with His own life--until it blazed with transfigured beauty and became a resistless force in building up the kingdom of heaven in this world.

Whatever our weakness may be--we need only to give it to Christ. He does not want our strength--He will not do anything with it. Some people are so good--that Christ will not use them. They are so wise--that He has no place for them in His service. They know so much--that He cannot teach them anything. They are so holy--that He cannot make them any better. Let us beware of self-righteousness, the emptiest and most hopeless of all conditions. If we consider ourselves strong, good, wise, holy, and skillful in doing work--Christ does not want us. At least He does not want us in that mood. The first thing is to get emptied of all our own wisdom, strength, and ability for service--and then He can take us and do something with us.

There are many who are so full of themselves--that they have no room for Christ. If only they would become empty, empty of self--He would fill them with Himself, and then they would have untold power for good in the world. We want to be used by the Master, to have our faces shine with His indwelling love, and to become blessings among men. Are we willing to pay the price? Are we willing to accept the thorn when it is given to us, and to endure it, that we may be kept humble, so that the Master can use us? We may safely trust Him with the enriching of our lives. He knows when pain is needful, when loss is the only way to gain, when suffering is necessary to hold us at His feet. He gives trouble--in order to bless us in some way. We shall always be losers--when we chafe or reject our thorn.

#### More White than Black

A little story-poem tells of a shepherd-boy leading his sheep through a valley, when a stranger, meeting him, looked over his flock and said, "I see you have more white sheep than black." "Yes," answered the boy, "it is always so." It is always so with sheep. In every flock there are many more white ones than black. Then we may take a wider view, and we shall find that everywhere in life--there is more white than black.

It is so in nature. There are some desert spots on the earth--but, on the other hand, we may think of the broad fertile fields which spread out everywhere. Much, too, of what we call desert is really rich in its possibilities of fertility and culture, needing only the bringing to it of the water from the mountains overshadowing it--to change it into garden beauty. Then even irreclaimable deserts have their

compensations. They are not altogether useless. Sahara seems a blot on the face of the earth--but it makes Southern Europe what it is, with its semi-tropical climate and productions, while but for the desert--it would be, in its long winters and its cold, like other countries at the same parallels. There is more white than black in nature.

It is so in the matter of human conditions. There are some afflicted people in every community. There are those who seem unfortunate in their circumstances. There are homes with sorrow in them, with empty chairs and vacant places, and with memorials of sore losses. There are sad hearts and lonely people in every community. But the number of sorrowing and grieving ones--is far exceeded by the great multitude of those who are happy. There are more songs than wails. There is more laughter than weeping--more white than black.

There always are many sick, crippled, blind, and suffering ones in any neighborhood. There are hospitals, always filled. Physicians are kept busy going their rounds. But the proportion of the sick and suffering, to the well and strong--is very small. For one home with its illness--there are many with bounding health. The great majority of people are well, active, and strong. There are some cloudy or rainy days--but there are far more days of sunshine and blue skies.

But there are people who take no note of any, but dark days. They keep a weather record--but enter in it only the disagreeable features, the excessive heat or the excessive cold, the rain, the snow, the thunder-storm, the high humidity, the drought. Every year must have its unpleasant days--but for every one of these--it brings us many days of comfort and delight.

In every individual life, too, there is more white than black. Some people are unwilling to confess that it is so with them. They seem unhappy if they have nothing to speak of--that makes an appeal for sympathy. They are never heard saying in genuine gladness, that they are perfectly well. They must always tell you of some ailment, some suffering, some drawback. They are pessimistic concerning their own lives. They magnify their troubles. They think that the evil days are more in number than the good days; that there is more cloud than blue sky in their lives, that they have more sorrow than joy.

But this is never true. The list of mercies in any life, if added up through the years, would make a measureless total; while the sad and painful things would make a very small list. One tells of keeping a two-column account: on one side--all the trials, losses, disappointments, sufferings; on the other side--all the joys, benefits, favors, pleasures, mercies, kindnesses; and the bright column grew until there was no room to set down the items, while in the dark column there were but a few painful things noted. It is always so. There is more white than black.

