

The After-Christmas Sail

Luke 2:18-20; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; December 29, 2013

How are we to navigate ('sail or journey through') everyday life in the aftermath of Christmas, this new year, to the glory of God?

1. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Savior. (Luke 2:10-11)

In Jesus, we have a Savior from the penalty and power of sin. The opposite of this is to see your sin and live like you are hopeless or can save yourself or can be saved by mere men. *Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)*

'One day as I was passing into the field . . . this sentence fell upon my soul. Thy righteousness is in heaven. And me thought, withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand; there, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, he wants [=lacks] my righteousness, for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself.' (John Bunyan)

2. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a God. (Luke 2:14)

Through Jesus, we have all we need and desire; we have a true and lasting satisfaction in God. The opposite of this is to live like you have no resources or hope or like you must meet your own needs or like you can find satisfaction in the things of this world. *'You shall be My people, And I will be your God.'*" (Jeremiah 30:22)

'How the means are to come, I know not; but I know that God is almighty, that the hearts of all are in His hands, and that, if He pleaseth to influence persons, they will send help.' ... 'The Lord never lays more on us in the way of chastisement, than our state of heart makes needful; so that whilst He smites with the one hand, He supports with the other.' ... 'I bow, I am satisfied with the will of my Heavenly Father, I seek by perfect submission to His holy will to glorify Him, I kiss continually the hand that has thus afflicted me.' ... 'If the Lord were to take this piece of land from me, *it would be only for the purpose of giving me a still better one; for our Heavenly Father never takes any earthly thing from His children except He means to give them something better instead.*' ... 'According to my judgment the most important point to be attended to is this: above all things see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord.' (George Mueller)

3. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Message. (Luke 2:10-11, 14, 17)

Our message is the good news of an able and willing Savior to all and the wonder of sovereign grace to many who refuse to come to God for mercy. The opposite of living like this is to live like you have nothing to say to those who are in your life or to live as if you can only speak hope to some in your life. *Today, a Savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)*

'None of us loves men as Christ loves them; and if the love of all the tender hearted in the world could run together, they would make but a drop compared with the ocean of the compassion of Jesus. ... if anything can call faith into exercise [it is the knowledge] that Christ is willing to receive thee. ... All our Lord's sermons were so many loving calls to poor aching hearts to come

and find what they need in Him. ... Beloved, there is nothing that so delights Jesus Christ as to save sinners ... You misjudge Him if you think He wants to be argued with and persuaded to have mercy; He gives it as freely as the sun pours forth light. ... 'Paul had no stinted Savior to present to a few, no narrow-hearted Christ to be the head of a clique, but he preached a great Savior to great masses, a great Savior to great sinners ... My Lord Jesus, by His death, has become immensely rich in pardoning grace – so rich indeed that no guiltiness can possibly transcend the efficacy of His precious blood.' ... Do you know what it is you are rejecting this morning? You are rejecting Christ, your only Savior ... I should be worse than a fiend if I did not now, with all love and kindness and earnestness, beseech you to "lay hold on eternal life" ... (Charles Spurgeon)

4. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Vision. (Luke 2:15, 20)

Our vision for what to do in every situation and in every relationship is simply this: trust and love according to the Word. The opposite of this is to live like you don't know what to do or like you don't have a guide for trusting and loving or like this guide isn't enough. *So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (Revelation 12:17)*

"The Scripture, which ... teaches us what we are to say, is equally explicit as to the temper and Spirit in which we are to speak. Though I had knowledge of all mysteries, and the tongue of an angel to declare them, I could hope for little acceptance or usefulness, unless I was to speak 'in love.'" ... Of all people who engage in controversy, we, who are called Calvinists, are most expressly bound by our own principles to the exercise of gentleness and moderation. ... '[If he is a believer,] in a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts. ... [If he is an unconverted person,] he is a more proper object of your compassion than your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ.' (John Newton)

5. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Mission. (Luke 2:20)

We are to live as satisfied servants to our family, church, workplace and world. The opposite of this is to live like life is simply about enjoyment and selfish ambition or living like life is one dimensional or living like you don't have a responsibility in each of these areas. ¹³ *"You are the salt of the earth; ...* ¹⁴ *"You are the light of the world. ...* ¹⁶ *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)*

"If ... a principle of true Religion [i.e., true Christianity] should ... gain ground, there is no estimating the effects on public morals, and the consequent influence on our political welfare." ... But he was no ordinary pragmatist or political utilitarian, even though he was one of the most practical men of his day. He was a doer. One of his biographers said, "He lacked time for half the good works in his mind." James Stephen, who knew him well, remarked, "Factories did not spring up more rapidly in Leeds and Manchester than schemes of benevolence beneath his roof." ... "No man has a right to be idle." "Where is it that in such a world as this, [that] health, and leisure, and affluence may not find some ignorance to instruct, some wrong to redress, some want to supply, some misery to alleviate?" (William Wilberforce, John Piper's short biography)

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Introduction

We see three responses recorded in Scripture in light of the birth of Jesus. Three 'after Christmas' responses, we might say.

