

Christ our Example in Worship

Friday evening, 19th January 2018

‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’ Matthew 11:28-29

‘And learn of me.’

The gospel is not a one-off thing. Many quote these wonderful words of the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,’ as being the sum of the gospel. They are the gospel. But the gospel doesn’t end there, because Christ does not end it there. He carries on, ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.’ It is not just coming to Christ, it is not just finding rest in Christ; Christ carries on and says, ‘Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.’ If we know anything of the gospel, if we know anything of this rest, we will know something of discipleship. We will have to mourn throughout all our lives here below what poor disciples we are, and how feebly we show forth the glories of the Lamb; how poorly we show forth the gospel in our lives and in our conversation. How far short we come! But this is what the Lord’s people are called to. ‘Come unto me ... I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you *and learn of me.*’ It is what the apostles exhort us to throughout the epistles. As Peter said: ‘Grow in grace and *in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*’ ‘And learn of me.’

I want to examine these words this evening in perhaps a rather narrow sense. If you remember, last Lord’s Day morning the Word we had before us was, ‘O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works unto the children of men.’ I ended my sermon that day by trying to speak a little of how the Lord’s people should praise him: they should praise him for who he is, and they should praise him for his goodness to them. Thinking this over since, I have felt so poor and so empty of any real praise, any real worship. We come so far short. Failure appears to be written over everything we do. But as I thought, my mind went to this word, ‘And learn of me.’ I came to think of Christ as our example. And specifically Christ our example in worship and praise.

You may be wondering, ‘How can Christ be our example in worship and praise?’ So we would answer this question first, before looking at three specific ways in which Christ is our pattern for worship and praise.

I. Firstly then, I would like to examine how Christ can be our example in worship.

Jesus can be our example in worship and in praise because he has the same God as us, and therefore he worships the same God.

You say, ‘But he is God. How can you say that Jesus Christ has the same God as us when Jesus Christ is God? He is the second person of the Trinity, he is the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.’ But what did Jesus say? Hear his own words. Hear him on the cross of Calvary. What did he say? ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Hear him when he has just risen from the tomb, shortly to ascend into glory, and Mary finds him in the garden. What does he say? ‘Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ These are not different gods, but *the same God*. The God of Jesus is our God too. When we get a sight of that, do we not say with Peter, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Peter 1:3)? It is such an important point. Peter brings it in right at the start, in the opening verses of his first epistle. Note, it is not ‘blessed be God *the* Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ but, ‘Blessed be *the* God,’ the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. That was who Peter desired to delight in—to worship. But if you’re a poor sinner convinced of your sin and you know something of the holiness of God, how will you ever begin to worship him? Outside of Christ you’ll never be able to worship him. But when you come to see that he is the God of Christ and that you can worship this God in Christ, then you will exclaim with Peter, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!’

Paul emphasises this point as well as Peter. Paul states that God is the God of Jesus in his writings, on three occasions (2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 1:17). In the opening chapter of Ephesians, Paul speaks of ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Do you know why Paul uses that expression there? Throughout the Old Testament, God had been known to the Israelites in this manner, ‘the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ This told the Israelites that God, our God, is a covenant-keeping God. He delights to love his people. He finds them, he enters into covenant with them, he loves them with an everlasting love. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is not a God who is divorced

from sinners, he is not a God who won't have mercy upon sinners. But he has mercy on us in the covenant. And he reminds his people of that covenant in the name he wanted them to call him by. He is a covenant-keeping God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But now the new covenant has come in all its fullness. A more glorious covenant. The old covenant has passed away, because it was weak—not in itself, it was a perfect covenant, Paul is quite clear on that—but because we are sinners. As sinners we could never keep the terms of that covenant, and therefore it had no power to save us. So a new covenant is brought in. Jesus has sealed that covenant with his blood. Its blessings flow from God to us through him, the Lord Jesus. We are no longer therefore reminded of the covenant through examples of men who were included in that covenant, but are directed to our covenant head, the one who has come into this world, lived and died for us, and who 'received gifts for men', from his God, on our behalf. Therefore, Paul reminds his people this God is still the same God, still a covenant-keeping God, by directing them to this: he is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the God we worship.