Even our few dark days have their mission and bring their blessing. All sunshine would be the bane of the fields. If no clouds ever gathered, if it never rained, what would become of the trees, the grasses, the growing grain. Nature needs rain. If there were no cloudy days in our experience, if no showers ever fell--our lives would not reach their best. The dark days come to us--on friendly errands.

We must not think we are losing time, when we are called apart from activity to rest shut up in a sick-room. Work is not the only way of pleasing God. Activity is not the only duty of our lives in this world. We have lessons to learn, as well as things to do. Some day we shall learn that many of our best days--have been the days we thought we were losing ground--idle, wasted days. But the day that has shadow or pain or sorrow in it--may have more of heaven in it than any day that is cloudless, full of joy and pleasure.

Some of us train ourselves to see only certain things--to the exclusion of other things. Thus we each make our own world, and two people looking out from the same window--see altogether different worlds. One looks through his little pane of glass--and sees only mud; and another looks out--and sees blue sky and shining stars. The trouble with too many people--is that one little spot of darkness bulks so in their vision, that it hides a whole heavenful of light and a whole earthful of beauty! One sorrow blots out the memory of a thousand joys. One disappointment makes them forget years of fulfilled hopes.

Many people have a strangely perverted faculty of exaggerating their mole-hills of trouble into mountains; and then of looking at their blessings through diminishing lenses. A cheerful heart always finds brightness, while an unhappy spirit sees nothing but discouragement in even the most favorable conditions. One person is happy in the poorest circumstances; while another is wretched in a luxuriant home with every desire granted.

Some people never see anything to be thankful for. They may attend a service of praise on Thanksgiving Day--but they are not in a joyful mood, and not the first strain of thanksgiving rises from their hearts. They never stop complaining long enough to allow a grateful thought to nest in their hearts! They keep themselves always in such a mood of discontent, that no note of praise is ever heard from their lips! One would think, to hear them talk about their trials, that God does not love them and that no favor ever comes into their lives. Yet, really, they do not have any more than their share of human suffering, while they certainly have a full portion of blessing and good.

But this is not the way for a Christian to live. We dishonor God, when we indulge in unhappiness and refuse to be grateful! We spoil our own lives and make existence wretched for ourselves, when we insist on seeing only the black. Then we make it harder for others to live, casting the burden of our gloom upon them. We should train ourselves just as carefully and conscientiously to be thankful and songful--as we do to be truthful, honest, kind, or thoughtful.

Some people try to excuse their unhappiness--by saying that they were made that way and cannot change their disposition. They were not born with a sunny temperament, as some of their friends were. They are naturally predisposed to gloom and depression. But, even if this is true--it does not doom them forever to gloom and depression. The best Christian gladness--is conquered sadness. Christ is able to make us over again, giving us new hearts, and the new hearts. He makes are all songful hearts, full of rejoicing and gladness.

We all have our special days, when we go up to the hill-top, out of our low valleys, and get a wider vision. It is well to have such a day even occasionally--but it would be better if we should live on the hills all the time! Some people stay always down amid the mists--and never get to see a mountain-top. They never behold the sun. They never breathe the atmosphere of heaven.

A little dog, one chill autumn day, was seen to get up from where he was lying in a dark corner of a room, and go and lie down in a patch of sunshine which he saw on the floor. The dog teaches us a good lesson. There are always bright spots in even the darkest experience, and we should find them and live much in them. Yet there are too many Christians who seem to live always in the fog-banks of fear and unbelief. Then they wonder why they do not have the joy of the Lord. But the joy of the Lord never is found in such climates. We must dwell in the uplands of God--if we would know the secret of God's gladness!

The Master and the Doubter

"Are You the One who is to come--or should we expect someone else?" Matthew 11:3

No other loss possible to a human life is so deep, so poignant, so desolating, as the losing of the sight of God's face in the darkness, the fading out of belief in the unseen world, in the divine Fatherhood, in the eternal goodness, in the immortal life. One of the strangest experiences in the story of John the Baptist, was his doubt of the Messiahship of Jesus. There are many godly men who in certain experiences, have like questionings.

