

Thoughts on 1 Corinthians 15.

by William Kelly

The sermon emphasizes the victory over sin and death that we have in Christ, and encourages us to rest upon this and to rejoice in the hope of the glory that is coming.

Scripture: Romans 5:8, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 15:55, Ephesians 2:4, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 John 4:9

Topics: "Christ's Resurrection", "God's Sovereignty"

Description

William Kelly preaches about the profound significance of Christ's death and resurrection, emphasizing that sin was not a mere accident but a deliberate act of God's enemy to oppose Him. Despite the evil in the world, God allowed it to showcase His depths of love, grace, and goodness in the midst of darkness. Through Christ's victory over sin and death, believers stand on the imperishable rock of ages, experiencing God's compassion and mercy amidst trials and tribulations, with the assurance of future glory and eternal blessings.

Transcript

It is amazingly sweet that the very day on which we came together to remember Christ, and to show forth His death, speaks to the intelligent ear of eternal blessedness -- tells those who come at the bidding of the Lord Jesus that the great victory is won; that that is removed which was the only difficulty in the way of God. And, beloved, there was but one thing that ever was a difficulty to Him, and I think I may say with reverence, that there was a difficulty even to God. Undoubtedly all things are possible with God; but then it was possible only at the cost of His Son. Now this was the great thought always before God. For there never was a more profound mistake than to suppose that sin was a mere accident that came into the world; and that the gift of Jesus, the redemption of Jesus, was a bare remedy and necessity on God's part, if that terrible thing, sin, was to be taken out of the way. It is perfectly true that sin was in no wise entitled to fill a place in the universe of God. "An enemy hath done this." It was God's enemy that brought it into the world once spotless, and the outward reflection of God's beneficent power; and all was ruined. But then it is of all importance for our souls to bear in mind steadily that it was always the thought of God to permit that the very worst should be done in order that He might show His own depths of love and grace to those that were ruined by sin, that He might bring out such tenderness, and patience, and wisdom, and goodness in the midst of evil, as never else could have been seen. And goodness is never so thoroughly proved as where there is that evil which resists it and hates it. It is all well when things are smooth. We know from personal experience that it is an easy thing to go on when there is no difficulty in the way, where everything is congenial and in favour of what is good; where there is no trial and no contrariety to

the spirit. But that which puts the soul to the proof is where everything runs hard and foul against it.

Now God permitted that the enemy should introduce into this world that which denied and opposed Himself at every point; that which left God not a particle of character in the world that He had made; for what in God has not been belied of Satan? What evil, what calumny has not Satan invented, have not our hearts believed about Him? Who is it we have so much dreaded as God? Who is it we have most endeavoured to flee from? Yet, in the face of all this evil which God has allowed to come out in its worst colours, He has provided that there is not a word, nor a deed, nor a feeling that Satan could excite in this world, but brings into evidence something of God that never had been so well known before.

The wonder is this: the Son of God has come, lived, died, and is risen; and we assemble here together at His bidding on His resurrection day. The evil meanwhile goes on; God has Himself told us that it must increase; "evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived -- bad times -- worse times -- the last days the worst of all -- until what God has wrought in the death and resurrection of Christ is brought out before the whole world by His power. But just think, now, what a wonderful place is ours!

And this was the prominent thought upon my spirit; that we, having found Christ, have had our feet, as it were, set upon the rock of ages by God Himself, that we stand upon that which is imperishable and unchangeable, and which brings us into association with the very deepest thoughts of God, and with the greatest victory that even He has ever achieved. For, in fact, all other victories are but the result of that one which is already ours in Christ. Because it must be evident to every intelligent mind that, if that which is the worst of all, and the root of all the confusion, has been met; if the poison that has been trickling all over the world, and penetrating and corrupting everything else -- if that has been dealt with, it is only a question of God's will, the bringing, out of that which He has already found and given to us in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Now, every Christian knows that he has found it there. I do not mean that every Christian realizes what God has done there. If so, there never would be anything but hearts entirely above all the circumstances of this world. There might be holy weeping and loving sorrow over a groaning, sinful world, but the heart would be evermore overflowing with thankfulness to God. For it is quite possible to have in the affections of our hearts drawn out towards the saints of God in all their trials, and to have the deepest feeling for the poor world, and yet have nothing but praise and thanksgiving as we look at Christ and think who has given Him for us and to us.

This is our place. This is what God Himself brings before us in connection with the very day on which we assemble to remember Christ; and it is a blessed thought for us that God did not choose that day when Christ died. Most solemn it was that the Messiah should be smitten in the house of His friends -- though it was the death of Him by whom alone our sin could be put away; for God Himself was obliged to turn away His face from His beloved Son when our sins were laid upon Him.

But the day of the cross is not that which summons us together, nor is it the day that intervened between his death and resurrection -- the day when man was keeping, alas! his holy day; when those who thought themselves something for God on the earth, but who were really the enemies of the Father and the Son, vainly supposed that they were sanctifying a day to the Lord of Hosts -- the day when their own Messiah lay in the grave, slain by their wicked hands.