Now in what sense could this God be said to be the God of Jesus Christ? Certainly not as it regarded his divinity. As Father, Son and Holy Spirit; co-equal, co-eternal; there is no subordination in the Godhead. The Son never worships the Father, the Holy Spirit never worships the Father nor the Son. No! There is no sense in which we can say that God the Father is the God of the Son when we think of the Son as he is essentially, the second person of the Trinity. But as the Son came into this world, and took human nature into union with his divine person, as he was found in fashion as a man, this God became his God. This is why Jesus was able to call God his God, 'My God,' who is also (when he speaks to his disciples), 'Your God.' They are the same God. Not a different God, the *same* God. That was the teaching of Christ concerning his relationship, as the God-man, the man Christ Jesus, with his Father in heaven. He was his Father and his God. He worshipped God.

To consider this further, in what sense was God his God?

(a) Well, first of all, **God was his creator**. As the Son says to the Father in the Psalms, 'A body thou hast prepared me.' His body, was prepared by the Father. His body was created in the womb of the virgin Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. That thing that was formed in her, a holy thing, he took into union

with his divine person. The Word was made flesh. God was his creator. In this sense our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ worshipped God as his creator, his God.

(b) We were created in the image of God, although sin has sadly defaced that image. It is a great mystery, but **our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as man, also bore the image of his God.** The image of himself! He displayed that image of God—consisting primarily of knowledge, righteousness and holiness—in all its fullness. Consequently, he worshipped his God with perfect knowledge, perfect righteousness, and perfect holiness. A profound mystery!

We have depths before us this evening that I tremble at. Left to ourselves, we will make so many errors. The Word of God shows that error often begins at the person of Christ. This is what the devil would desire to attack. May the Lord keep my lips this evening. May he keep our hearts and our minds in these things. May we stick close to the Word of God. May we always be prepared to confess that we never expect to get to the end of this mystery here below. Indeed, friends, in some sense, I don't believe we'll ever get to the end of it in glory to come, because we will always be created, we will always be finite. There, in glory, with the shackles of sin removed and our minds renewed, we will undoubtedly have an understanding of things which we cannot enter into here. But while we are here, may we ever be willing to confess the *mystery* of godliness. 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' What a blessing it is that our salvation is mysterious – that we can't get to the end of it. If we could sum all our salvation up in a few sentences, if I could lay it all straight for you this evening and name it as a physicist might name his equations, what salvation would we have? But the blessing is, the salvation provided for us is an eternal, an everlasting salvation, it's a salvation we will never get to the end of, we will never be fully able to understand. It's a depth that knows no sounding.

On such love, my soul, still ponder,

Love so great, so rich, so free,

Say whilst lost in holy wonder,

Why, O Lord such love to me?

Hallelujah!

Grace shall reign eternally.

(John Kent)

Does a realisation of this make you worship this evening? A sense of the boundlessness of the salvation that God has provided for sinners such as you?

(c) One final aspect of the way in which our God was the God of Jesus is seen in this fact: **Jesus was dependent on him.** Entirely dependent on him. God is the only self-existent being. The only being that has no dependence on anything else. Everything in existence outside of God emanates from God. God spoke, and everything that is in existence came into existence. And anything that is created is totally dependent on its creator. Therefore in the flesh, the Son was dependent on his God. O, friends, that's a mystery, isn't it? Though he was equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation. He laid aside his glory. He humbled himself. He took human nature into union with his divine person. He was found in fashion as a man. Though he was a son, yet learned he obedience. That God should become man, that's a mystery. When we see that man dependent on his God, that is an even greater mystery.

We see his dependence in the fact that he had to pray to God. He was dependent on God for answers and thus lived a life of prayer. Note that his prayers were not sham prayers. Never be tempted to think that Jesus only prayed just to show us how to pray, as if he only went through a form in order to be instructive to us. They were real prayers, expressing real dependence on God. There was a vital necessity that Jesus should pray, because his prayers were part of his mediatorial work. When he was praying in the days of his flesh, he was making intercession for his people. Can you rejoice in that fact? When we read in the gospels that Jesus spent nights alone on the mountain praying, he was praying for you. He was praying for Peter, wasn't he? 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee.' He didn't say, 'I will pray for thee, *when it happens,*' he had *already* prayed for him. When had he prayed for Peter? During those nights when he was on his own, when his disciples were lying there asleep, and he was making intercession for his people. These were no sham prayers. They were real prayers. They form part of the intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. From them we can learn how to pray.