Again and again, after great sorrow, Christian people are found doubting. In some cases the doubt takes this form: "Surely God is not the God of love I have been taught that He is, or He would not have darkened my life as He is doing." In other cases the feeling voices itself thus: "God must be punishing me for sins I have committed; or He is displeased with me for my failures and neglects in duty." Or, the person feels that God Himself has failed in His promises. "I have cried to Him--but He is silent to me. He does not regard my distress. He has no pity upon me. He has altogether forgotten me!"

We are taught that the note of joy never should cease to be heard in the Christian's life, that we should praise God at all times, that we should rejoice evermore. That is, indeed, the way our Master would have us live. He has overcome the world, and would have us share His victory.

Yet there are times in the lives of many saintly believers, when from some cause or other--the Father's face is hidden for a season. We do not forget that even Jesus Himself, in the terrible darkness of His cross, lost, for some moments at least--His consciousness of the divine presence, and cried, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" One writer says he wishes the evangelist had forgotten to put down this cry of Jesus on His cross. But we may be glad that he did not forget it, for if ever we have such an experience, we know now that it is not a mark of desertion, since even Jesus once felt the same.

John did just the right thing with his doubt. He did not nurse it in his heart, and brood over it in his dungeon. If he had, his faith would have died out--and the bitterness of disappointment would have overwhelmed him. That is the mistake some people make with their doubts and questionings. They nourish them, and the doubts grow into black clouds that quench every star. What John did--was to take his question at once to the Master. He did not want to doubt; he wanted explanation, that he might continue to believe. The only true thing for one who has doubts--is to go right to Christ Himself with them! Faith is not lost--only there are things which cannot be understood. These the Master will make plain.

It is profitable to learn how Jesus dealt with His friend's doubt. He did not work a miracle and bring him out of his dungeon. When we are distressed by the ways of God with us, and begin to think that He is not dealing with us in love, and then cry to Him, "Are You, indeed, our Friend, our Redeemer? Is this love--this strange way by which You are taking us?" He may not change His treatment of us; the pain may become no less poignant, the sorrow no less bitter. This may not be His way of blessing us.

John was suffering in prison, for faithfulness to his Master and to truth. We would think that Jesus would have sent him a message of sympathy in his suffering. There is great power in even a word of encouragement, when one is carrying a heavy load, or passing through a fierce struggle, or when one is in danger of fainting and giving up. It would have seemed like our Master--if He had spoken to John's messengers some approving words about their master, which they might have reported to him when they went back to the prison.

After they had gone, Jesus did speak to His own disciples and the people such words. He said that they must not think of John as a reed shaken by the wind, as a man whom softness and luxury had spoiled. Of all men that had been born--there was none greater than John. Would it not have made John in his prison braver and stronger to endure his confinement, if his disciples had returned, saying, "Jesus spoke most approvingly of you and of your work. He said this and this and this about you"? But there was not a word of such praise, not a word expressing sympathy with the caged lion in his chains within his bars.

Jesus knew best how to deal with His friend. Perhaps a gentle message would have unmanned the noble hero. Perhaps commendation would have made him less able to endure the solitude of his dungeon. Our Lord wants to make us brave and strong. He does not pamper us. Some people live on compliments and flatteries. They have become so used to being praised for everything they do--that if praise is not given them--they fret and repine! They are like children who have been rewarded so often for being good, for getting their lessons, for doing home tasks, and for keeping sweet--that if the reward is not given--they sulk and do nothing they should do. Reward is sweet--but to work only for commendation is one of the lowest forms of selfishness!

There are some people who want always to be sympathized with, and who are hurt when a friend fails to say at every complaint they utter, "I am very sorry for you!" No mood of life is more unwholesome than this craving. It indicates pitiable weakness, selfishness of a most unmanly kind! We do others great harm--when we humor such demands in them. We should seek to make our friends more self-reliant, instead of indulging their infirmities and fears.