- Many *wondered* (at what they heard).
- One *treasured* (what was heard and seen).
- Some *went back* (to everyday life changed people it would seem).

Life 'after Christmas' is often not a proper response to the great truths of Christmas:

The Twelve Days After Christmas Lyrics

The first day after Christmas my true love and I had a fight,
And so I chopped the pear tree down and burned it just for spite.
Then with a single cartridge, I shot that blasted partridge,
My true love, my true love, my true love gave to me.

The second day after Christmas, I pulled on the old rubber gloves,
And very gently wrung the necks of both the turtle doves.
My true love, my true love, my true love gave to me.

The third day after Christmas, my mother caught the croup;
I had to use the three Frech hens to make some chicken soup.
The four calling birds were a big mistake,
for their language was obscene.

The five gold rings were completely fake and they turned my fingers green .
The sixth day after Christmas, the six laying geese wouldn't lay,
I gave the whole darn gaggle to the A.S.P.C.A.

On the seventh day what a mess I found,
All seven of the swimming swans had drowned.
My true love, my true love, my true love gave to me.

The eighth day after Christmas, before they could suspect,
I bundled up the eight maids a milking, nine pipers piping, Ten ladies dancing, 'leven lords a leaping, Twelve drummers drumming and sent them back collect.

I wrote my true love, "We are through, love",
and I said in so many words,
"Furthermore your Christmas gifts were for the birds!"

How are we to navigate ('sail or journey through') everyday life in the aftermath of Christmas, this new year, to the glory of God?

¹⁹ *But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)*

Since Mary 'treasured' and 'pondered' the things she heard about the baby born at Christmas, so should we.

Sailing

A trip or voyage in a sailing craft. (noun)

1. To navigate or manage (a vessel).
2. To voyage upon or across: sail the Pacific. (verb) (Webster's)

We could say things like:

- Breathe (take a deep breath, gather your thoughts and renew your resolve).

Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)

- Remember THE Story (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation).

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

- Don't lose the wonder of a 'held Baby' who held and still holds the world.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)

- Make sure you take Christmas personally.

Today, a Savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

- Take the wonder and personal reality of Christmas back to your everyday life.

And all of those things are important and are related to the things I want us to 'ponder' today.

The question that struck me this week was:

What did the shepherds go back to and how did all they heard impact their everyday lives, whether they were watching their flocks or washing their socks?

The shepherds went back. (Luke 2:20)

While Shepherds Washed Their Socks at Night

‘In last couple weeks, more people asked about this Sermon Title than any other. In his book, Faith, Hope and Hilarity, Dick Van Dyke tells of a little girl who informed her mother that the birth of Christ was announced by angels “*while shepherds washed their socks at night.*” That’s where the title comes from. When I first read that I just thought it was funny. But the more I thought about it, the more it became a parable of sorts. In her limited understanding of what she thought she heard, this little girl actually hit upon a great truth. Whether it was while they were watching their flocks or washing their socks, the shepherds were visited by an angel who brought Good News. That Good News of Jesus broke in upon the ordinariness of everyday life. This morning I want us to go with them to the manger, because God continues to break into and enter into the ordinariness of our every day lives. And that is what keeps Christmas alive in our hearts. (Methodist pastor Billy Strayhorn, While Shepherds Washed Their Socks sermon)

So how else might we describe an ‘after Christmas sail’ that glorifies God?

1. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Savior.

¹⁰ *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)*

In Jesus, we have a Savior from the penalty and power of sin.

The opposite of this is to see your sin and

- live like you are hopeless
- or can save yourself
- or can be saved by mere men.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

What difference did it make for John Bunyan to be able to say ‘I have a Savior’?

