

BETWEEN FRIENDS

2017



A human's value does not depend on being clever, or rich, or powerful, or beautiful, or healthy, but simply on this great fact that each human being is made in the image of God.

DAVID GOODING - JOHN LENNOX

One of a series of graphics which have been produced for social media. The quote is taken from David Gooding and John Lennox's book *The Bible and Ethics*.



Written for our instruction the living word speaks

Every great step forward that the people of God have taken has been accompanied by a return to the word of God. We have often been reminded this year that 2017 is the 500th year since the beginning of the Reformation with its recovery of 'Sola Scriptura' (scripture alone).

This cry of the reformers echoes earlier cries, right back to the time of the apostles. Paul writes that the very facts of the gospel itself are 'according to the Scriptures' (1 Cor 15:3-4). As he witnessed for Christ, Stephen provided his accusers with a narrative overview of the Scriptures from the call of Abraham to the setting up of the temple (Acts 7). Again, Peter expounded scripture in his sermon at Pentecost in order to proclaim the fact that Jesus is the Christ, God's promised Messiah.

The same principle is at work in the Old Testament. As David Gooding has pointed out in his teaching on 1 & 2 Kings, when King Josiah found the book of the law—what we now know as Deuteronomy—he was very afraid. He realised if what was in that book was true, he and his people were very far from God. And so they returned to the God of the Scriptures and began once again to practise the things they found in his word.

Drawing the parallel with our present situation, Dr Gooding says, 'What a thing it is when, even in our modern world, churches rediscover the book of God and dare to carry out what it says should be carried out in Christian churches. There's a day coming when we might be hard put to it to explain to Christ why, if we have done so, we have

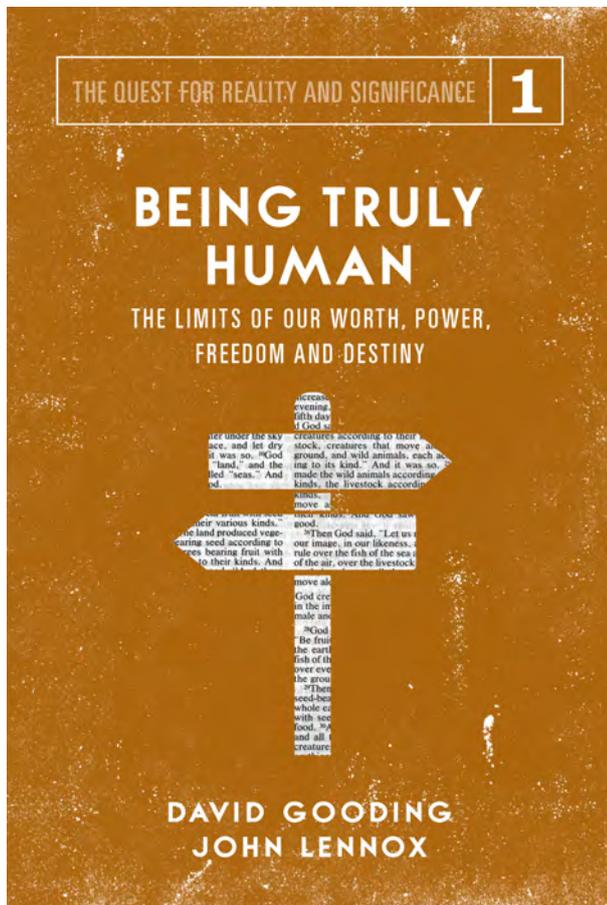
neglected to do what Christ's apostles have told us.'

These examples from history continue to confront us today. It is our responsibility to act on the belief that 'all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work' (2 Tim 3:16-17).

This edition of *Between Friends* recounts some of the ways in which The Myrtlefield Trust is working toward this great goal of spreading the truth of the word of God around the world. It comes with sincere thanks for your ongoing support by your prayers and gifts, which are helping Bible students, teachers and churches take another step forward in the light of God's word.

Find out more

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‘The average student has a problem—many problems in fact, but one in particular. No longer a child, he or she is entering adult life and facing the torrent of change that adult independence brings. It can be exhilarating but sometimes also frightening to have to stand on one’s own feet, to decide for oneself how to live, what career to follow, what goals to aim at and what values and principles to adopt.