There is a time for sympathy--but sympathy must never be enervating. If one comes to you in your sorrow, he must leave you more able to endure your sorrow, not with self-pity in your heart. The effect of too much that is called comforting, is to make the grief seem greater, and the heart less able to bear its load! But not thus, did Jesus comfort John. The effect of the message He sent was to quiet and reassure him, to give him new confidence, and then enable him to continue in his prison courageously and victoriously to the end. Jesus wanted John to believe in Him without any concession to John's wishes, without a word of praise or sympathy. He did not make it a whit easier for John to believe. He treated him as a hero, and a hero John proved.

Jesus answered John's question by continuing in His work of mercy. The people were thronging about Him as they always were, bringing their sick, their blind, their lame, their lepers; and all who were brought to Him, He healed. Then after the messengers had been watching the gracious work for a time, Jesus said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind see, the lame walk, those with skin diseases are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news." This was the answer to John's question, "Are You the Messiah?"

When today the questions are asked, "What are the real evidences of Christianity? What are the highest proofs that Jesus Christ was the Son of God?" the answer may be made in the very words which the Master spoke to John's messengers. The strongest proof that Christianity is divine--is in what it has done and is doing for the world. Does anyone doubt that Jesus was God's Messiah? Show him what the name of Jesus has wrought! Every sweet home in Christian lands is an evidence of Christianity. Every hospital, every asylum, every institution of charity, every orphanage, every school for feeble-minded children, every home for the blind--is an evidence that He who came was indeed God's Anointed One!

There are three things about doubting--of which we may be sure.

One is, that our Master is very patient with us--when we find it hard to believe. It is not always so with our human friends. Some of them are impatient with any question implying uncertainty of belief. There are good men who resent even the most honest doubt in others--as if it were a grievous sin! But Jesus will never treat our difficulties in believing, in this way. We may tell Him just what it is we cannot understand, and why we cannot quite believe--and He will listen to us patiently, explain the hard things, and teach us faith. We may never be afraid to bring to Him any doubt or question that perplexes us.

Another thing to remember, is that while Jesus is very patient with honest doubt, and deals with us gently--yet we rob ourselves of untold joy and blessing, when we give way to questionings. Doubts are clouds in the sky which hide the blue and shut out the stars. Faith is infinitely better than doubt. It shows us the glory of heaven; it greatly enriches all human blessings; it makes life a song and a triumph.

This, too, we should not forget--that doubt never is necessary. It was not necessary in John's case. Nothing was going wrong with the Messiahship of Jesus. Nothing was really going wrong with John's own circumstances. They were very hard, it is true--but John was fulfilling his mission. If he could have seen all things as they appeared from God's throne--his doubt would have become joyous faith. There are painful things in every life, sometime, somewhere. We see only one side of the experience. Or we read the serial story only part way through, not waiting for the final chapters, and at some dark point we begin to doubt God's goodness and love. We need only to wait a little longer, and we shall see the beauty. Here is where faith wins its victory. Faith has such confidence in the power, the wisdom, and the love of God--that no matter how things seem--it trusts and sings. We should seek to lose all our doubts, in the joy of believing.

It is Well

There is no experience in life in which it is not possible for a Christian to say, "It is well." One ground for this confidence, is that this is God's world. Nothing ever gets beyond the sweep of His power. What is true of the universe at large--is true also of all events, of all affairs, even of men's cruelty and hate. God rules in all.

Pilate said to Jesus, that he had power to crucify Him and power to release Him. Jesus replied, "You would have no power against Me, except it were given you from above." God could have rescued His Son from Pilate's hand that day--if He had chosen to do so. That He did not do it--was no evidence that He did not love Him. God could free us from all that would pain us--if He would. The trouble that breaks into your life, is not an accidental occurrence, something that has escaped from the divine control, something from which God could not have delivered you. There is no lawlessness in this universe, where God is sovereign. Whatever is done--He is the doer of it, or He permits it.

A further ground of confidence is that this God, in Whose hands are all things--is our Father. If He were a cruel God, if He did not love His creatures, we would have no assurance that we shall be kept from harm amid all the strange experiences of human life. But, being our Father, we know that the least and the lowliest of us are always thought about and have a special place in God's plan and purpose.