But they were also real prayers in this sense. He lived a life of dependence on his Father. He had to pray to his Father in his need, and his Father answered! He approached his Father in his need in the same way—the necessity of a mediator excepted—using the same means, the means of prayer, as his poor people who have to live a life of dependence in prayer on their heavenly Father today. Friends, do you love those words of the hymn writer,

The path of prayer thyself hast trod,
Lord teach us how to pray. (James Montgomery)

There is no other religion in this world that has a God that has prayed. That has had a God that humbled himself to walk the path of prayer, that he should worship. ‘My God, and your God.’ And that he should do that for sinners. But such a high priest became us! This is part of the humiliation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is part of the depth of grace, the depth of mercy, the depth of sovereign love, which is seen in the work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that he might provide a salvation for sinners such as you and me. You know, when we get a sight of this, we will worship, won’t we? We will worship then! We will worship God in the Son! We will worship God who spared not his own dear Son but sent him into this world to save sinners. We will worship the Spirit who freely reveals these things to us and makes us worship. You see, friends, God was his God. Our God was the God of Jesus. Therefore Jesus can be our example in our worship of this holy God. Christ is our example.

You may say, ‘Well, that sounds rather legalistic!’ Or ‘That’s just what the Socinian preaches, isn’t it?’ The Socinian believes that Jesus Christ was just a good man, a perfect example, he is just there for us to follow, and we should be striving every day to be perfect as Christ was. To be tenderhearted one to another, to love our enemies and to ever be turning aside the hard words, and the more we become Christ-like the more we have a hope of heaven. Friends, what gospel is that? No gospel at all! Christ came into this world to save sinners—to save sinners from beginning to end by free and sovereign grace. But in coming into this world to save sinners he is also our example. Hence he says, ‘And learn of me.’

The Apostle Paul uses Christ as our example. And he used Christ as our example in the very matter before us this evening—worship. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, in the 10th and 11th chapters, he deals especially with the subject of the worship of God. In my Bible the page header summarise the content of these chapters as being, ‘Rules for divine worship.’ And there between the 10th and the 11th chapter, Paul says, ‘Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.’ What is Paul saying? ‘Don’t follow me just because it’s what I say, follow me insofar as I follow Christ.’ What is Paul saying? ‘Be ye followers of Christ!’ ‘Follow Christ in these things! Look to him as the pattern for your worship. Look to him as the pattern for your service of this great and living God.’ ‘Be ye followers of me, even

as I am of Christ.' O friends, follow Christ in these things. Let Christ be your example in these things.

II. Now the subject is vast. And I must be brief. As the subject opened up to me this evening I'd seek to bring before you just three aspects of the Lord's example in this matter of worship.

(a) The first is this: **his thanksgiving, or his praise.**

1. His praise began here, in a few verses before our text didn't it? 'At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' What was he thanking God for? How was he praising God? *He was praising God as a sovereign God.* We don't very often come there, do we? It's easy to thank the Lord when he blesses us and when everything goes well with us. It's easy to thank the Lord when we come to him in prayer and he answers our prayer exactly as we wished him to answer it, and he provides for us, and everything appears to be going well. But it's another thing to praise the Lord when he blasts our gourds and lays us low. But, friends, perhaps, they are the times of real worship.

My maternal grandmother came to a time in her life when all her family other than my mother were taken from her into the sanatorium, even her baby who was just about a year old when he went in, and they were away from her for over a year. On the night before her baby was taken away from her, she said, 'Lord, I can't give him up.' But the Lord drew near and so blessed her that she felt she could even give him up. He blessed her in the sentiment expressed in the hymn,

It is the Lord enthroned in light,
Whose claims are all divine,
Who has an undisputed right
To govern me and mine. (Thomas Greene)

And she said, 'I worshipped on that evening in a way that I've never worshipped before or since.' What was she praising the Lord for? For his sovereign will.

Friends, you know, it's a blessing when we can be brought there, to be enabled to say as Christ did, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' That's praise for sovereign grace. Grace is the sovereign act of God that passes by and says, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' That's the work of God that separates between sinner and saint. It can be very painful, particularly

when it comes into our families, and particularly when we find our families divided by sovereign grace. These things go against the flesh. Old nature won't bow to them. Old nature won't praise God for these things. But if we're saved by grace, then we know something of sovereign grace. I believe there are those times when, melted by that grace, melted by the gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we will have to come and praise God for sovereign grace, and in this way follow Christ's example here.

