

Received to Hold

Luke 2: 25-32; Luke 10: 38-42; Luke 19: 1-6; Col. 2: 6-10.

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I want to speak, the Lord helping me, of the blessings that accrue to us in receiving Christ, and the consequent effect that His reception into our hearts and lives should have upon our walk.

The first chapter of John's gospel opens with that magnificent reference to the glory of His eternal Person as He, the eternal "Logos," the Creator, comes into this world. He came to His own interests, and His own people received Him not. He was unknown to the world, but He was also refused and rejected by His earthly people. "But," says the Scripture, "as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to be children of God, to those that believe on His name." The word "received" is a word of great import. It does not refer to a mental reception of the truth, important as that may be; the word indicates receiving something to hold, tenaciously and permanently. The very word is used in relation to the Pharisees and Sadducees in Mark 7, where it says "they received to hold the traditions of men." That which proceeds from the minds of men — denigrating the Person and glory of Christ — held tenaciously today, and I am praying as I speak that if there are any in danger of being held by such traditions; receiving them to hold, only to find the end of them to be destruction, that God may turn your hearts and minds to Christ, that you might find in Him the answer to all your difficulties and problems.

We have read in Colossians "In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in Him." In the first chapter of John's gospel there is not only that which is presented to us in the person of Christ as coming into the world, but there is that which He brings with Him. It says "of His fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace." The reference there is to the ocean, the fulness, the love, the power, the wisdom and grace that exists in Christ; and of that fulness, that ocean of God's resources in Christ, we have received grace upon grace; before the effect of one wave has passed away, another has taken its place — that is what God has in mind for us. I want to call your attention to the blessedness, the potentiality of receiving Christ in this very real and precious way, receiving Him to hold. So, I have ventured to refer to several Scriptures which speak of those who received Christ, and the effects upon them.

Simeon, a man in Jerusalem in a day of darkness, a day of apostasy, of breakdown, a day similar in a moral sense to the day in which we live. There is a wonderful verse in Zechariah's prophecy which speaks of a day when "at eventide there shall be light;" and beloved brethren, we are in the eventide today, the eventide of the dispensation; we are drawing to the close of the day in which Christ is rejected, not owned, not desired, not held, and God would illumine our souls with the light of the preciousness and glory of this blessed Man. Simeon — "Received Him into his arms, and blessed God." I want to say to you tonight, dear friends, that if you will receive this blessed Man to hold as Simeon did, there will be substance formed in your heart in which you can praise and bless our God and Father. Simeon had not the light that we have; Simeon hadn't the Holy Spirit in the way in which we have Him; but he was there under the power and guidance and influence and tuition of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit always calls attention to the preciousness and glory of Christ.

Simeon took this Babe into his arms and he blessed God. My dear brethren, the Holy Spirit would direct our attention to the preciousness of Christ — coming here in holy, spotless, incarnation to do the

will of God; to fulfil His Father's business; to move in unswerving devotion to the will of God; coming here to die — "the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." The Holy Spirit would focus our attention upon the glorious facts that stand related to the incoming of this blessed Man, the Man Christ Jesus — Simeon took Him into his arms and he was prepared to let everything else go — nothing would hold him now. He was holding in his arms God's Salvation, notice he does not say "mine eyes have seen *my* salvation" — precious as that was — "mine eyes have seen *thy* salvation," a vessel which God had prepared for the carrying out of all His mighty purpose from eternity — God's salvation. The Vessel who would fulfil everything existing eternally in the heart of God for universal blessing, and for the eternal joy of His own blessed heart of love. The illumination that came into his heart as he received Christ! Dear brethren, there are dark problems around us today. There are dark features pressing heavily on the spirits of men. Men are looking in fear for something that is coming upon the earth. There are all sorts of shadows lengthening and deepening; there are difficulties in the Church of God in all its broken state; if we so receive Christ there will be illumination in the power of the Spirit that will dispel every shadow and every aspect of gloom, and open up before us the wonderful vista of all God has determined to bring in for our blessing and for His own glory. Beloved young people, may I ask you — you may have mentally agreed to certain doctrines but have you, dear young brother and sister, received to hold tenaciously, permanently, blessedly, lovingly, this glorious Person who alone can fill the earth with the light of the counsel of God; who alone can fill your heart with the light and joy and blessing which even death itself cannot quench. He received Him in his arms, he received Him to hold.

