

LET THE WHOLE WORLD HEAR

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), the world-famous violinist, earned a fortune with his concerts and compositions, but he generously gave most of it away. So, when he discovered an exquisite violin on one of his trips, he lacked the money to buy it.

Later, having raised enough money to meet the asking price, he returned to the seller, hoping to purchase that beautiful instrument. But to his great dismay it had been sold to a collector. Kreisler made his way to the new owner's home and offered to buy the violin. The collector said it had become his prized possession and he would not sell it.

Disappointed, Kreisler was about to leave when he had an idea. "Could I play the instrument once more before it is consigned to silence?" he asked. Permission was granted, and the great virtuoso filled the room with such heart-moving music that the collector's emotions were deeply stirred. "I have no right to keep that to myself," he exclaimed. "It's yours, Mr. Kreisler. Take it into the world, and let people hear it."

To sinners saved by grace, the gospel is like the rapturous harmonies of heaven. We have no right to keep it to ourselves. Jesus tells us to take it into our world and let people hear it.

*I'll tell the world how Jesus saved me
And how He gave me a life brand new;
And I know that if you trust Him
That all He gave me He'll give to you. —Fox*

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**Someone told you about Jesus.
Have you told someone lately?**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, November 20, 2004)

(Signs of Life: Back to the Basics of Authentic Christianity by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– David Jeremiah, 2007.

It's said that one day St. Francis of Assisi invited a young assistant at the monastery to go with him into town to preach. The novice was delighted to be singled out as Francis's companion. The two men passed through the main streets, turned down many of the byways and alleys, made their way into the suburbs, and at great length returned by a circuitous route to the monastery gate. As they approached it, the younger man reminded Francis of his original intention. "You have forgotten, Father that we went to the town to preach!"

"My son," Francis replied, "we have preached. We were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen by many; our behavior has been closely watched; it was thus that we preached our morning sermon. It is of no use, my son, to walk anywhere to preach unless we preach everywhere as we walk."⁴

This scene reminds me of an old poem:

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,
By the deeds that you do, by the words that you say;
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true.
Say—what is the gospel according to you?⁵

4. William Mitchell Ramsay, *Second Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 21-22.
5. Phillip W. Keller, *A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1976), 66-67.

pp. 30-31

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

We do not find it written that even angels give His soul delight; nor doth He say, concerning cherubim and seraphim, “Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee;” but He does say all that to poor fallen creatures like ourselves, debased and depraved by sin, but saved, exalted, and glorified by His grace. In what strong language He expresses His delight in his people! Who could have conceived of the eternal One as bursting forth into a song? Yet it is written, “He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.” As He looked upon the world He had made, He said, “It is very good;” but when He beheld those who are the purchase of Jesus’ blood, His own chosen ones, it seemed as if the great heart of the Infinite could restrain itself no longer, but overflowed in divine exclamations of joy. Should not we utter our grateful response to such a marvellous declaration of His love, and sing, “I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation”?
p. 530

(The Expositor’s Bible: The Book of Psalms-Volume I- Psalms I-XXXVIII by A. Maclaren, D.D.) New York, N.Y.: A.C. Armstrong and Son. Copyright – 1899.

If there is a God, and men are His creatures, it is supremely unlikely that He should not have a care of them. Nothing can be more absurd than the supposition of a dumb God, who have never spoken to such a being as man. The psalmist gives full weight to man’s smallness, his frailty, and his lowly origin, for his exclamation, “What is man?” means, “How little is he!” and he uses the words which connote frailty and mortality, and emphasise the fact of birth as if in contrast with “the work of Thy fingers”; but all these points only enhance the wonderfulness of what is to the poet an axiom—that God has personal relations with His creature.
pp. 72-73

(Christ/Life by Ruth Myers) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ruth Myers, 2005.

But as we'll learn throughout this book, we can replace those futile “if only” longings with reality, such as this thought: “I’m not at the mercy of my present circumstances or environment. My response to these things is always a matter of my own choice.”

And this thought: “I’m not a slave to my past. The past contributed to what I am, but I can’t change the past, only the present.”

And this one: “I’m not willing to waste time waiting for others to change. I’m going to focus on how *I* can change, how I can develop new thought and behavior patterns.”

p. 24

(Pure Pleasure: Why Do Christians Feel So Bad About Feeling Good? by Gary Thomas) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Gary Thomas, 2009.

Take this universal truth—God is on the move—and draw hope and purpose from it to attack the natural self-focus that arises from painful personal trials. If your child lies in the hospital, keep praying for the nurses and doctors who visit your room. If you’ve lost your job (or are still seeking your first one), ask God how he can use the new contacts you’re forced to make to reach out to others.

