

Today's Quick Word Leviticus 5:17-19

By Bruce Christian

LEVITICUS 5:17-19 If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible. He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; he has been guilty of wrongdoing against the LORD."

As I read through this chapter in Leviticus a number of other passages of Scripture came to mind.

Firstly, Psalm 19:12-13: "Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression." Like David, I am uncomfortably embarrassed about my sins that I KNOW about; but to these must be added the many others of which my holy God is fully aware, but of which I remain IGNORANT - all the things that will appear on the 'widescreen' account of my life on the Day of Judgement,

and that, sadly, I will recognise all too clearly!

Secondly, Psalm 130:4: "But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared." It is so wonderful to know that forgiveness is available to those who have 'a contrite and a humble heart' (see Isaiah 57:15)! As Isaiah notes, along with the Psalmist, so wonderful, gracious and amazing a provision is nothing short of awe/fear-inspiring!

Thirdly, and thankfully, Colossians 2:13-14: "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He FORGAVE us ALL our sins, having cancelled the written code (such as Leviticus 5!), with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross." I feel bad enough that Jesus had to bear the just punishment due to ME for the sins that I KNOW about, but how humbling it is know that he died for all the ones I STILL don't know about!

"Amazing love, how can it be, that thou, MY GOD, shouldst die for ME"! (Charles Wesley).



Today's Quick Word Proverbs 24:10

By Bruce Christian

PROVERBS 24:10 If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!

This verse is quite a challenge to us today! We are certainly in 'times of trouble'. Our Sovereign Lord God is really challenging us to stand firm in HIS strength. The sons of Korah remind us that "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1).

The implication of today's verse is that if our strength is GREAT (ie God's strength) then we won't falter in times of trouble. Is the 'trouble' we are experiencing today in fact a test, a kind of 'barometer', for us to gauge what we REALLY see as the source of our strength? "I hear the Saviour say, 'Thy strength indeed is small; child of weakness, watch and pray - find in me thine all in

all.'" (Elvina Hall).

So what we need so as not to falter in these times, is NOT more strength, but more FAITH/TRUST! As the Apostle Paul says, "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am WEAK, then I am STRONG. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). So when I lack resilience and the ability to persevere in times of trouble like this, I should not just grit my teeth and try harder to be tough, but rather pray with Jesus' disciples: "Lord, increase [my] FAITH." (Luke 17:5).

Today's Quick Word Psalm 16:3-4

By Bruce Christian

PSALM 16:3-4 As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

One thing that the COVID-19 virus crisis is doing for us is making us appreciate more and more the real value of Christian fellowship. Yes, we can still 'meet' together for 'corporate' worship and Bible study via our Zoom or other Apps, and we praise the Lord for the absolute wonder of the technology that enables us to do this, but it's not quite the same as the real thing where we can shake hands and perhaps have a quick (but, nevertheless, meaningful) embrace. In our congregation, we have people from the Middle East for whom this weekly hug and touching cheeks (in the right order - left-right-left) is an essential part of their emotional therapy.

Like King David, we live in a world and a society/culture that 'runs after other gods', and THAT is a virus more infectious and more deadly than the current coronavirus. Just as devotion to the One-True-Gracious-God is highly infectious as we encourage each other in our love for him and in our praise of him, so we are easily influenced if we spend too much time with those who have no room or time for him in their inwardly-focussed life-style, where they 'pour their libations'. My hope and prayer is that we don't become so accustomed to social isolation during the remaining months while it operates, that we forget what it

means to 'delight' in close fellowship with fellow-believers.

I remember as a teenager, and a Christian relatively young in the faith, sitting around a campfire when the leader of our group pulled a brightly burning log from the fire without saying anything, and just left it lying separately on the ground. After a while, it lost its red glow and became a 'dead' black log while the campfire kept burning - red and glowing. He then asked us to reflect on what we had just observed, and suggested that we think about how this might be an 'object lesson' about the importance of maintaining Christian fellowship. It certainly made its mark on me - that was over 60 years ago and I have never forgotten it!

We are all being bombarded almost 24/7 with a God-denying, God-rejecting worldview through public and social media. How much effort are we putting into 'staying in the fire' in order to keep our personal faith 'glowing' and 'shining' in a dark and darkening world? What are some of the 'other gods' that we are tempted to be attracted to and 'run after' instead of spending time among God's people? Let us all obey the 'social isolation' rules at present, and for as long as we need to, but let us make sure that we don't let it become an engrained habit, an addiction. We need to remember: "Let us not give up meeting together [as soon as we're allowed to!], as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25).