But now this is the grand change, when God has put forth His power once more -- not now to make a world that Satan might come and spoil it all, but the day when the new power is put forth -- when God has raised Jesus up from the dead, who had all our sins laid upon Him. And where are the sins? Where is that which God charged upon Jesus? It is gone! He is risen! And out of His resurrection flows every blessing, and this not to the Church only; for there is no lasting blessing that God will confer but what is founded on that death, and flows out of that resurrection. Yet the evil was allowed to go on. The world was making merry, little thinking that such a work was done. Nor was it, indeed, intended of God to be openly, undeniably known to the world yet. But God speaks from heaven Himself. He sends down the Holy Ghost to those whose hearts are opened by His grace upon the earth. And they know this mighty work that God has wrought -- that Christ is risen, the first-fruits of them that slept. And there we have the Holy Ghost; for He cannot rest when He opens such a theme till He shows us the end of it -- if indeed end it can be called; for he launches out into that scene where God shall be all in all, and there shall be no end -- where there will not be one single enemy to put down -- not a sorrow to heal -- not a breach to repair; but when all will be the full and suited result of the power of that life which is already ours in Christ.

Beloved friends, how do our hearts enter into all this? We owe it to God that we should feel all that is around is -- that we should take notice of that which He is doing -- that there should be no sorrow of the creature or of His own children, but what we should have hearts entering into it, and expressing our groan by the Spirit to God. For, so richly are we blessed, that God calls us to be imitators of Himself in this evil world. And how does not God feel for every wound and all the havoc that His enemy has caused? He is tender in pity towards all. Even if he were to execute judgment upon the proudest city that had threatened to ravish His beloved people -- the city of Nineveh, He must first send a prophet to warn them; and that prophet, little entering into His mind, might prefer judgment to mercy, if his own character as a prophet lay at stake. Yet, on the confession and repentance of the people, God turned aside the blow. It might be but a little confession, and one that soon passed away. And the destruction came afterwards, and fell upon the fickle, guilty people, for their early repentance was but a transient thing. But there never is even so much but what God takes notice of it. And, therefore, when there was even this outward repentance of the people -- clearly not of the Holy Ghost (for had it been the work of the Holy Ghost, it would have had permanency), God sets aside His own prophet, makes him heartily ashamed of himself, and even the little children and the very cattle of the place are brought into the remembrance of God.

We little enter into the largeness of His goodness, and His compassion, for every creature that He has made. But again, the very depth of His compassions, when despised, and where there is the unbelief that rejects Jesus, only brings the more surely eternal destruction from His presence.

But what a thought is this astonishing mercy and compassion of God for the ruined and miserable in the world! It is true that misery is not taken away, and the death of Christ has left the world apparently in the same state. The world, in fact, only got rid of One that troubled it. But what have the saints got through it? We are on God's side. We look at the death and resurrection of Christ, on the side not of man, but of God. And what do we see? In this poor world, which man might think but a speck in creation, we see the wonder of wonders that puts to shame not merely all on earth, but everywhere else; for what is there in heaven itself compared with the death and resurrection of Christ?

Never, at any time, nowhere in any sphere that God has made, and that man in his poor thoughts and feelings might set above it, is there ought to be compared with that which calls us together this day. We remember One who was God, but who became man for us -- One who did not only come from heaven, full of goodness and power, but to stiffer death, the death of the cross, because we had sins that could not

otherwise be put away. But what thanks shall we render unto God that we know this? that we have His own certain testimony of it? that all that God wants is that we should take the fulness of the blessing He has given us?

We cannot make too much of Christ's death and resurrection. God has brought us within the precincts of perfect goodness. He has borne away all our evil; and what we have to do is simply to believe and enjoy and rest upon Himself. We may even find death encroaching, coming near and touching and withering up, as it touches that which is very dear to us. But we know resurrection-life in Christ -- a far better life than a life would have been that had not known death. For what would have been even Christ, living in this world, if Christ had not died? (2 Cor. 5) It is His death that proves the power of His life, as of His love -- the life which triumphed for ever over death.

For the eternal victory is won, and God has given it to us. There is nothing more to be done for us in respect of our sins. There is a great deal to be done in respect of our bodies and of the heavens and earth over which we are to reign. But there is nothing to be done to make good our position before God, or our deliverance, and the putting away of everything that could be a difficulty before God. The only real difficulty has been grappled with, and it is gone. The difficulty was that we lay under sin, and that God could not get over sin.

But it is gone -- entirely gone. He has done it Himself, at the cost of His beloved Son, and God leaves us in the world that we may learn the sufficiency of His grace in practice, as we know the triumph of it in Christ. And we are come to remember what He has done and to rejoice in what He is to us, to anticipate the sure glory that is coming, glory without end. No doubt it is glory that we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Am I not put in the place of a son in his father's house, who has perfect community of interest in all that his father has and is?

We are waiting to be manifested as sons and heirs through Christ; but such we are even now. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Nothing will be altered as regards the world till God has taken us to Himself to be with Jesus -- till Jesus has come to receive us and to represent us in the Father's house. For there will be no such thing for us as slipping into heaven. He will come for us to receive us, that when we do enter the Father's house, it may be with fulness of acceptance in that Blessed One who makes all sweet that the Father looks upon.

We shall be ushered in by the Son Himself -- not even the least one will be left behind. What a change will it be for all -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! Then God will have the joy of having all His own way, and then Satan will have the misery of seeing all those whom he had attempted to injure fully blessed of God!

Such is our portion even now in hope. We are not like those who have to wait till our bodies are changed to know what God feels towards us. May we remember that we are not dependent upon anything that may happen. We rest upon this -- God has shown us Jesus. He has given us to believe in Jesus, and not only in Him, but in the mighty work -- that God has wrought for us in him.

May we enter into this our portion with increasing simplicity, remembering that the day approaches!

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