

We humbly thank our Savior Jesus for His *sufferings in our place*. He endured the penalty of our transgressions of God's holy law. We also thank Jesus *for His enduring the wickedness of the Cross*, the violent and bloody way in which Christ suffered at the hands of the most violent men and devils. But, if we are to appreciate Christ's atoning work, we must grasp the value and prevailing power of Christ's obedience in our place as well.

Mon/Tues: Read Hebrews 5:7-9 & John 5:44-47**Moses Wrote of Me**

Hebrews 5:7-8 makes clear that our Lord was constantly careful to provide His Father with "a sweet-smelling savor" to go along with His sacrificial work. In other words, Christ was committed to pleasing His Father in all things – especially in the sweet communion which He had in our nature with His Father, living out a life of perfect obedience. John 5:45-46 describes Christ's obedience in terms of the perfect obedience which the Law of Moses requires, saying, "Moses wrote of Me" (John 5:46).

This was true *sacrificially*, because Moses' ceremonial Law required a "spotless Lamb" for each burnt offering (Numbers 28). The daily, weekly, monthly and festival offerings all required a lamb, goat or bull "without blemish." Thus Moses wrote of Christ the perfect sacrifice who fulfilled all the Old Testament "types" of a sinless burnt offering on the Cross.

Moses also wrote of Christ as the perfect King, whose love for the Law of God meant that "morning by morning" Christ was a diligent student of God's Word (Isaiah 50:4) *just as all Old Testament kings were required to be* – see Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

Finally, Moses wrote of Christ as the perfect prophet, whom God would raise up. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him," Deuteronomy 18:15.

In these three ways, Moses testified that Christ Jesus meets our every need as our Prophet, Priest and King. What confidence we should have every time the Scriptures are opened – they all speak of Him! No wonder Moses commands us in Deuteronomy 8:3 to "live on every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God!" No wonder the disciples on the road to Emmaus have their hearts warmed and their despairing faith renewed as Christ "opens the Scriptures of Moses and the Prophets" to them (Luke 24:27 & 24:32).

Meditate and Pray: This was the Christ predicted by Moses whom the leaders of Israel rejected (John 5:45-47). But let us rejoice that He is *our* Savior, and that we see all the Old Testament fulfilled in Him! Ask this mighty prophet, priest and king to be present in your life today, using hymn # 301:

1 Join all the glorious names
of wisdom, love, and pow'r,
that ever mortals knew,
that angels ever bore:
all are too poor to speak his worth,
too poor to set my Savior forth.

2 Great Prophet of my God,
my tongue would bless thy name:
by thee the joyful news
of our salvation came,
the joyful news of sins forgiv'n,
of hell subdued, and peace with heav'n.

3 Jesus, my great High Priest,
offered his blood and died;
my guilty conscience seeks
no sacrifice beside:
his pow'rful blood did once atone
and now it pleads before the throne.

4 Thou art my Counselor,
my pattern, and my Guide,
and thou my Shepherd art;
O keep me near thy side;
nor let my feet e'er turn astray
to wander in the crooked way.

Wednesday: Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3; Psalm 78:1-22 and Psalm 78:38

Bound by Grace

The Lord takes His people into the wilderness to show them what is in their sinful hearts. He then follows their failures with His compassion on their lost, wandering condition. In short, the wilderness is a place of testing, humiliation and failure, but at the same time restoring, forgiving, nurturing grace. How does Psalm 78:38 describe God's frequent demonstrations of grace?

Yet, He, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; He restrained His anger often and did not stir up all His wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again (Psalm 78:38).

Meditate and Pray: If God pre-plans the trials, then He also pre-prescribes the remedy. Sing about God's foreknowledge and provision, in the words of hymn # 457:

1 Come, thou fount of ev'ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love.

3 O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander – Lord, I feel it –
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it,
seal it for thy courts above.
Just so with Jesus Christ.

Thursday: Read Psalm 78:12-38

The Slander of Unbelief

Time and again God's own people learn that they are *not* where they should be in obedience. Though He gives them many opportunities to show their devotion, they persist in unbelief:

Yet they sinned still more against him,
rebellious against the Most High in the desert.
They tested God in their heart
by demanding the food they craved.
They spoke against God, saying,
"Can God spread a table in the wilderness?"
(Psalm 78:17-19)

Meditate and Pray: In Psalm 78:19, we see the depths of Israel's sin that prompted God's wrath. Listen to Charles Spurgeon as he sums up this glaring failure on the part of Israel:

From this verse we learn that unbelief of God is a slander against him. Yea, they spake against God. But how? The answer is, They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? To question the ability of one who is manifestly Almighty, is to speak against him. These people were base enough to say that although their God had given them bread and water, yet he could not properly order or furnish a table. He could give them coarse food, but could not prepare a feast properly arranged, so they were ungrateful enough to declare.

As if the manna was a mere makeshift, and the flowing rock stream a temporary expedient, they ask to have a regularly furnished table, such as they had been accustomed to in Egypt. Alas, how have we also quarrelled with our mercies, and querulously pined for some imaginary good, counting our actual enjoyments to be nothing because they did not happen to be exactly conformed to our foolish fancies. They who will not be content will speak against providence even when it daily loadeth them with benefits. (CHS)

Fri/Sat/Sun: Read Mark 6:30-44; Matthew 9:35-36 and John 6:1-15

We Need Jesus' Obedience!

After a day packed with teaching "many things" (Mark 6:34), our Lord takes steps to test His disciples and feed the crowd of five thousand men.

First, note how He responds to the hungry and spiritually lost crowds. He has compassion on them (Mark 6:34). Yes, their physical need moved Him. As B.B. Warfield says, even more it was their spiritual destitution which most deeply moved His pity. Their fatal ignorance of spiritual things, along with their hunger and diseases, moved Him to pity. This same compassion for spiritual destitution comes out clearly in Matthew 9:36 where, "Christ was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, "worn out and torn by running here and there through the thorns with none to direct them, and have now fallen helpless and hopeless to the ground" (Warfield translation). What a tender heart for the lostness of mankind!

Meditate and Pray: In John 6, Jesus challenges his disciples to find the food needed to feed this vast multitude. Lydia McGrew points out in *Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts* that Jesus singled out Philip, who is from that area of Bethsaida (John 1:44). In this way, the problem is placed directly before an Apostle *who would know the impossibility of feeding this crowd from a local knowledge of this wilderness location*. Yet all proceeds according to plan. As Jn 6:6 says, "He already knew what He was going to do." Sing about Christ's sovereignty in all that He does, using hymn # 74:

God is working his purpose out
as year succeeds to year:
God is working his purpose out,
and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

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