2. Another specific aspect of thanksgiving which we read about in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is concerning *his praise for bread*. You know it's our custom—at least I trust it is—to give thanks before our meals, to say grace. I didn't realise till this week, that Jesus Christ is the first person we read of in the Word of God saying grace for his meals. You may be able to deduce it from the part of Deuteronomy chapter 8 where it speaks about blessing the Lord for the increase of the land and for the wheat that's been brought forth, but there's no express commandment given to thank the Lord for our meals.

But Jesus gave us an example. We find him when he fed both the five thousand, and the four thousand, that he took the bread, and blessed it, or gave thanks for it. This bread the disciples found absolutely derisory—'Lord, what is this among so many?'—they would have overlooked it completely and said, 'It's not even worth us telling the people to sit down.' But the Lord knew what he himself would do. 'He blessed the bread,' we read in some of the gospels, 'he gave thanks,' in others. He thanked God for the provision. Why, friends? Because, as the incarnate Saviour, he was dependent on God for the provision of bread. He didn't exercise the divine power that he had in his own person as the eternal Son. Why didn't he exercise it? Because he was walking a path of humiliation, in order to save sinners. The devil tried to tempt him to it, didn't he? 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' But Jesus rebuked him, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

We see there the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ thanking God for what we may regard as being the least mercy. Dry bread, a few fish, what are these among so many? What have we got to thank the Lord for? Friends, are we not sometimes just like those disciples, so hard-hearted? We'll thank the Lord for great blessings—when he does great things for us, we might not be forgetful about those—but the least mercies, the little things that we receive day by day, we forget to give thanks for them. Yet we are entirely dependent on God for them. In our day when we're

used to going to the supermarkets, when the cupboard is always full, we risk losing sight of that fact. But if God in a moment should withhold good and favourable weather for a harvest, what could we do about it? We're dependent on God for the least things in life. Are we mindful of these things? Do we give him thanks? Christ is our example. 'And learn of me.' 'And he gave thanks.' When he had given thanks he broke the bread and the fishes and gave it to the twelve, and they gave to those that sat down upon the ground. There was more than enough, and full baskets of fragments left over. Christ is a pattern for us in giving thanks for providential blessings.

3. But then, friends, we must come to this example. One of the most precious times when we read of Jesus giving thanks is this. 'In the night in which he was betrayed Jesus took bread, and blessed it,' and then, '*He took the cup and he gave thanks.*' He said, 'This is the cup of the new testament in my blood'—blood which he said was shed for many, for the remission of sins— 'and he gave thanks.' Friends, what was he thanking his Father for? He was thanking his Father for the sufferings that were about to break on his head, the sufferings which he was about to cry to his Father under and say, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thy will be done.' He was thanking his Father (I believe in one sense on behalf of his people) for the mercy which had provided a Saviour, provided himself, so that his blood would be the seal to the new covenant, that on the death of the testator the covenant would have force and thus that it would be a cup of blessing to his people.

These are deep things—the worship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. O to see him there as our Saviour, praising his Father, giving thanks, on our behalf, for himself as our sacrifice! O to be brought by grace to praise God for the Lamb which he provided, for the salvation procured for us in the precious cup for which Jesus gave thanks!

O friends, do you have to confess with me this evening how unthankful you are? How often praise seems to languish upon our tongues, it seems to die, we are so half-hearted! What a blessing there was no half-heartedness in the thanksgiving of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as he was found our mediator, our priest!

(b) The second aspect of how Christ worshipped I'd like to come to is this. **He worshipped in his submission, his humility, his willingness to do the will of the Father that had sent him.**

1. You know, it is a great mystery that *Jesus came into this world, not to do his own will but the will of him that had sent him*. And he was totally submissive to that will. Christ never sought his own will. He came not to do his own will but to do the will of his Father. How often can we say the same of ourselves? We always want our own will, don't we? We are so often so unsubmitive to the will of God. When we come to the Word of God, we find so many examples of it. Jonah, running away from the clear command of the Lord to go down to preach unto the people at Nineveh. Poor Elijah when he'd escaped from the hand of Ahab and when he sat down under the juniper tree, wearied because of the way, there was a certain hard-heartedness that rose up within him. Was it a lack of submission to the Lord's will? The hard-heartedness of the Lord's servants at times! It is not always seen in outward rebellion. Heart rebellion, an unsubmitive heart, that's our problem. What a blessing when grace bends our will and makes us willing in the day of his power to know no will but his! Ah, friends, they are days when, following Christ's example, we truly praise our sovereign God.

