

Becoming Heavenly Minded 4

September 2017

Sunday School #4

Review:

- I. **Observe** the especial calls of providence, and **apply** your minds unto thoughts of the duties required in them and by them.
 - A. **Observe:** Is there a voice in some providences? What is the voice saying?
 1. Do chastening providences exist or happen?
 2. Are they a divine tool of communication? If so, then what is the message?
 - a) Do you agree with his interpretation of Micah 6:9?
 - b) What about Isaiah 26:11?
 - B. **Apply:** Suppose, then, this to be the voice of providence, suppose there be in it these indications of the mind and will of God, what are the duties that we are called unto thereby?
 1. A diligent search into ourselves, and a holy watch over ourselves, with respect unto those ways and sins which the displeasure of God is declared against.
 2. A diligent endeavour to live in a holy resignation of our persons, our lives, our families, all our enjoyments, unto the sovereign will and wisdom of God, so as that we may be in readiness to part with all things upon his call without repining. This, also, is plainly declared in the voice of present providences.
 3. God is making wings for men's riches, he is shaking their habitations, taking away the visible defences of their lives, proclaiming the instability and uncertainty of all things here below; and if we are not minded to contend with him, we have nothing left to give us rest and peace for a moment but a holy resignation of all unto his sovereign pleasure.

Main Lesson:

- I. It is our duty greatly to mind the things that are above, eternal things, both as unto their reality, their present state, and our future enjoyment of them.
 - A. Why should we do this?
 1. How do you place your utmost interest in things above and not have many thoughts about them?

2. **The apostle commands it:** Colossians 3:1–4 (NKJV): 3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
 3. **We are motivated and upheld by it:** 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NKJV): 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
 4. **It is our security:** Hebrews 6:19 (NKJV): 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,
 5. **Deadens our affections for the world:** He that looks steadily on the sun, although he cannot bear the lustre of its beams fully, yet his sight is so affected with it when he calls off his eyes from it, he can see nothing as it were of the things about him; they are all dark unto him. And he who looks steadily in his contemplations on things above, eternal things, though he cannot comprehend their glory, yet a veil will be cast by it on all the desirable beauties of earthly things, and take off his affections from them.
- B. **Faith will be increased and strengthened by it.** Invisible things are the proper objects of faith. It is “the evidence of things not seen,” Heb. 11:1. Wherefore, in our thoughts of them faith is in its proper exercise; which is the principal means of its growth and increase.
1. The soul will come unto a more satisfactory, abiding sense of the reality of them.
 - a) When we find them in a continual readiness to rise up in our minds on all occasions wherein the thoughts and remembrance of them are needful and useful unto us.
 - b) They who do not think of them frequently shall never believe them sincerely.

c) No wonder if we find faith faint and weak in the work it hath to do, which oftentimes is great and weighty, if we neglect to guide it daily unto that which should administer strength unto it.

C. It will give life and exercise unto the **grace of hope**.

1. Colossians 1:27 (NKJV): 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
2. Where Christ evidenceth his presence with us, he gives us an infallible hope of glory; he gives us an assured pledge of it, and worketh our souls into an expectation of it. Hope in general is but an uncertain expectation of a future good which we desire; but as it is a gospel grace, all uncertainty is removed from it, which would hinder us of the advantage intended in it. It is an earnest expectation, proceeding from faith, trust, and confidence, accompanied with longing desires of enjoyment.
3. Now, the reason why men have no more use of, no more benefit by, this excellent grace, is because they do not abide in thoughts and contemplation of the things hoped for.

(1) The especial object of hope is eternal glory, Col. 1:27; Rom. 5:2. The peculiar use of it is to support, comfort, and refresh the soul, in all trials, under all weariness and despondencies, with a firm expectation of a speedy entrance into that glory, with an earnest desire after it. Wherefore, unless we acquaint ourselves, by continual meditation, with the reality and nature of this glory, it is impossible it should be the object of a vigorous, active hope, such as whereby the apostle says "we are saved." Without this we can neither have that evidence of eternal things, nor that valuation of them, nor that preparedness in our minds for them, as should keep us in the exercise of gracious hope about them.

b) Suppose sundry persons engaged in a voyage unto a most remote country, wherein all of them have an apprehension that there is a place of rest and an inheritance provided for them. Under this apprehension they all put themselves upon their voyage, to possess what is so prepared. Howbeit some of them have only a general notion of these things; they

know nothing distinctly concerning them, and are so busied about other affairs that they have no leisure to inquire into them, or do suppose that they cannot come unto any satisfactory knowledge of them in particular, and so are content to go on with general hopes and expectations. Others there are who by all possible means acquaint themselves particularly with the nature of the climate whither they are going, with the excellency of the inheritance and provision that is made for them. Their voyage proves long and wearisome, their difficulties many, and their dangers great, and they have nothing to relieve and encourage themselves with but the hope and expectation of the country whither they are going. Those of the first sort will be very apt to despond and faint, their general hopes will not be able to relieve them; but those who have a distinct notion and apprehension of the state of things whither they are going, and of their incomparable excellency, have always in a readiness wherewith to cheer their minds and support themselves.

- c) In that journey or pilgrimage wherein we are engaged towards a heavenly country, we are sure to meet with all kinds of dangers, difficulties, and perils. It is not a general notion of blessedness that will excite and work in us a spiritual, refreshing hope. But when we think and meditate on future glory as we ought, that grace which is neglected for the most part as unto its benefit, and dead as unto its exercise, will of all others be most vigorous and active, putting itself forth on all occasions.