How are such decisions to be made? Clearly much thought is needed and increasing knowledge and experience will help. But leave these basic decisions too long and there is a danger of simply drifting through life and missing out on the character-forming process of thinking through one’s own worldview. For that is what is needed: a coherent framework that will give to life a true perspective and satisfying values and goals. To form such a worldview for oneself, particularly at a time when society’s traditional ideas and values are being radically questioned, can be a very daunting task for anyone, not least university students. After all, worldviews are normally composed of many elements drawn from, among other sources, science, philosophy, literature, history and religion; and a student cannot be expected to be an expert in any one of them, let alone in all of them (indeed, is any one of us?).

Nevertheless we do not have to wait for the accumulated wisdom of life’s later years to see what life’s major issues are; and once we grasp what they are, it is that much easier to make informed and wise decisions of every kind. It is as a contribution to that end that the authors offer this series of books to their younger fellow students. We intend that each book will stand on its own while also contributing to the fuller picture provided by the whole series.’

From the Series Preface

The Quest for Reality and Significance Coming 2018!

New Books from David Gooding and John Lennox

In 2017, Myrtlefield House has been working on an exciting new project. *The Quest for Reality and Significance* is a series of six books that addresses some of the most challenging questions we face today. Each book provides an in-depth treatment of a distinct subject that is necessary for developing a full picture of the world in which we live and make choices. The books are written in a comprehensive, yet understandable, way that is appropriate for both Christians and those who are not. They are written for university students, teachers and anyone who wants to think seriously about these subjects.

- Book 1 – **Being Truly Human:** The Limits of our Worth, Power, Freedom and Destiny
- Book 2 – **Finding Ultimate Reality:** In Search of the Best Answers to the Biggest Questions
- Book 3 – **Questioning Our Knowledge:** Can we Know What we Need to Know?
- Book 4 – **Doing What’s Right:** Whose System of Ethics is Good Enough?
- Book 5 – **Claiming to Answer:** How One Person Became the Response to our Deepest Questions
- Book 6 – **Suffering Life’s Pain:** Facing the Problems of Moral and Natural Evil

The first book, *Being Truly Human* will be published in early 2018. The other five books will be released over the following months.

In *Being Truly Human*, the authors consider questions surrounding the value of humans. Besides thinking about human freedom and the dangerous way it is often devalued, they deal with questions about the nature and basis of morality and how other moralities compare with one another. Any discussion of the freedom humans have to choose raises the question of the power we wield over other humans and also over nature, sometimes with disastrous consequences. What should guide our use of power? What, if anything, should limit our choices, and to what extent can our choices keep us from fulfilling our full potential and destiny?

We look forward to seeing how readers benefit from these resources as they are made available around the world. Keep an eye out on myrtlefieldhouse.com and on Facebook and Twitter for up to date information about the release of each book.

Please pray for the project as the books reach the publication phase. If you know anyone who would benefit from reading the series, both believers and unbelievers, please make them aware of the books when they become available. We also hope to supply many universities around the world with a copy of each book and need prayer that these doors would be opened at the right time.

Reaching out in Korean Key Bible Concepts

A report from Korea

With over 70 million speakers, Korean is the thirteenth most commonly spoken language in the world. In 2017, *Key Bible Concepts* became Myrtlefield's first Korean publication. The first 1000 copies have now been printed through partnership with a Christian publisher in Seoul. Half of these books are being given away as grants to students and Bible teachers, and the other half are being sold by our friends in Seoul who will use the proceeds for their ongoing work.

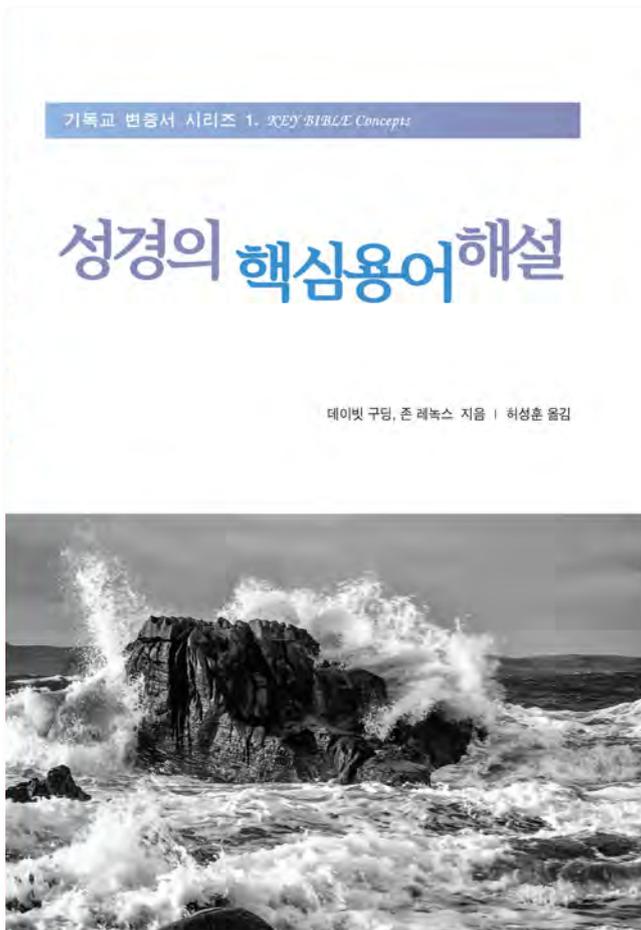
We intend to publish further books in Korean if there is a good response to this first