But we never find hard-heartedness in the Saviour. We never hear him complaining. Even though in this chapter itself (Matthew 11) we read about him confronting the impenitence of the people. 'Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done because they repented not.' Many people followed after him, but they followed only for the loaves and fishes, and quickly turned away from him. So little fruit really appeared to follow the preaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and yet we never hear him murmur. He may have wondered at the lack of fruit, but that wonderment was always in total submission to the will of the Father (c.f. Isaiah 53:1 and 49:4). Why? Because he came into this world not to do his own will but to do the will of him that had sent him. He was walking a path of submission. A path of humility.

'Lo, I come,' he says in Psalm 40:7-8, 'In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.' And what a necessity was this will that was laid upon him! When he went up to the temple with his parents at the age of 12, he said, 'Wist ye not that I *must* be about my Father's business?' This is why he had come into the world, to do his Father's business. It didn't sit lightly on him, did it? He submitted by accepting the weight and the necessity of the work the Father had given him to do and willingly undertaking that work.

We see him submissive when he came to the ordinance of baptism. (Friends, he gives us his ordinances for us to submit to—may he grant us grace to submit

accordingly.) What did Christ say concerning his submission to that ordinance? ‘Suffer it to be so now.’ ‘Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.’ He *must* pass through it, he needed to pass through it, in obedience to his Father’s command. We spoke just a moment ago about Jesus’s prayers. It’s a wonderful thing that, when he passed through that ordinance, Jesus prayed. We read this in the Gospel of Luke. ‘And as he prayed, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father was heard, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ What was the reason why the Father was pleased with him? ‘Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience.’ O the glory that was brought forth to the Father, to God, to *his* God, through his humiliation!

But let’s come on a little bit. Throughout Jesus’s ministry there’s a ‘*must*’ about everything. If you search a concordance through the Gospels for the word ‘must,’ it reveals something very interesting. Many of the occurrences of this word are spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ concerning his work. It was a work that he ‘must’ do. ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up,’ and ‘I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’ He’d been given a work to do, and that work he must do. ‘And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I *must* bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.’ That was his work described from a different angle but with the same necessity. ‘I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.’ We can’t begin to fathom the depth of his sense of obligation in that word, ‘How am I *straitened*.’ But the hymn writer picks it up when he says, ‘How *willing* was Jesus to die.’ We read, ‘He *set his face as a flint* to go unto Jerusalem.’ There was never a murmur, never the least turning back from the way which he was walking, from the command which he had been given, from the work which he had to perform. No! ‘He set his face as a flint.’

2. And throughout his days on this earth in his flesh, *Jesus lived in daily submission to his Father for provision of everything*. He was provided for spiritually as the Holy Spirit rested on him. He was dependent upon the Spirit continually. The enduing of Christ with the Holy Spirit is another great mystery. ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.’ That speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. ‘God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,’ said the psalmist in the

45th Psalm. But it is a mystery which deserves to be better looked into by us. O to desire to understand these mysteries—to fathom the great mystery of godliness!

As we have already said, he was entirely dependent on the provision of God for all his providential needs too. He had to continually, and submissively, wait on the Father. ‘For foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.’ O, friends, you see the humility of Christ. The submission of the Son. He made himself of no reputation. That’s the mystery of the gospel, isn’t it? The Son of God coming into this world to suffer and to bleed and to die. He is our example.

O may our cry be this evening,

Lord, submissive make us go,

Gladly leaving all below;

Only thou our leader be,

And we still will follow thee.

(John Cennick)

For God is truly worshipped in such submission—when he increases in our estimation, and we become nothing. You know, friends, we’ll only be granted the grace of submission, we’ll only be made willing to walk cheerfully in the way which the Lord has prepared for us here below, as we’re enabled to keep our eyes fixed by grace upon this one—Christ our example. As the Holy Spirit keeps our eyes fixed upon Jesus, as our hopes are stayed there, we’ll run the way cheerfully, we’ll run the way willingly, and in our running there will be praise and glory brought forth to God.

You see, friends, the path of true worship and thanksgiving, we get it so wrong, don’t we? We tend to want to do something specific to thank the Lord. We ask, ‘What shall we sing in his praise?’ ‘What shall we do?’ But Matthew Henry says somewhere, true thanksgiving is really ‘thanks-*living*’. That may sound trite, but when we come to realise something of the depth of it there’s nothing trite about it is there? It’s not to be just giving thanks, it’s to be living out our thanks, all the time and in all that we do. Thinking back to our text last Lord’s Day, ‘O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!’ This praise should issue forth in every aspect of our lives. It needs a change of heart, doesn’t it? It needs a change of attitude. It needs a change in the way in which we live our lives, a change of the way in which we think. It’s no longer

self first, but it must be Christ first and it must be in *all* things seeking to look unto Jesus.

