

# Milk & Honey

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*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## The Temple Of God

William MacDonald

1. **Believers Are The Temple Of God.** “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you (1 Cor. 3:16)?” Paul reminds the believers that they are the temple (Gk. - the inner shrine or sanctuary) of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in them. It is true that every individual believer is also a temple of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but that is not the thought here. The apostle is looking at the church as a collective company, and wishes them to realize the holy dignity of such a calling.

“The Church is in partnership with Him. In order that she may carry out the responsibility, she is in partnership with Him, in companionship....I am inclined to think if that truth broke upon us today in all its power, it would have a remarkable effect on the life of everyone.” (G. Campbell Morgan)

2. **The Temple Of God Is Holy.** “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are (1 Cor. 3:17).” Apparently there were false teachers who had come into the church at Corinth and whose instruction tended more to sin than to holiness. They did not think it a serious matter to thus cause havoc in a temple of God, so Paul thunders out this solemn declaration. Viewed in its local setting, this means that if any man enters a local church and wrecks its testimony, God will destroy him. The passage is speaking of false teachers who are not true believers in the Lord Jesus.

“Those who teach the Word of God should tremble lest even unintentionally they injure the structure they are seeking to erect.” (W. E. Vine)

3. **The Body Of The Believer Is The Temple Of The Holy Spirit.** “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own (1 Cor. 6:19)?” Again Paul reminds the Corinthians that theirs was a holy and dignified calling. Had they forgotten that their bodies were a temple of the Holy Spirit? That is the solemn truth of Scripture, that every believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God. How could we ever think of taking a body in which the Holy Spirit dwells and using it for vile purposes. Not only is our body the shrine of the Holy Spirit, but in addition, we are not our own. It is not for us to take

our bodies and use them the way we desire. In the final analysis, they do not belong to us; they belong to the Lord.

“How careful you and I ought to be that we grieve not that blessed One who dwells within, that we do not bring dishonor upon the name of the Savior who has sent His Spirit to live in our body.” (H. A. Ironside)

4. **Idols Cannot Dwell In The Temple Of God.** “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16).” Idols have nothing to do with the temple of God. That being the case, how can believers traffic with idols, since they are the temple of the living God. Idols here, of course, mean not only carved images but any objects which come between the soul and Christ. They could be money or pleasure or fame or material things.

“With Him on our side - with the promise of His indwelling Spirit to sanctify us, of His fatherly kindness to enrich and protect us - shall we not obey the exhortation to come out and be separate, to cleanse ourselves from all that defiles, to perfect holiness in His fear?” (James Denney)

5. **Each Believer Has A Place In The Building Of The Temple.** “In whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21).” The unity and symmetry of the temple are indicated by the expression, the whole building, being fitted together. It is a unity made up of many individual members. Each member has a specific place in the building for which he or she is exactly suited. Stones excavated from the valley of death by the grace of God are found to fit together perfectly. The unique feature of this building is that it grows. It was born on the day of Pentecost, has been growing ever since, and will continue to grow until the Rapture. Paul describes the holy temple as being in the Lord. In other words, the Lord Jesus is its source of holiness. Its members are holy positionally through union with Him, and they should be holy practically out of love to Him.

“All believers on earth, at any given moment, are looked at as forming the habitation of God.” (Hamilton Smith)\*

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# Missing The Point

Keith Keyser

Recently my eldest daughter & I had a “daddy date” at our favorite local diner. Immediately adjoining our booth seated behind us were two elderly gentlemen. Although I was not trying to eavesdrop, they were speaking in a volume that made not overhearing their conversation impossible. I disregarded them until I heard the one more verbose man mention “Jesus Christ.” My ears perked up – perhaps he was about to share the gospel with his friend. He began well, speaking of the selfless attitude of the Lord and even spoke of Him showing this by dying on the cross “to save our souls,” as he put it. Much to my dismay, the more he spoke the more it became apparent that he was trying to sell some senior housing to his friend, and he was using the Lord to assure him of his own unselfish motivations by saying that he tried to follow Christ’s example.