Even if you’re sick or in pain; unemployed; divorced, widowed, or frustrated in your singleness; addicted or worn-out—if you know God, those who don’t know him still have a greater need than you do. Reach out to them. Embrace the pleasure of seeing God’s kingdom spread, even in desperate situations. It will feed you in a way that nothing else can and will bring an even deeper dimension of pleasure into your life—one you might have missed had you never walked through this dry season.

p. 205

v. 7 even as you learned from Epaphras, the beloved, our fellow bond-slave, who is faithful on your behalf as a servant of Christ.

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

You learned the gospel from Epaphras, our dear fellow slave—a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf—

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

It's as vigorous in you now as when you learned it from our friend and close associate Epaphras. He is one reliable worker for Christ! I could always depend on him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The Colossians **learned it**, the gospel, **from Epaphras** who apparently founded the church at Colosse . . . Paul called him a **dear fellow servant**, a humble description from a great apostle, and a **faithful minister of Christ**, as opposed, no doubt, to those unfaithful ones who here and elsewhere were disturbing the faith of God's flock . . . Paul also called Tychicus "a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord" . . . Epaphras was in Rome with Paul, for Paul called him "my fellow prisoner" . . . "Epaphras" is a shortening of "Epaphroditus," referred to in Philippians 2:25 and 4:18. These could be the same person or different persons since both names were common.

Epaphras, said Paul, ministered **on our behalf**, probably as Paul's representative . . . This implies, of course, that Paul had not visited Colosse himself . . . But even though Epaphras was sent by Paul, he was primarily a "minister of Christ."

There are **FOUR THINGS** that Paul says about Epaphras here in verse 7. He calls him:

1. **“THE BELOVED,”**
2. **“OUR FELLOW BOND-SLAVE,”**
3. **“WHO IS FAITHFUL ON YOUR BEHALF,”** and
4. **“A SERVANT OF CHRIST.”**

The Gospel of the grace of God which has manifested itself among you in your faith, love, and hope, was brought to you by Epaphras. Epaphras was their pastor. Because of the pressures to conform to the error that was being taught, he had gone to Rome to tell Paul and to seek some advice from him.

There are **FOUR THINGS** that are said about Epaphras that we would do well to consider:

1. He is called **“THE BELOVED”**

Paul says in:

Ephesians 1:6 (NASB)

to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Becoming a part of God’s family through faith in Jesus Christ has made us accepted in **“THE BELOVED.”**

The Apostle often referred to his companions in this very affectionate way.

2. "OUR FELLOW BOND-SLAVE."

Epaphras was one who had given himself over completely to Jesus Christ to be used in whatever way would please him.

He wanted no right to himself but just to be a slave of Jesus Christ.

3. "WHO IS FAITHFUL."

1 Corinthians 4:2 (KJV)

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

The thing that pleases the heart of God more than anything in his children, I'm sure, is **FAITHFULNESS**—the ability to stay with something and to see it through to successful completion.

God never designed that we do something that we can't do. But He does expect us to be faithful in doing what we can.

Ultimately, His affirmation of our tour of duty here on earth will be "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." This statement we long to hear from the lips of our Savior.

4. He is called **“A SERVANT OF CHRIST.”**

There is no higher calling or greater calling than to be a servant of Christ.

Matthew 20:26-28 (TLB)

“But among you it is quite different. Anyone wanting to be a leader among you must be your servant. And if you want to be right at the top, you must serve like a slave. Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many.”

These **FOUR THINGS** are certainly **EVIDENCES OF A CHANGED LIFE**.

Epaphras gave himself to the Saviour without reservation. Because of this, he was greatly used. I believe our responsibility at this point is to stop and ask ourselves the **QUESTIONS**:

ARE THESE FOUR THINGS TRUE OF ME?

IF NOT, WHY NOT?

Abbott says:

This gives them a further assurance as to the source of their Christianity; the apostle gives his seal to the teaching of Epaphras, which conveyed the full gospel of the grace of God, so that having received this in truth as they did, they had no need to listen to strange teachers.

p. 199

Lovett says:

EPAPHRAS. This brother, along with Philemon, Archippus and Aristarchus, was a Colossian. Likely a delegation of them had traveled to Ephesus during Paul's three year stay there and were saved. After being taught in his school, they returned to their own area to establish local churches. This accounts for their warm attachment to Paul and Timothy. The apostle is thus able to speak of their faithfulness and certify the teachings they brought when founding the churches at Colosse, Laodicea and Hieropolis. These cities, all within 12 miles of each other, are familiar to those acquainted with the 1st Chapter of The Revelation. Epaphras is thought to be the founder of all three. Paul never visited any of them personally.

p. 166

(Seeking Him by Nancy Leigh DeMoss & Tim Grissom with Life Action Ministries) Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. Copyright – Life Action Ministries, 2004.