You may say, ‘Well, you preach high things, too high for us to attain to.’ Yes, friends, I do preach high things, and I have to fall under them and say I’m a failure and I’m guilty. But we’ve got a *good Saviour*, haven’t we? When we fail, it’s not because of any problem in the example. And don’t you sometimes desire that you might be brought up a little higher? Don’t you sometimes desire that you might grow in grace? Is there no breathing after holiness? No desire in your heart, ‘Lord, that I might be more Christ-like?’ You know, left to ourselves, old nature, and the devil, would be quite satisfied if we were left exactly where we are. But that’s not grace, is it? That’s not grace! You read the epistles. You read the New Testament. What is their aim? That we would be growing, that we would strive, that we would be, if I may put it this way, moving forward, that we would be found *looking unto Jesus*. That’s the only way to truly live a life of worship, a life of thanksgiving and praise, a life of submission. There are many ministers who preach sanctification, and they tell their hearers they must attempt to become more holy, they always need to do a bit more. But it’s nothing more than legal striving, and they bring nothing more than bondage on their hearers. Paul never does that, does he? Paul begins and ends here, ‘looking unto Jesus.’ The same place Christ begins and ends in our text: ‘And learn of me.’

(c) In third place, the final aspect I wanted to bring forth of how Christ worshipped was trust.

Trust in God is the centre of a life of worship. I might say faith. Some people might recoil if I say that Christ exercised faith in his God. We have to be clear what we mean by faith. Ordinarily when we speak of faith we tend to speak narrowly in the sense of saving faith—faith as exercised by a sinner in salvation, faith which relies on the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as our only hope, as the only way of salvation. There is no sense in which Christ can exercise that faith. But as J. C. Philpot says, every grace that’s found in the heart of a believer, Christ has that same grace without measure. That must include the grace of faith, the grace of trust in his God. I’ve already said this evening that in his humanity Jesus lived a life of dependence on God. Why did he depend on God? Because he trusted in him.

You know, his faith began the moment he was born. We see this from the 22nd Psalm. It’s a psalm that David wrote, but it’s a messianic psalm. The Son speaking, Jesus Christ speaking, says, to God the Father, ‘Thou art he that took me out of

the womb, thou didst make me *hope* when I was on my mother's breasts.' What did he hope in? He hoped in his God. 'I was cast upon thee from the womb, thou art my God from my mother's belly.' It's the same trust in his God which he expresses in his dying breath. 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' He trusted in God. Even the religious leaders of his day recognised this. 'He trusted in God' (Matthew 27:43). If there's any doubt about it, go to Hebrews 2, where Paul brings forward the proofs for the humanity of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amongst those proofs, he includes this in verse 13, 'And again, I will put my trust in him.' That's the Son speaking, Jesus Christ. I should be careful what I say. It's not the essential Son speaking, but the incarnate Son, the Word made flesh. 'I will put my trust in him.' Paul gives this as a proof of his humanity. The Son didn't trust in God, as we've already said, as the second person of the Trinity. But as he was incarnate, as he took flesh, as he was found in fashion as a man, this is what he could say, 'I will put my trust in him.'

Where do we see the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ exercising this trust in his God in all its brightest glory? Perhaps in this. 'Who in the days of flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard *in that he feared*.' Or, 'heard in that he trusted.' The apostle gives the only way in which we rightly come to God in prayer: 'Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Jesus prayed in this pattern, he believed and trusted. 'And was heard in that he feared.' 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec.' This is this blessed one who says, 'And learn of me!' Friends, he's walked that path! He has trusted in God.

He was not put to shame. He said: 'I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' Why? Because, 'I trusted in him.' 'I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.' Friends, here we have the blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, resting in hope, trusting in his God. 'For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption' (Psalm 16:8-10). God didn't let his Son see corruption. God was faithful. He abode faithful to his own dear Son. He raised him again from the dead on the third day. He was shown

to his disciples and has ascended into glory, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

‘And learn of me.’ Let us learn from Christ to worship God in humble faith.