Not only does God love us and wish our good--but His wisdom is infinite. He knows what is best for us, what things will do us the good we need. We ourselves do not know. The things we think would bring us blessing--perhaps would bring us irreparable harm! The things we dread as evil, and shrink from--perhaps are the bearers to us of divinest good. We would make pitiful work of our lives--if we had the ordering of our affairs and experiences in our own hands. If for but one day we could take matters into our own hands, out of God's hands--we would wreck everything! "My times are in Your hands!" Psalm 31:15

It seemed cruel in God to let the sons of Jacob sell the boy Joseph away into a foreign land as a slave. Could not He have interfered and prevented the crime? Certainly. Did He not hear the lad's cries? Yes, He heard--and did nothing--but let him be carried off. How can we reconcile such permission of wrong against a helpless boy--with the creed of Christendom that "God is love?" Indeed, it was just because He loved the boy--that He let him be carried away. We have only to read on to the end of the story to learn this. We see at length in the outcome, the most beautiful divine goodness and wisdom. We see Divine love working in this one story of Providence that is written out for us. It may not be written out so plainly in the experiences of our own and our friends lives--but this really is the story of all the mysterious things of life. God is willing to let us suffer today, that we may get some great, rich good--or do some noble service for the world, tomorrow.

With these truths about God and His dealings with us fixed in our minds--it is easy for us to believe that whatever our experience may be, it is well with us. We may not see the good with our own eyes--but God sees it, and that is enough. Even when we have brought the trouble upon ourselves by our disobedience of the divine laws, we may so relate ourselves to our sin as to be able to say, "It is well."

There is in the mercy of God, and in the redemption of Jesus Christ--a wondrous power that can even take the bitterness out of sin, and rob it of its curse. We may never do evil, that good may come--that would be to mock God and act presumptuously. But when we have sinned we may take our sin to God and ask Him to forgive it, and then to arrest its poison in our life and change it to good. We should understand well how to deal with our sins, when in weakness or temptation we have done evil. If we keep our sins and hide them--they will be our eternal undoing. Or if we try in any way of our own to set right that which our sin has made wrong, we shall find that the blight and curse remain. No such dealing with our sin can bring good out of it.

But if we bring our sin to Christ, our Redeemer, and put it altogether into His hands--that is what it is to confess our sin and repent of it--He will take it and forgive it, and bring out of it benefit and good. That is the way the Master does with every sin that is truly confessed and given to Him. Not only is it then forgiven--but its repetition is made impossible, for the evil within which caused the sinful act--is changed to good, and where the ugly thorn-root grew with such baleful fruit, will spring up now a lovely flower instead. That is what redemption means. That is the way Christ saves us from our sins--not from their penalty, merely, which really would not be a saving at all--but from the very sin-roots themselves!

So there is a blessed sense in which we may say, even after sinning, "It is well." We may never say it of the sin, or of our own hearts while cherishing the sin; but we may say it when the scarlet sin has become as white as snow, when the crimson red sin has become as white as wool. David's sin was black and terrible--but the blessing of forgiveness wrought in David thereafter, the noblest things of all his life. Peter's sin against his Master was pitiful in its shame--but Peter came a new man out of that night. The memory of his fall, instead of working sorrow and despair in him, wrought intenser earnestness in his Master's service!

Some time or other everyone must experience bereavement. Evermore the circles of love are being broken. How can we say, "It is well" when a loved one is taken away? How can it be well when we have lost out of our life--all the wealth of a gentle and holy affection? But there is a beatitude even for mourning--they are blessed who mourn. The reason given is that they shall be comforted. This does not mean that the lost one shall be restored--but that God will put such peace, such strength, so much of His own love, into the bereft heart--that the sorrow will be changed into joy.

The story of many a bereavement--is a story of restored joy. Those Christians who were taken out of our sight, are not really taken from us--they stay with us in memory, in love, whose clasp death cannot break, and in the benediction of their sweet lives, which abides unto the end. Those who never have mourned, have missed the deepest blessing of the divine love.