John Bunyan (28 November 1628 – 31 August 1688) was an English Christian writer and preacher, who is well-known for his book *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Though he was a

Reformed Baptist, he is remembered in the Church of England with a Lesser Festival on August 30th, and on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church (US) on August 29th. (ccel.org)

‘One day as I was passing into the field . . . this sentence fell upon my soul. Thy righteousness is in heaven. And me thought, withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand; there, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, he wants [=lacks] my righteousness, for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself.’ (John Bunyan)

Indeed this is one of the greatest mysteries in the world - namely, that a righteousness that resides with a Person in heaven should justify me, a sinner on earth. - JB

The best prayer I ever prayed had enough sin to damn the whole world. - JB

2. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a God.

¹⁴ *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”*
(Luke 2:14)

Through Jesus, we have all we need and desire; we have a true and lasting satisfaction in God.

The opposite of this is to live like

- you have no resources or hope
- or like you must meet your own needs
- or like you can find satisfaction in the things of this world.

‘You shall be My people, And I will be your God.’” (Jeremiah 30:22)

What difference did it make for George Mueller to be able to say ‘I have a God’?

George Müller (German – 27 September 1805 – 10 March 1898), a Christian evangelist [pastor] and Director of the Ashley Down orphanage in Bristol, England, cared for 10,024 orphans in his life. He was well known for providing an education to the children under his care, to the point where he was accused of raising the poor above their natural station in life. He also established 117 schools which offered Christian education to over 120,000 children, many of them being orphans. (Wikipedia)

‘How the means are to come, I know not; but I know that God is almighty, that the hearts of all are in His hands, and that, if He pleaseth to influence persons, they will send help.’ . . .

‘The Lord never lays more on us in the way of chastisement, than our state of heart makes needful; so that whilst He smites with the one hand, He supports with the other.’ ...

‘I bow, I am satisfied with the will of my Heavenly Father, I seek by perfect submission to His holy will to glorify Him, I kiss continually the hand that has thus afflicted me.’ ...

‘If the Lord were to take this piece of land from me, *it would be only for the purpose of giving me a still better one; for our Heavenly Father never takes any earthly thing from His children except He means to give them something better instead.*’ ...

‘According to my judgment the most important point to be attended to is this: above all things see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord.’ (George Mueller)

Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you. - GM

God delights to increase the faith of His children. We ought, instead of wanting no trials before victory, no exercise for patience, to be willing to take them from God's hands as a means. Trials, obstacles, difficulties and sometimes defeats, are the very food of faith. - GM

“In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone. Through our natural alienation from God we shrink from Him, and from eternal realities. This cleaves to us more or less, even after our regeneration. Hence it is, that more or less, even as believers, we have the same shrinking from standing with God alone,--from depending upon Him alone,--from looking to Him alone:--and yet this is the very position in which we ought to be, if we wish our faith to be strengthened. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith with reference to my body, my family, my service for the Lord, my business, etc., the more shall I have opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance.” — George Mueller, *Answers To Prayer*

“God is pleased continually to vary His mode of dealing with us, in order that we may not be tempted to trust in donors, or in circumstances, but in Him alone, and to keep our eye fixed upon Him.” — George Mueller, *Answers To Prayer*

3. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Message.

¹⁰ *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

¹⁴ *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”*

¹⁷ *When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. (Luke 2:10-11, 14, 17)*

Our message is the good news of an able and willing Savior to all and the wonder of sovereign grace to many who refuse to come to God for mercy.

The opposite of living like this is to live like

- you have nothing to say to those who are in your life
- or to live as if you can only speak hope to some in your life.

Today, a Savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

What difference did it make for Charles Spurgeon to be able to say ‘I have a message’?

Charles Haddon (C.H.) Spurgeon (19 June 1834 – 31 January 1892) was a British Particular Baptist preacher. Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is known as the "Prince of Preachers". He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the Church in agreement with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith understanding, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day. (Wikipedia)

‘None of us loves men as Christ loves them; and if the love of all the tender hearted in the world could run together, they would make but a drop compared with the ocean of the compassion of Jesus. ... if anything can call faith into exercise [it is the knowledge] that Christ is willing to receive thee. ... All our Lord’s sermons were so many loving calls to poor aching hearts to come and find what they need in Him. ... Beloved, there is nothing that so delights Jesus Christ as to save sinners ... You misjudge Him if you think He wants to be argued with and persuaded to have mercy; He gives it as freely as the sun pours forth light. ... ‘Paul had no stinted Savior to present to a few, no narrow-hearted Christ to be the head of a clique, but he preached a great Savior to great masses, a great Savior to great sinners ... My Lord Jesus, by His death, has become immensely rich in pardoning grace – so rich indeed that no guiltiness can possibly transcend the efficacy of His precious blood.’ ... Do you know what it is you are rejecting this morning? You are rejecting Christ, your only Savior ... I should be worse than a fiend if I did not now, with all love and kindness and earnestness, beseech you to “lay hold on eternal life” (Charles Spurgeon)