“When God declared to Paul . . . ‘My grace is sufficient for you,’ He affirmed the total sufficiency of His grace for every need in life . . . God’s grace was sufficient for the deepest pain Paul (or any other believer) could ever experience.”

—John MacArthur

p. 94

(Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs by Bill Hybels) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Bill Hybels, 2008.

There isn't enough money in the world to motivate me to do what I do. But there is a kind of compensation that does fire me up. It's God's commendation to all his sons and daughters who serve faithfully: "Well done."

p. 201

(The Expositor's Bible: The Book of Psalms-Volume I- Psalms I-XXXVIII by
A. Maclaren, D.D.) New York, N.Y.: A.C. Armstrong and Son.
Copyright – 1899.

But mercy standing alone might seem to lack a guarantee of its duration, and therefore the strength of “faithfulness,” unalterable continuance in a course begun, and adherence to every promise either spoken in words or implied in creation or providence, is added to the tenderness of mercy. The boundlessness of that faithfulness is the main thought, but the contrast of the whirling, shifting clouds with it is striking. The realm of eternal purpose and enduring act reaches to and stretches above the lower region where change rules.

p. 348

(Each New Day by Corrie ten Boom) Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell.
Copyright – Corrie ten Boom, 1977, 2003.

Growing, Glowing, Going

How do you think of yourself—as owner or as captain of what you possess? Are you delivering the goods? The world does not read the Bible—it reads you and me. The godly man is the ungodly man's Bible. Are you growing like Peter? Are you glowing like Stephen? Are you going like Paul?

People will ask: “Why was I not told
Back at the crossroads of this Jesus?”

How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And
how are they to hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:14 RSV

Thank you, Lord, that you will strengthen us by a dying Savior's love, a risen Savior's power, an ascended Savior's prayer, and an eternal Savior's glory.

p. 30

(High Calling: The Courageous Life and Faith of Space Shuttle Columbia Commander Rick Husband by Evelyn Husband with Donna VanLiere) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Evelyn Husband, 2003.

Bob Cabana, chief of Flight Crew Operations, walked to the podium to speak of the STS-107 crew. He said, in part:

There was nothing flashy about them. They performed flawlessly with understated excellence and were an example for us all of what we can accomplish when we work together as one. I'd like to share with you the faith that they had and the strength I've gained from them. It all began before leaving the suit room on launch day to head for the Astro van on the way to the pad. The commander, Rick Husband, stopped before exiting, turned to his crew, and the seven embraced as one: Jew, Hindu, Christian together, and Rick led them in prayer. As they rode to the pad, they were filled with joy, anticipation, excitement, and an inner peace that they were ready for whatever may lie ahead.

Bob spoke of each crew member and finished with thoughts about Rick. He said,

Colonel Rick Husband, United States Air Force. Why break the mold with this crew? Another mild-mannered antithesis of what one thinks of as a fighter pilot, a leader of the highest caliber. But what really set Rick apart was his faith. I wish I had half of it.

p. 199

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

Be dogmatically true, obstinately holy, immovably honest, desperately kind, fixedly upright. 3381.558

p. 126

(Second-Mile People by Isobel Kuhn) Singapore: OMF International.
Copyright– OMF International, 2008.

Oswald Chambers says, ‘The people who influence us most are not those who buttonhole us and talk to us, but those who live their lives like the stars in heaven and the lilies in the field, perfectly simply and unaffectedly. Those are the lives that mould us.’ A great mistake is to think that a Spirit-filled man or woman must always be casting sermons at people. Being ‘filled with the spirit’ (which is a first qualification of Second Mile People) is merely a refusing of self and a taking by faith of the life of Christ as wrought in us by His Holy Spirit.

p. 37

v. 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

The NET Bible translates verse 8:

who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

He's the one who told us how thoroughly love had been worked into your lives by the Spirit.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Not only did Epaphras carry the good news of Christ to Colosse, but he also brought back to prisoner Paul the good news about their **love in the Spirit** for Christ. Believers are in the Spirit and the Spirit is in them . . . Thus their "love . . . for all the saints" . . . stemmed from the indwelling Holy Spirit. Elsewhere Paul urged that by "the love of the Spirit" . . . believers manifest the "fruit of the Spirit"

Epaphras was not only faithful in declaring the Gospel—the grace of God—to the Colossians, but also when he came to Rome he told the Apostle of their love in the Spirit.