III. In conclusion.

You might say, ‘This has all been high stuff tonight. What does it mean for me? What does it mean for me as I sit in the pew this evening? As I struggle in my worship, as I seem to come so far short of the service of which I’m called to in the gospel, “take my yoke upon you and learn of me.”’

(a) Firstly, **Christ is a most suitable example**, he’s our *only* example (and what a blessed example he is!) He stooped. He was found in fashion as a man. He walked in our flesh. He knows what sore temptations mean, for he has felt the same. And therefore, friends, he’s not an example (if I may put it this way) which is beyond our reach. It’s not as though we’re asked to follow an angel as our example, an angel that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. No, our example was touched with the same infirmities as you and me. ‘*Yet without sin.*’ We must never imply he struggled with personal sin. ‘*Yet without sin.*’ He is our example. We can’t ask for any better example, we can’t expect any higher example. If we want to know how we should serve and worship the Lord, look to Jesus. He who says, ‘And learn of me.’

(b) But then secondly, **he is our motive too**. This is the blessing of the gospel. This is what makes it the gospel this evening and not law. The law is our example in the sense that it sets before us what is holy and good. It tells us what is right, it tells us what we must attain to. But as John Berridge says:

‘Run, run, and work,’ the law commands,
Yet finds me neither feet nor hands;
But sweeter news the gospel brings;
It bids me fly, and lends me wings.

How, friends, does the gospel lend us wings? Because it provides a motive. The gospel provides the grace. The grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He says, ‘And learn of me.’ What is he saying? ‘I am the only source of grace. Come to me. Ask of me.’ And he giveth more grace. He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, the apostle James says, and he encourages us to ask for more grace. And when grace seems to be low in the balance, when we feel we’ll make shipwreck, when we feel to be coming so far short, his promise is, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee, my

strength is made perfect in weakness.’ O you know, friends, there will never be a lack of grace. There certainly can never be a lack of grace while we’re looking to this source of grace. He is full of grace and truth. And of his grace have all we received, and grace for grace. O you see, friends, this is the blessed motive. This is the source of our worship.

You know, I must be hard-hearted this evening, and you must be hard-hearted, very hard-hearted, if we can leave the house of God this evening without a spirit of true worship. We have tried to consider him, this blessed one, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in all his grace, in all his humility, in all his love. If this doesn’t bring us to worship the blessed God of our Lord Jesus Christ – who sent him, who gave him in covenant to his people, to be their covenant head, to be their Saviour, to be the way whereby sinners might be reconciled unto God – I tell you we are very hard-hearted. And hard-hearted we will be, if it was not for grace.

‘O for grace to love him more!’ Is that your desire this evening? Well, you know, friends, if it is, there’s only one you can make that cry to, isn’t there? And it’s to him who will not turn away any. ‘All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me *I will in no wise cast out.*’ If you feel this evening self-condemned and self-aborred because of how far short you come in these things, *remember that.* ‘Him that cometh to me *I will in no wise cast out.*’ He giveth more grace. ‘*Come unto me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.’ Friends, he is our motive for worship.

(c) But I want to finish with this, very briefly. **Christ is our only plea before the Father.** Why did Christ give thanks to his Father? Why was he walking a pathway of submission? Why was he trusting in God? Because he was working out a perfect righteousness for his people. He fulfilled all the law perfectly that we might have a perfect righteousness. And this is what sinners have to come and plead, isn’t it? This is what we have to come and plead when we fall so far short in our worship. This is what we have to plead when we find that the more we strive to be holy, the more we seem to only bring forth sin, we seem to only bring forth what is marred. Ah, there’s a perfect righteousness provided! That’s what the Father would have us plead—the precious righteousness, the name and the merits of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And his righteousness includes this righteousness of perfect worship, perfect praise, perfect submission, perfect trust in *his* God and therefore in *our* God. ‘*My* God, *your* God.’ He’s walked this path for

us. He worshipped his God in the flesh, for sinners. O that the Holy Spirit would give us to see this evening that his worship was for us! On our behalf! If so, we have a precious righteousness to plead this evening, precious blood, a precious name, a precious person—the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he who condescends to us in our low estate, and says to sinners such as you and me, ‘And learn of me.’

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts. May Christ be our precious example and our best motive in all our worship. May we run in the way of his commandments when he doth enlarge our heart. And, friends, what will enlarge our heart like a sight of our precious Christ?

Amen.