I refer to Mary — that house in Bethany. Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem, and at Jerusalem Christ was rejected and crucified. In the very shadow of that great city which He would so often have poured His love upon, and which was marked by His total rejection, was this house at Bethany — the house of victory. May I digress for one moment — after His resurrection He led them out as far as to Bethany, He led them to the place where the shadow of death had been removed from the spirits of His lovers. He would lead us far — as *far* as to Bethany. Yes, there is that which lies beyond Bethany; blessed indeed in the company of Christ, to reach the moral significance of Bethany, and in this day of moral darkness, spiritual decline, spiritual death, to have the shadow of death lifted from our spirits; to know the One who is able to show to the full the blessedness of the heart of God and to lead us into the permanent enjoyment of it. He came to Bethany and entered into the house; Martha received Him and if we go to the twelfth chapter of John we see the ultimate result of His being received into that house, the whole sphere was filled with the fragrance of a devoted heart responding to the preciousness of Christ. This was the result of Martha receiving Him into her house under the very shadow of the place where He was rejected. There was to be a sphere filled with the fragrance of devoted love to Himself, and one would desire that Christ may be so received into *our* circumstances that they may be fragrant with the preciousness of that glorious Person; and as we pass through this sin-stricken, evil world we might leave in our pathway something of the preciousness and glory of the One whom we have not only received into our arms, but into our very circumstances; our hearts filled with appreciation of the preciousness and glory of the One we have received — the Christ of God. "Mary sat at His feet and listened" — the word should "she listened to His word." There is a great difference between hearing and listening. We may hear certain things and not take note of what they intend we should understand, but to quietly sit down and to listen to the words of Christ. Have we so received Him dear brethren? do we know what these quiet moments are to sit at the feet of Christ, to listen to His word? How much time we spend (may we spend more) in speaking to Him and asking from Him, and how graciously He fulfils our thoughts, our prayers. But beloved, may I challenge my heat and yours, as to who much time we spend allowing Him to speak to us. How much time do we spend at His

feet, those beautiful feet, listening to what He would say to us? Would He not fill our hearts with the preciousness of His own communications?

That long journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus was filled out with what He was saying to those who would listen to Him, their hearts burned as He spoke to them. His word is *pure*. Oh the impurity of the sounds that fill this world today! But every word of God is pure, and who can bring home to us the preciousness and purity of the Word of God as the One who is the Eternal Word, the Living Word? To sit at His blessed feet and to allow Him to speak to us of the glorious things of God which He knows so well. His word is pure. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." Thus our ways shall be morally clean to this immoral world, in this amoral world, and found to be in accord with the mind of God. Mary listened to the purity of His word, and responded to Him in a purity of affection that is unique to herself (John 12). The word of God is *powerful*. The Apostle John (in speaking to the young) says — "The Word of God abides in you." In this way there is ability to overcome the world; problems arise at work, at school or in the office — you are confronted with questions by men who have no regard for Christ or His Word and oftentimes there are difficulties which seem incapable of explaining, but the Word of God will so affect your heart and mind and thoughts that you will be able to overcome every worldly influence that Satan, the god of this world, can bring against you. To sit at His feet and listen to His Word in all its *purity*, in all its *power*.

The Word of God is *permanent*. Nothing can ever shake it, nothing can ever alter it — "Forever, O Lord, is Thy Word settled in heaven" (Psalm 119). Men may bring certain things to notice which will be contradicted in a few days time, nothing that we can put the foot down upon with certainty; but in the Word of God there is permanence. Every promise of God is Yea and Amen in Christ, and every Word of God will be fulfilled, something that we can stand upon in time and enjoy and respond to throughout all eternity. The preciousness of the Word of God. Oh! to sit at His blessed feet and listen to His Word in its purity, in its power, in its permanence.

The Word of God is *penetrating*, "dividing between soul and spirit," penetrating into every thought of the heart in order that every desire might be purified before God as listening to His Word. The precious, penetrating Word of God in all its searching quality. "Search me," says the Psalmist, "and see if there be any wicked way in me." As turning thus to God we find in Him all that is needed to walk here in purity and power, and in the steadfastness that the Word of God would give. Pure, powerful, permanent, penetrating.

The Word of God is *prophetic*. Man is wondering what is to happen. Newspapers don't know what is going to happen. God's Word is sure, the prophetic portion of God's Word, the prophetic features of God's Word are to be relied upon. If we desire to know what will happen tomorrow, or the next day, or in the years to come, or throughout all eternity, the answer is in His Word. The prophetic Word of God which gives us God's mind will illumine the soul, giving us to walk on in triumph knowing full well that everything is in the hands of God, and everything will be brought to pass for His glory and for our blessing.

One other thing I would say — there are many others — is that God's Word is *productive*. What does it produce? Ah, it produces an entirely new creation — a born-again creation, born anew by the Word of God. The operating word of God in the soul brings entirely new thoughts, new desires, new expectations, a newness of life. The powerful Word of God, bringing us out of death and moral degradation into a scene where we can walk in the Spirit's power in all the dignity of the sons of God. Powerful, precious, productive, permanent, pure Word of God. Sitting at the feet of Christ in order that He might instil into our hearts His own thoughts, His glorious thoughts, those thoughts which are as

high above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth — precious, eternal thoughts of God which will bring us into an entirely new walk, into newness of life, into a condition which is outside the poverty and degradation of this world.