It seems to us that suffering and loss must always be evil, that they never can bring good. We cannot see how it can be good for us to lose property, to be sick, to endure pain. But it is a law of life that the higher can only be reached, through the sacrifice of the lower. There are those who can be saved for spiritual things, only through the losing of all that seems desirable in the earthly life.

A distinguished musician ordered a violin from a maker of violins--the best he could make. At length he came for his instrument. He began to draw the bow across the strings, and his face clouded. He was disappointed. He broke the violin to pieces on the table, paid the price, and went away angry. The maker gathered up the fragments of the shattered instrument and carefully put them together. Again the musician came, and taking his bow, drew it over the strings--and now the tone was perfect. He was pleased. "What is the price?" he asked. "Nothing," the maker replied. "This is the violin you broke to pieces on my table. I put the fragments together and this is the instrument on which you now make such noble music."

Just so, God can take the broken fragments of a life, shattered by sorrow or by sin, and out of them make a new life whose music shall thrill many hearts. If one is discouraged, if the life seems to be hopelessly broken, the gospel of divine love brings encouragement. There are no ruins of life out of which God cannot build beauty and blessing!

This is our Father's world. He loves us and is watching over our lives. Only our unbelief can turn the divine good into evil for us. We need never be defeated, we need never fail. Whatever our sorrow, our discouragement, our hurt, our failure--there is no day when we may not look into the face of Christ and say, "It is well." This is the meaning of the love of God to us. This is the full and final blessing of Christ's redemption--victory over all hurt, over all sorrow, over all pain, over all sin. We need only to cleave to Christ in every time of fear or danger--and He will bring us through to glory!

### The Joy of the Cross

We are not accustomed to associate joy with the experiences of the cross. Every item in the story of the terrible hours when Jesus was in the hands of His enemies, tells of suffering. Yet there is no doubt that there was joy in the Redeemer's heart in the midst of all His anguish. One New Testament writer tells us that for the joy that was set before Him--He endured the cross, despising shame.

In one sense, Christ's enduring of the cross includes His whole life. It seems certain, at least, that from the beginning of His public ministry He was aware of the manner of His death. When in His village home in Nazareth He heard the call to go out to begin His Messianic work, He knew to what He was going. It is easy to find hints of joy in the story, as He moved toward the cross.

It may seem strange to look at the seven words on the cross to find hints of joy, and yet more than one of these has its note of gladness. The saddest of them all was that uttered in the darkness, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It was a mysterious cry. In the bitterness of His sufferings, His Father's face was obscured for a time. Yet in the words "My God" we have a suggestion of joy. Though He could not see His Father's face, His faith did not fail. God was His--and He was God's; and in His direst sorrow He spoke this word of confidence.

Another of the seven words was, "It is finished!" This certainly has in it a note of joy. It was not a cry of despair--but a shout of victory. A work had been given Him to do, and now it was finished. The word told of the gladness which filled His heart as He came to the end. Great was His relief, that His sorrow was now over. Great was His gladness, that He had not failed in doing what had been given Him to do. He knew that His life was not a failure, that He was not dying too soon, that an everlasting kingdom would be established through His sacrifice and death, that His influence would fill the world, that His very cross would draw all men unto Him.

It was the joy set before Him, that enabled Him to pass through the experiences of death in triumph. Just beyond the cross--He saw glory for Himself. John puts it thus in one of his great words referring to the death of Christ: "Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." He does not say, "Knowing that His hour was come when He should go to His cross," but, "when He should depart unto the Father." His eye and heart did not rest on the way of His going, close before Him--but upon His destination. He was going back to His Father! He was going to His coronation as King of glory. This was one of the secrets of the joy which sustained Christ in those hours.

