

May 2012

Seeking the Saviour

"Looking unto Jesus..."

"It will always give a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease, and peace, to think of the perfect righteousness of Christ. How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! I do not think they ought to be. I do not think they would if they could always see their perfection in Christ.

There are some who are always talking about corruption, and the depravity of the heart, and the innate evil of the soul. This is quite true, but why not go a little further, and remember that we are perfect in Christ Jesus. It is no wonder that those who are dwelling upon their own corruption should wear such downcast looks; but surely if we call to mind that Christ is made unto us righteousness, we shall be of good cheer. What though distresses afflict me, though Satan assault me, though there may be many things to be experienced before I get to heaven, those are done for me in the covenant of divine grace; there is nothing wanting in my Lord, Christ hath done it all."

~Charles Spurgeon

"Oh, let my hand forget her skill,
My tongue be silent, cold, and still,
This bounding heart forget to beat,
If I forget the mercy seat!"

~Hugh Stowell

"Thousands and tens of thousands have sought for pardon at the mercy-seat of Christ, and not one has ever returned to say that he sought in vain. Sinners of every name and nation—sinners of every sort and description—have knocked at the door of the fold, and none have ever been refused admission.

If the way which the Gospel sets before us were a new and untraveled way—we might well feel faint-hearted. But it is not so. It is an old path. It is a path worn by the feet of many pilgrims, and a path in which the footsteps are all one way. The treasury of Christ's mercies has never been found empty. The well of living waters has never proved dry."

~J.C. Ryle

"Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain,
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
Before the world's foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When Heaven and earth are fled away.

Father, Thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far;
Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
Thy arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste and live.

O Love, Thou bottomless abyss,
My sins are swallowed up in Thee!
Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me,
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

By faith I plunge me in this sea,
Here is my hope, my joy, my rest;
Hither, when hell assails, I flee,
I look into my Savior's breast;
Away, sad doubt, and anxious fear!
Mercy is all that's written there

Though waves and storms go o'er my head,
Though strength, and health, and friends be gone,
Though joys be withered all and dead,
Though every comfort be withdrawn,
On this my steadfast soul relies,
Father, Thy mercy never dies.

Fixed on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail, and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love."

~J. A. Rothe

THE MERCY SEAT

A light drizzle began, interspersed with occasional drops of rain as I sat in the midst of the congregation listening to Pastor John read from Leviticus about the sacrificial system under which the Israelites lived. The blood of the animals had to be shed year after year, always according to an exact pattern, and offered up by certain men, qualified by birth into the family of Levi - family of priests – the only humans allowed to approach the holy place. They must be accepted based on their own cleanness before God, which seems like a precarious system, trusting in the cleanness of any man; yet, it pleased God to set this before His people as a shadow of the Real Sacrifice which would come in His time.

Pastor John brought to us a message of eternal magnitude: four facts, four realities – when God saves a soul, His immediate goal is that this one be brought to Him, enabled to become a friend of God... what an amazing thought! God must provide a place to meet us, for He is too holy and we are too sinful – far too dirty to face a pure, completely holy Creator. Jesus Christ is the “Meeting Place” of which the physical mercy seat, where the priests offered the bloody sacrifices was only a picture. Now, in the New Testament times we still must have a mercy seat, though it is no longer a physical, golden covered article with cherubim hovering over it. Christ Himself is now our true Mercy Seat, the complete fulfillment of the type given during Moses' time, the Real and not the shadow. What a tremendous amount of truth, of reality is contained in these facts – Jesus Christ is our Mercy Seat. Jesus Christ is the Satisfaction of a Holy God. Because of and in Him we can meet with God. Such a thought is truly incomprehensible. How glad I am that comprehension is not a prerequisite to embracing such mystery!

At last we consider the fact, the reality that if we reject the shadow, the mere picture, we are condemned to die. What if we reject the Perfect – the Real? What if we reject Christ, our only hope of ever meeting God, of seeing Him in glory, of experiencing peace in this life (which is only a shadow of the Real Life which is to come, which those who loved Him and who have gone on before are even now living)? If we lived under Moses' law during the Old Testament times, and we sinned against the law, we would be condemned to die only by the testimony of two or three fallible human witnesses. *What WILL be the result if we reject our Saviour, our Mercy Seat?*

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did ere such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Forbid it Lord, that I should boast
Save I the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

The words of this hymn pierced my heart and stirred my soul as we sang – beautiful music exalting our own dear Saviour, our own Mercy Seat, God's Satisfaction for the righteous demands of His holy law. As Pastor John finished praying I sat down thinking surely, *surely* this could not be the end of such a message. I wanted to run to _____, to pull _____ into the chair beside me and look into their eyes and SEE that they had heard.

As I left the building the rain was coming down in earnest and it seemed as if nature was weeping over our needy state, the clouds were crying for our apathy and for the souls of the lost. How many does this encompass here within our little circle and am I among them? The whole realm of nature would be an offering far too small to bring to our King and what we do possess *we refuse to give* – our lives, without reservation – our thoughts and words and actions, our hearts full of love for The One Who has given all of Himself for us.

We drove home in silence, Katie and AnnMarie and I, the very air upon which we depend for our breath sighing in heaviness for the sins of the world, the sins of God's children, for the long separation between Christ the Creator God and His glorious creation since the perfect beginning when the morning sang for joy and then the catastrophic plunge by Adam into sin and a sinful state. I felt the groaning of all who knew God for those who do not... and I wept. I thought of how I had not wanted to leave the assembly, of how I felt a keen desire to fall down somewhere – anywhere and take hold of something... the pulpit? Ridiculous; the pastor? Even more ridiculous; what? The horns on the altar? No hope even there; *the mercy seat – yes!* the Mercy Seat! **Christ! Christ alone.** Only Christ would suffice and He HAS satisfied and will satisfy all who are hungry and thirsty. *Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.* There is nothing tangible for me to reach out and touch **but His Presence is more real than any object this world has to offer.** *Cling*, my soul, cling to Him Whom my soul loves; *love*, my soul, love Him Who has satisfied the righteous demands of the Just and Holy God of all heaven and earth; *serve*, frail body, serve the King Who rules in truth and righteousness. Love until you breathe your last. It will not be death to die in the service of such a King – only a transfer to the permanent post where service **will all be love.**

~Kathy Strelvel