‘In 1857, a day or two before preaching at the Crystal Palace, I went to decide where the platform should be fixed; and, in order to test the acoustic properties of the building, cried in a loud voice, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In one of the galleries, a workman, who knew nothing of what was being done, heard the words, and they came like a message from heaven to his soul. He was smitten with conviction on account of sin, put down his tools, went home, and there, after a season of spiritual struggling, found peace and life by beholding the Lamb of God. Years after, he told this story to one who visited him on his death-bed.’ (Charles Spurgeon)

This doctrine is as much God's Word as the other. You ask me to reconcile the two. I answer, they do not want any reconciliation; I never tried to reconcile them to myself, because I could never see a discrepancy. If you begin to put fifty or sixty quibbles to me, I cannot give any answer. Both are true; no two truths can be inconsistent with each other; and what you have to do is to believe them both. With the first one, the saint has most to do. Let him praise the free and

sovereign grace of God, and bless his name. With the second, the sinner has the most to do. O sinner, humble thyself under the mighty hand of God, when thou thinkest of how often he hath shown his love to thee, by bidding thee come to himself, and yet how often thou hast spurned his Word and refused his mercy, and turned a deaf ear to every invitation, and hast gone thy way to rebel against a God of love, and violate the commands of him that loved thee. (Charles Spurgeon, Sovereign Grace and Man's Responsibility – Romans 10:20-21)

4. After Christmas, live (talk and walk) like you have a Vision.

¹⁵ *When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."*

²⁰ *The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (Luke 2:15, 20)*

Our vision for what to do in every situation and in every relationship is simply this: trust and love according to the Word.

The opposite of this is to live like

- you don't know what to do
- or like you don't have a guide for trusting and loving
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So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (Revelation 12:17)

What difference did it make for John Newton to be able to say 'I have a vision'?

John Henry Newton (24 July 1725 - 4 August – 21 December 1807) was an English sailor and Anglican cleric. Starting his career at sea at a young age, he became involved with the slave trade for a few years. After experiencing a Christian conversion, he became a cleric and hymn-writer and later a prominent supporter of the abolition of slavery. He was the author of many hymns, including "Amazing Grace" and "Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken". (Wikipedia)

"The Scripture, which . . . teaches us what we are to say, is equally explicit as to the temper and Spirit in which we are to speak. Though I had knowledge of all mysteries, and the tongue of an angel to declare them, I could hope for little acceptance or usefulness, unless I was to speak 'in love.'" . . .

"The views I have received of the doctrines of grace are essential to my peace; I could not live comfortably a day, or an hour, without them. I likewise believe . . . them to be friendly to

holiness, and to have a direct influence in producing and maintaining a gospel conversation; and therefore I must not be ashamed of them." . . .

Of all people who engage in controversy, we, who are called Calvinists, are most expressly bound by our own principles to the exercise of gentleness and moderation. . . .

‘[If he is a believer,] in a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts. . . . [If he is an unconverted person,] he is a more proper object of your compassion than your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ.’ (John Newton)

If two angels were sent down from heaven,--one to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street,--they would feel no inclination to change employments. - JN

When people are right with God, they are apt to be hard on themselves and easy on other people. But when they are not right with God, they are easy on themselves and hard on others. - JN

God's people have no assurances that the dark experiences of life will be held at bay, much less that God will provide some sort of running commentary on the meaning of each day's allotment of confusion, boredom, pain, or achievement. It is no great matter where we are, provided we see that the Lord has placed us there, and that He is with us. – JN

5. After Christmas, live (talk and live) like you have a Mission.

²⁰ *The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (Luke 2:20)*

We are to live as satisfied servants to our family, church, workplace and world.

The opposite of this is to live like

- life is simply about enjoyment and selfish ambition
- or living like life is one dimensional
- or living like you don't have a responsibility in each of these areas.

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What difference did it make to William Wilberforce to be able to say ‘I have a mission’?

William Wilberforce (24 August 1759 – 29 July 1833) was an English politician, philanthropist, and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade. A native of Kingston upon Hull, Yorkshire, he began his political career in 1780, eventually becoming the independent Member of Parliament for Yorkshire (1784–1812). In 1785, he

underwent a conversion experience and became an evangelical Christian, which resulted in major changes to his lifestyle and a lifelong concern for reform. (Wikipedia)

"If . . . a principle of true Religion [i.e., true Christianity] should . . . gain ground, there is no estimating the effects on public morals, and the consequent influence on our political welfare."