Another was in the knowledge that countless lives would be saved through His sufferings and death. One of Dore's pictures represents Jesus on His cross. Stretching away into the dim distance is seen a vast multitude of people of all ranks--kings, nobles, peasants, men, women, children, a company which no man could number. On every face falls a light from the cross. There is no doubt that some such vision as this was before the eyes of Jesus Himself, when He hung on the cross. He saw before Him all the blessed and glorious results of His great sacrifice. He knew that multitudes in all ages--ages past and ages to come--would reach the blessed life--because of His offering of Himself on the cross. This was one element of the joy set before Him, which enabled Him to endure the cross with triumph in His heart.

Jesus is not only our Savior--but also our example. He would have us endure our cross--as He endured His. The great central meaning of the cross is suffering for others. No one ever can lay down his life for others in the same wonderful way that Jesus did. Yet everyone who follows Him, must lay down his life in his own measure. The death on the cross was the token of Christ's vicarious suffering. He lived and bore the cross for others every day that He lived. He loved perfectly, and love always gives itself. Love in us must be the same that it was in Christ. He exhorts His followers to love one another--even as He loved His disciples.

John says that "because He laid down His life for us--we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We shall not likely have to do this literally. Now and then one falls at his post in doing the duty of love for another. Sometimes physicians and nurses give their lives for their patients. Ofttimes a mother gives her life for her child. But there are many ways of laying down one's life for others, besides dying for them. Usually our duty is to live for others--not to die for them. This means to forget ourselves utterly, never to hold ourselves back from any service or sacrifice to which love calls us.

A beautiful story is told about the Agassiz brothers. Their home was in Switzerland, on the shore of a lake. One winter day the father was on the other side of the lake from the home, and the boys wanted to join him. The lake was covered with thick ice. The mother watched the boys from her window as they set out. They got on well until they came to a wide crack in the ice. Then they stopped, and the mother became very anxious, fearing they might be drowned. The older boy got over easily--but the little fellow was afraid to jump. Then, as the mother looked, she saw Louis, the older brother, get down on his face, his body stretched over the crack, making a bridge of himself, and then she saw his little brother creep over on him.

This story is a beautiful parable of love.

We should be willing to make bridges of ourselves, on which others may pass over the chasms and the streams that hinder them in their way. We have many opportunities of doing this in helping our brothers over hard places, out of temptation, through sickness--into some better way of living. It is not pleasant to lie down on the ice or in the wet--and let another use us as a bridge. But Christ did it. His cross was just the laying of His own blessed life over the awful chasm of death and despair--that we might pass over on Him into joy and hope and heaven. He endured the cross, despising shame, that He might save us.

We cannot call ourselves Christians if we balk or falter or hesitate in responding to calls to endure suffering, loss, or shame--in order to help others. "He who saves his life shall lose it." Life is not easy for any of us. It may be easy to live without self-denial, to live to please ourselves. Many people have no higher thought of life than this. They like to have friends--but they never think of being a friend when it means inconvenience, trouble, or cost to themselves; when it requires sacrifice, the giving up of comfort, ease, or pleasure, to help another. They call themselves Christians--but they never think of doing anything that requires discomfort or self-denial. There is no teaching of the Master which by any possibility, can be made to put the stamp of 'Christian' on such living as this.

Everything that is truly of Christ--bears the print of the nails. Where this sign is not found, whether it be in a life, in a creed, in a character, or even in a church, we have a right to say, "This is not of Christ!" Not only did Jesus bear the cross Himself, bowing under its burden and submitting to have His body nailed upon it--but He tells us that if any man will follow Him, he, also, must bear the cross. And this does not mean merely that we are to share Christ's cross--that is, trust in it for salvation, hide beneath its shadow for refuge. It means that we are to bear our own cross; that is, the principle for which the cross stands--must be the law of our life. The cross means voluntary surrender to the will of God. It means death to selfishness, and joyful acceptance of all duty. It means the giving up of one's life, all one's dreams of pleasure or profit or ease, whenever the Master calls for service.

Not only must the cross be endured--but it must be endured cheerfully. Some people always chafe and fret when they are called to do any hard or disagreeable duty. Perhaps they do it--but they do it in a way which robs the act of all beauty. Jesus endured His cross with joy, and that is the way He would have us do with our cross. We must not fret

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/when-the-song-begins/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**