Romans 5:5 (NASB)

and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

One of the things that made Paul thankful in verse 4 was their “love . . . for all the saints.” This love, of course, included the Apostle Paul and his companions. This love was not a love which was produced from human effort, but was produced by the Spirit of God.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Abbott says:

. . . expresses the ground of their love, which was not individual sympathy, personal acquaintance, or the like, but belonged to the sphere of the Holy Spirit’s influence.

p. 201

Bruce says:

This is the only explicit reference to the Spirit of God in the letter. The absence of reference to him elsewhere is the more striking since there are several points at which his activity might have been naturally introduced. Where other letters of Paul speak of the Spirit's presence with believers as the guarantee of their resurrection and eternal inheritance (Rom. 8:11, 15-17; Eph. 1:13-14), this letter speaks of the indwelling Christ as their hope of glory (v. 27). But the presence and ministry of the Spirit are implied here and there in Colossians—for example, in opposition to the “flesh” as the source of true knowledge.

p. 44

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Since then, *my inward experience* has often been a wilderness; but Thou hast owned me still as Thy beloved, and poured streams of love and grace into me to gladden me, and make me fruitful. Yea, when my *outward circumstances* have been at the worst, and I have wandered in a land of drought, Thy sweet presence has solaced me. Men have not known me when scorn has awaited me, but Thou hast known my soul in adversities, for no affliction dims the luster of Thy love. Most gracious Lord, I magnify Thee for all Thy faithfulness to me in trying circumstances, and I deplore that I should at any time have forgotten Thee and been exalted in heart, when I have owed all to Thy gentleness and love. Have mercy upon Thy servant in this thing!

p. 611

(A Resilient Life by Gordon MacDonald) Nashville, TN: Nelson Books / Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright – Gordon MacDonald, 2004.

In almost everything I have written through the years, I have managed at least once to quote my hero, nineteenth-century Anglican priest Charles Simeon. One evening, when he was entertaining some of his closest friends, he said to them:

I love to view all my Christian friends as fuel. Having gathered you all together at my hearth, I warm myself at your fire, and find my Christian love burns and glows.

p. 84

(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)
Grand Rapids, MI: Moody Press. Copyright – Kregel Publications,
1985.

“*These!* are in the world.” We might almost imagine Him looking at them, in the intensity of His love, and stretching forth His hand toward them, as He speaks—“these!” Thine own gift to Me, My Father, Thine own portion, My Father; *these!* the children, the helpless ones, the flock, My redeemed; “these are *in the world,*” they are My life, My Bride, My joy, My glory, My portion, My all; “these are in the world”; they are not of the world, Our love hath taken them out of it, they are raised above it, yet they are in the world.
p. 177

(The Holy Wild: Trusting in the Character of God by Mark Buchanan)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – M.A. Buchanan, Inc., 2003.

What if it were not so? What if God only loved as I did—proportionally, moderately, prudently, frugally, as it suited Him? When it was convenient. When there was charm in the other to woo Him. When there was something love-worthy in the other, something there to draw love out. When there was a twinge of guilt, a nagging sense of personal debt.

Fifty cents and that’s all.

What if it were not so? What if God loved as I did?

But He didn’t love that way. He loved us as only the God who *is* love can: with a washbasin, a wounded side, a fatted calf, a cross on his back, *while we were still enemies.* From inside the camp.

He loved us with all the riches of heaven, lavished on the least of these, the worst of sinners.

p. 89

(Stones of Fire by Isobel Kuhn) Littleton, CO: OMF Books. Copyright– OMF International, 2005.

One brave missionary who elected to stay behind with the Chinese Church when others of her mission were withdrawing wrote: “We must out-love, out-serve, out-sacrifice any others who claim to have a way to solve life’s problems.”

p. 176

I don't know about you, but I feel like really praising the Lord for the change that has taken place in my life. I know you must feel the same way. I think it would be good for us to meditate in closing on the words of Charles Wesley's great old hymn:

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Words: Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1740.

Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed, all my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wing.

Wilt Thou not regard my call? Wilt Thou not accept my prayer?
Lo! I sink, I faint, I fall—Lo! on Thee I cast my care;
Reach me out Thy gracious hand! While I of Thy strength receive,
Hoping against hope I stand, dying, and behold, I live.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Thy Name, I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am; Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found, grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart; rise to all eternity.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/j/l/jlmysoul.htm>