The Lord Jesus is going through Jericho for the last time (Luke 19) and Bartimaeus is there. If I had time I would like to run through the previous chapter, Luke 18, where we find the adversary dealt with; the self-righteous Pharisee dealt with; the man who put his riches before Christ dealt with; where we see that the only way in which we can come into God's blessings for us is in the simplicity of a little child, and then the basis of it all in the death and resurrection of our beloved Lord. In the moral sense that all precedes the incident of Bartimaeus. He cries out that his eyes might be open to see something of the glory of this Person. He wants his eyes opened, he is blind, and I don't find in Scripture that the Lord Jesus ever allowed any of his disciples to open blind eyes; they did many things, but it was left to Him to open blind eyes. Paul opened blind eyes in a moral sense, but physically and actually the Lord Jesus reserved this to Himself. He opened blind eyes to see the glory of His Person. He would open eyes tonight, not that we might be blessed only, but like Zacchaeus, we might desire to see *who* He is in His Person. Zacchaeus — the name means pure. "the pure in heart shall see God" and here is Zacchaeus, not so much concerned with his blessing at the moment, he wants to see Jesus, *who He is*. I would that God would bring into your hearts and mine a fresh sense of who He is in the glory of His Person. This is the view that will transcend all else, this is the illumination of heart that will dispel every shadow — the Lord Jesus in the glory of His Person. Zacchaeus, in purity of affection wished to see who He was, came and "received Him joyfully." Yes, Simeon got illumination, Mary got instruction, and Zacchaeus in receiving Christ got a joy that no one could take from him. I press it upon you tonight, beloved brethren, if you want to be in the light of things, if you wish your soul to be illumined, receive Christ to hold. If you wish to be instructed in the Word so that you may know your way, a light to your path, a lamp to your feet, then sit at the feet of Jesus and receive Him into your every circumstance. He will illumine your heart and instruct your mind. More than that, He will fill your heart with a joy that no man can take from you; "he received Him with joy" — oh! what a blessed thing to have the joy that will last through time and eternity because Christ is received to hold in the affections.

May I just close by referring to the Scripture in Colossians. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Beloved, as we walk in this scene of darkness is our path illumined by our intercourse with Christ. Is it true that we are the light in this world? Is it true that men that work with us can see the light of the preciousness of Christ, the light of God's love in the gospel? Can they see it shining out in us? If we have received illumination into our hearts as receiving Christ, is that light shining out, do we let others know that we have the light of Christ in our hearts? Do they know anything of the preciousness of the gospel which has illumined our own hearts because we have received Christ? As we have received Christ — as the light of God's purposes come into our hearts through Jesus are we able — as circumstances permit, as God directs and the Spirit empowers — are we able to let that light shine into some dark heart? We are surrounded, are we not, by hearts that are darkened by sin, darkened by the apostasy that is creeping in, the cults that come in all their darkness from Satanic influences. And we have the light of the glorious Christ in our hearts, we have the light of the purpose of God in our hearts, we have light in our dwellings. What do people see when they come into our dwellings? Is there a reflection in our lives, in our homes of the glory of Christ? I plead with myself and with you, dear brethren, that in these days, as we have received Christ so we may walk in Him.

Have we so sat at the feet of Jesus that we know that those feet are beautiful upon the mountains

bringing glad tidings of peace to those who do not know where to turn, hearts that are bewitched by what Satan is bringing in? We have the truth of the Word of God in our hearts as well as in our hands, beloved, we have received the Word — are we dispensing it? What about our conversation with our neighbours, what about our conversation with our colleagues? What is it marked by? How easy to discuss the things of this world, things which are passing away, things which are going to destruction — and we have the light of another world in our hearts; we have the permanency and the power and the preciousness of the Word of God. It is our *responsibility*, and I am assured it is the *privilege* of many of you, if not all, to be able to dispense something of that light to the sad, broken, bereaved, distressed, depressed hearts all around us. We have received Christ, and He has brought to us a joy that no man can take from us. Our hearts have been filled with the sense of the preciousness, the joy that He Himself as a man walked in down here — our joy is full. If we have received Christ to hold, our joy is full.

The philosophy of men is destructive and beloved, "let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." In the midst of all this the Holy Spirit tells us that the fullness of the Godhead, all that we need to know about the blessed God, all that we ever can know about God is in this blessed Person whom we have received. We are complete in Him. Young men, young women, there is no need to listen to the preaching of the cults, the fullness of the Godhead is in Christ and we have received Him — let us hold Him; let us walk as those who are conscious of the fact that all we need in time and eternity we have in that blessed Man. We are complete in Him, and as we have received the Christ may we walk in Him for His praise, for His glory, until He comes, for His name's sake.