## Dropping The Ball

Beyond my personal revulsion at the man’s apparently mixed motivations in referring to the Lord, I grew increasingly frustrated by his misleading statements that almost - but not quite - described the good news. At one stage, he said that what one needs to do is feel sorry for their mistakes and ask God to forgive them. This is all that is needed to go to heaven, said the man. Sadly, at this point he did not mention the cross again, where Christ shed His precious blood as a sacrifice to satisfy the righteous demands of a holy God.

The Lord Jesus’ death was not merely an example (although for those who are already believers His passion certainly serves that function, 1 Pet. 2:21.) He died vicariously for sinners – as the hymn writer expressed it: “In my place condemned He stood.” 2 Corinthians 5:21 clearly spells out the doctrine of substitution: “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Humanity is sinful, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23.) He did not die for a political or social cause; nor did He give His life as one of history’s tragically misunderstood martyrs. Instead, the Lord willingly gave His life as a sacrifice to propitiate God and redeem man. Out of this death flows reconciliation between the Creator and His willful, erring creatures. Sin, the cause of their former alienation, has been fully judged, and the sacrifice is finished, never needing to be repeated. The Father demonstrated this by raising His perfectly obedient Son from the dead (Acts 2:24.)

## Godly Sorrow Instead Of Human Imitations

On the human side, there must be the response of faith. To be saved one needs more than feeling sorry for

sins. God wants repentance – a complete change of mind about oneself and God. One must see oneself as a sinner who justly deserves an eternity in hell, but who may be spared by a merciful God through the work that Christ did on Calvary. Many people are sorry to have vices, sorry they are not better people, or even sorry that their sins lead to negative consequences. But it is necessary to see one’s sin as the Creator sees it: an act of rebellion that merits hellfire. If someone sees their sin thus, and calls out to God to save them through the Lord Jesus Christ they will be saved. As Romans 10:9 says it: “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” To do anything less is missing the point.\*

## The Bible Is God’s Book For Today

C. H. Mackintosh

(Excerpt)

The Bible is the book for today. It is God’s own book - His perfect revelation. It is His own very voice speaking to each one of us. It is a book for every age, for every class, for every condition - high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, old and young. It speaks in a language so simple that a child can understand it, and yet so profound that the most gigantic intellect cannot exhaust it. Moreover, it speaks right home to the heart; it touches the deepest springs of our moral being; it goes down to the hidden roots of thought and feeling in the soul; it judges us thoroughly. In a word, it is, as the inspired apostle tells us, “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) \*

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# Understanding The Flesh

By a collection of authors as indicated

The Bible teaches us that we are born with a sinful nature often referred to as the flesh. "The flesh signifies the entire nature of man, sense and reason, without the Holy Spirit" (Philip Melancthon). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Knowing that the flesh is within us from our entrance into this world until our departure, it is important that we understand some basic facts about it.

1. **The Flesh Is Weak.** "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). "Our impotency in the service of God is the great iniquity and infidelity of our nature, and it arises from these sad remainders of corruption, which are the constant grief and burden of God's people" (Matthew Henry).

2. **The Flesh Conveys No Benefit Whatever.** "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing" (John 6:63). "The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, profits nothing. The word and ordinances, if the Spirit works with them, are as food to a living man, if not, they are as food to a dead man." (Matthew Henry)

3. **Those Who Are Living In The Flesh Cannot Please God.** "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). "This is God's sweeping announcement concerning all mankind that are out of Christ. Those in the flesh, even if, like Cain, they would worship God, would come in their own way, the flesh's way, which God cannot accept." (William R. Newell)

4. **The Desires Of The Flesh And The Spirit Are In Conflict.** "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Gal. 5:17). "The flesh never gives in, it is never dead, and hence there is constant conflict. There is always a tendency in the natural heart to do what is wrong. The flesh comes in and excuses one from doing what is right." (G. J. Stewart)

5. **Sowing To The Flesh Reaps Corruption.** "For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Gal. 6:8). "Men who sow wickedness reap the same. This is so self-evident that it needs no emphasis. Yet how easily we forget it, and how readily we hope that in some strange, unnatural transformation our sinful folly will be so overruled as to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness. But whether it be in the case of the unsaved

worldling, or the failing Christian, the inexorable law will be fulfilled - we reap what we sow." (H. A. Ironside)

