

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0938

Meditate On These Things

March 13, 2009

In a day of great uncertainty and, for some, suffering, we need to set our minds, that is, our thoughts and our meditations on that which will encourage our hearts as we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul knew hardship, but he kept his sight on above where his Lord is seated (Colossians 3:1-4), and he encouraged the saints to do likewise, to even rejoice and be anxious for nothing (Philippians 4:4-7). In particular, to the Philippians, Paul poured out his most intimate and personal desire to know and to gain Christ. As he began to conclude his letter, he encouraged the saints in Christ Jesus to meditate on certain things. What we need to see is that these things are Christ Himself and that we are to possess all that He is.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are TRUE, whatever things are NOBLE, whatever things are JUST, whatever things are PURE, whatever things are LOVELY, whatever things are of GOOD REPORT, if there is any VIRTUE and if there is anything PRAISEWORTHY—meditate on these things. (Philippians 4:8 NKJ)

What is true? Christ is True! When He comes to reign over this earth, heaven will be opened and He will be called Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11). He is true to His word. All that He has promised to His people will come about in the eons (age) to come. He said He would return, and so He will. As His people, we too are to be true in our actions and our words. It is His character to be true; and as we are conformed to His image, this same quality is to be ours.

What is noble? Christ is Noble! Psalm 45 speaks of the coming King and His consort Queen.

And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under You. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad. (Psalm 45:4-8 NKJ)

“In Your majesty” speaks volumes of His nobility. He is the noble one. He will come to this earth in all His dignity and nobility. He is true, humble, and righteous through and through. All His garments are a sweet aroma. How noble is our beloved Lord! Who can compare to Him? He alone is true nobility. He is the Majestic One. No earthly king will ever compare to the Majestic, regal King of kings. But where does this leave us? How can we be noble in this life? Is it possible? Yes, it is. As children of God, we are to grow up to be placed as sons. It is a process, a work going on inside of us that is conforming us to His image; and this image is to be reflected in our lives. Even deeper than this is a hidden work that transforms us into His glory.

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB)

Glory speaks mightily of the nobility of Christ. We may not see the glory in us, for it is a treasure hidden in earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:4-7); but the more we see Jesus and come into the mature knowledge of Him, the more we will be like Him. Glory is worked in our lives as we behold the face of Jesus Christ, and in some measure, it is to come forth from our lives. We are to be different from the world.

What is just? Christ is Just! He is the Just One, the Righteous One (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 1 John 2:1). His scepter is a scepter of righteousness, for His coming kingdom is one of righteousness and peace. In the day that He takes the scepter, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Praise God; we can stand before God, not because of our own righteousness but because of the righteousness that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In that day, we can enter His kingdom of righteousness by faith in the Righteous One. However, today we are called to live righteously, practicing righteousness, doing the righteous acts of the saints which form the wedding garment of the wife of the Lambkin (Matthew 22:2-14; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Revelation 19:7-8).

What is pure? Christ is Pure! John exhorts us: **Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope {fixed} on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure** (1 John 3:2-3 NASB). We have a hope set before us, and it will be fulfilled in the day that our beloved Lord appears. When He appears, we will be like Him. But until that day, we are to purify ourselves as He is pure. Where does the purity start? It starts in our hearts and in our spirits; and it is manifested in love—love of the brethren, just as Christ loved us by laying down His life for us.

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5 NASB)

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22 NASB)

What is lovely? Christ is Lovely! Again, Psalm 45 reveals how lovely our King is.

Thou art fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Thy lips; therefore God has blessed Thee forever. (Psalm 45:2 NASB)

He is fairer than the sons of men. There is no one lovelier than He is. What could be lovelier than His grace? He came as the One full of grace and truth, and we have received grace upon grace (John 1:14, 16). The words that pour forth from His lovely lips are grace. His very character is full of grace. He is the most gracious Person who has ever walked on this earth. How lovely is our beloved Lord Jesus! When He comes for His people, He will come with grace, for grace will be brought to us at the revelation of Him (1 Peter 1:13). It is this grace and this loveliness which is to be a sweet aroma that comes forth from our lives. We are to be different from the people of the world. By faith, we are to receive the grace of the Lord and allow the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ to come forth in every place. Knowing Christ contains all the good things, and this knowing is to be manifested as a sweet aroma. As Paul wrote: **But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place** (2 Corinthians 2:14 NASB).

What is of good report? Christ and His return is the Good Report!

My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. (Psalm 45:1 NASB)

The psalmist's good theme was about the King who is coming. He is our good news. We are to be vessels that can speak of this good theme and, most of all, encourage our brethren to love and good deeds, so much more as we see the Day approaching. We must remind each other that this Day is coming.

Finally, **if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things** (Philippians 4:8 ASV). *Virtue* refers to "general moral excellence; right action and thinking; goodness of character." In other words, if there is to be any right thinking and character, then we need to consider the things upon which Paul calls us to meditate, and these things are all summed up in our Lord Jesus. Paul was not asking a rhetorical question without an answer; rather, he was making an emphatic statement. Think about Him and all will be well. Where is our praise to be directed? The Psalmist proclaims: **I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever** (Psalm 45:17 NKJ). We need to praise Him today, for this is our vocation.

Until His arrival, we are to practice these things, and the God of peace will be with us (Philippians 4:9).