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But he was no ordinary pragmatist or political utilitarian, even though he was one of the most practical men of his day. He was a doer. One of his biographers said, "He lacked time for half the good works in his mind." James Stephen, who knew him well, remarked, "Factories did not spring up more rapidly in Leeds and Manchester than schemes of benevolence beneath his roof."

...

"No man has a right to be idle." "Where is it that in such a world as this, [that] health, and leisure, and affluence may not find some ignorance to instruct, some wrong to redress, some want to supply, some misery to alleviate?"

The grand object of my parliamentary existence [is the abolition of the slave trade]. . . Before this great cause all others dwindle in my eyes, and I must say that the *certainty* that I am right *here*, adds greatly to the complacency with which I exert myself in asserting it. If it please God to honor me so far, may I be the instrument of stopping such a course of wickedness and cruelty as never before disgraced a Christian country. . . .

He was an unusual father for his day. Most fathers who had the wealth and position he did rarely saw their children. Servants and a governess took care of the children, and they were to be out of sight most of the time. Instead, William insisted on eating as many meals as possible with the children, and he joined in their games. He played marbles and Blindman's Bluff and ran races with them. In the games, the children treated him like one of them. Robert Southey visited the house when all the children were there and wrote that he marveled at "the pell-mell, topsy-turvy and chaotic confusion" of the Wilberforce apartments in which the wife sat like Patience on a monument while her husband "frisks about as if every vein in his body were filled with quicksilver." Another visitor in 1816, Joseph John Gurney, a Quaker, stayed a week with Wilberforce and recalled later, "As he walked about the house he was generally humming the tune of a hymn or Psalm as if he could not contain his pleasurable feelings of thankfulness and devotion." (William Wilberforce, John Piper's short biography)

"Is it not the great end of religion, and, in particular, the glory of Christianity, to extinguish the malignant passions; to curb the violence, to control the appetites, and to smooth the asperities of man; to make us compassionate and kind, and forgiving one to another; to make us good husbands, good fathers, good friends; and to render us active and useful in the discharge of the relative social and civil duties?" -WW

"Let true Christians then, with becoming earnestness, strive in all things to recommend their profession, and to put to silence the vain scoffs of ignorant objectors. Let them boldly assert the cause of Christ in an age when so many, who bear the name of Christians, are ashamed of Him: and let them consider as devolved on Them the important duty of suspending for a while the fall

of their country, and, perhaps, of performing a still more extensive service to society at large; not by busy interference in politics, in which it cannot but be confessed there is much uncertainty; but rather by that sure and radical benefit of restoring the influence of Religion, and of raising the standard of morality.” — William Wilberforce, *Real Christianity*

- Point your family to the only Savior, Satisfier and Sovereign – the Hero of Heroes.
- Humbly serve your family even if it means ‘stable duty.’
- Love those who have been loved by a gracious God.
- Serve those who do not deserve to be called Children of God.
- Take the good news of a personal Savior into the workplace.
- Make the backdrop of your witness a pursuit of your co-workers good.
- Take the good news of a personal Savior into your world.
- How?
 - Hold out to those you meet the good news of a Savior for them too.
 - Humbly rejoice in the good news of a God who refuses to let us all reject His mercy.
- Make the backdrop of your witness a pursuit of the good of all men.

Where do you start? How do you continue?

- Turn (from sin and self-righteousness to God and His mercy)
- Trust (in Jesus and His righteousness and all He promises us)
- Love (trust in His perfect rule and obey His Word).

None Like Christ, None Like Christ, None Like Christ
[‘Holy, Holy, Holy’ – EJM]

John Brown of Haddington (1722-1787):

If I never write to you more, let these be my last words:
There is none like Christ-none like Christ-none like Christ. . . .
There is no learning nor knowledge like the knowledge of Christ.
No life like Christ living in the heart by faith.
No work like the service, the spiritual service of Christ,
No reward like the free-graces wages of Christ.
No riches nor wealth like “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
No rest, no comfort, like the rest, the consolation of Christ;
No pleasure like the pleasure of fellowship with Christ.
Little as I know of Christ, and it is my sin and shame that I know so little of him, I would not exchange the learning of one hour’s fellowship with Christ for all the liberal learning in ten thousand universities, during ten thousand ages, even though angels were to be my teachers.

Cited in Joel Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality*, 220-21.