6. **By Nature We Are Governed By The Flesh.** "Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others" (Eph. 2:3). "Man walks in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Not all sinners, by any means, live immoral lives. Satan does not encourage it. He knows very well that the more upright a sinner is the less danger there is of his turning to God in repentance. Nevertheless, millions of men indulge and delight in the practice of fleshly lusts. God alone knows the awful scourge of immorality in its many phases, becoming the more pronounced as we reach the end of the day of grace." (August Van Ryn)

7. **We Ought To Place No Confidence In The Flesh.** "For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). "Every child of God must watch and fight against this snare. It was this that caused Simon Peter to deny his Lord, and this fleshly confidence comes naturally to "the flesh." But in this verse I think the Spirit of God is speaking especially of fleshly piety, and empty forms, in place of Christ. Alas, far from being rare, such confidence in the flesh, in respect to the things of God, is the commonest thing today." (G. Christopher Willis)

8. **The Flesh Responds To The World.** "For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the price of life - is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 Jn. 2:16). "Satan uses the world to hug the believer and to crush all practical life out of him. There is something very seductive and alluring about the world, or we would not be put on our guard against falling in love with it. The devil dangled it before the eyes of our Lord in the temptation in the wilderness, but, of course, in vain. The moment anything becomes one's master and comes between the soul and God, it is of the world and should be shunned like the plague. If the believer will keep near to Christ through prayer and meditation on the Word, the world will not have any hold upon him." (August Van Ryn)\*

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*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Ephesians 2:8*

June, 2012

## The Responses Of Christ To Faith

Matthew Henry—William MacDonald—August VanRyn

Christ always responds to those who have faith in Him. Here are four examples of His responses.

1. **Jesus saw their faith.** “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven you.” (Mk. 2:5) He saw their faith; perhaps not so much his, for his distemper hindered him from the exercise of faith, but theirs that brought him. He commended their faith, because they did bring their friend through so much difficulty. True faith and strong faith may work variously, conquering sometimes the objections of reason, sometimes those of sense; but, however manifested, it shall be accepted and approved by Jesus Christ. (Matthew Henry)

2. **Jesus felt their faith.** “Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, when she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, Who touched My clothes?” (Mk. 5:25,27,30) He needed not that any should inform him, for he had presently his eye upon her. As secret acts of sin, so secret acts of faith, are known to the Lord Jesus, and are under His eye. If believers derive virtue from Christ ever so closely, He knows it, and is pleased with it. (Matthew Henry)

3. **Jesus tested their faith.** “Jesus said to Philip, Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat? But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.” (Jn. 6:5,6) The Lord was going to teach Philip a very valuable lesson and test his faith. Jesus Himself knew that He would

perform a miracle to feed this great crowd of people. But did Philip realize that He was able to do this? Was Philip’s faith great or was it small? Apparently, Philip’s faith did not rise to very great heights. (William MacDonald)

4. **Jesus marveled at their faith.** “And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die.” He said to Jesus, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof....But say the word, and my servant will be healed. When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him...” (Lk. 7:2,6,7,9) The centurion’s Jewish friends declare he is well worthy that the Lord should heal his servant. But the man himself flatly contradicts them and declares that he is not worthy at all. I am sure our Lord appreciated this genuine humility. Ah, it is those who confess their own utter unworthiness whom the Lord delights to bless. The centurion had the right conception. No matter how well we might stand with our neighbors and friends; no matter how worthy we are in their sight; we have no standing before God except on the ground of our unworthiness alone. And still higher rises this man’s faith. “Just speak the word and my servant shall be healed.” No wonder Jesus marveled at his faith, for, while this man confessed his own unworthiness, he also recognized the infinite worth of the Lord Jesus. How it must have gladdened the heart of our Savior to find one who recognized His glory and greatness and confessed his own worthlessness. (August Van Ryn)

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**“But without faith it is impossible to please him”  
(Heb. 11:6)**