book. The next book to be translated would be *The Bible and Ethics*.

Please pray for this work in Korea, particularly at this time of uncertainty in the region. We would like to see these books used to strengthen the faith of Christians, and as tools in their hands to reach many more for Christ.

If ever we were going to know what God's heart's attitude towards us is like, then God had to take the initiative and reveal himself, and do so in terms which we human beings could understand. Hence the incarnation, the Word of God made flesh.

Key Bible Concepts
Ch 10 – Faith



We dare to hope that the reasons we have given for why we believe the Christian message to be wonderfully true will encourage you to continue to explore that message and enter into the new life that is promised to all those who place their trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Key Bible Concepts
Ch 16 – Salvation

성경의 핵심용어 해설 Key Bible Concepts

성경. 이 한 권의 책이 어떻게 그렇게 널리 읽혀져서 많은 사람들에게 감명을 주고 또 그렇게 독특한 도전을 받을 수 있을까? 성경은 수많은 사람들의 존경을 받기도 하고 또 수많은 사람들의 조소의 대상이 되기도 한다. 그럼에도 스스로를 증명할 기회를 좀처럼 갖지 못하고 있다. '성경의 핵심개념 해설'은 기독교 복음의 중심이 되는 용어를 탐색하고, 그 의미를 분명하게 설명해준다. 저자인 구밍과 레녹스는 기독교 사상의 기본적인 용어를 쉽고 간결하게 설명하여 성경적인 뜻과 그 의미를 오늘날 우리에게 풀어준다.

머틀필드 인카운더즈(Myrtlefield Encounters) 시리즈

머틀필드 인카운더즈는 성경 문화, 기독교 교리 및 변증학에 관한 현대적인 연구 서적이다. 그 중 '기독교의 정의 (The Definition of Christianity)'는 사도행전을 새롭게 조명해주고, 초대 그리스도인들이 복음만이 가지는 독특한 특성을 어떻게 찾아내고 변호했는지를 살펴본다. '기독교, 아편인가 진리인가? (Christianity: Opium or Truth?)'는 고통의 문제 및 예수 그리스도의 배타적인 주장 등과 같이 계속 반복되는 중대한 질문들에 대해 새로운 관점을 제시한다. '성경과 윤리' (The Bible and Ethics)는 신약과 구약에 걸쳐 나타난 주요 사건, 인물, 사상, 시, 도덕적 가치 및 윤리 등에 대한 개관을 선사한다.

이 시리즈의 책들은 신자들과 종교 회의론자들의 생각을 사로잡는다. 또 이 책들은 삶의 현실과 그 질문들, 문제들, 아름다움 및 잠재력을 해결하기 위해 하나님이 성경에서 어떻게 말씀하셨는지를 보여준다.

값 9,000원



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ISBN 978-89-93141-92-4

Myrtlefield books around the world

United Kingdom Pfander Centre for Apologetics

Outreach to Muslims

The Pfander Centre for Apologetics in London describes itself as a ‘team made up of people from different nations dedicated to taking the gospel to Muslims, holding Islam to account and equipping the church to do the same.’ Earlier this year, at the staff’s request, we sent a range of our books to aid the Centre’s staff and students as they prepare Bible studies and apologetic talks for their Muslim contacts.

A representative from the Centre recently sent us an encouraging comment saying the books ‘have been helpful to the Pfander team and some of our students.’ Let’s pray for the work of the people at the Pfander Centre and specifically that the Myrtlefield books will provide them with insights that will lead many people to salvation.

Northern Ireland

Chinese University Students

One of the interesting developments of globalisation is that the great commission can now be fulfilled without even leaving our own countries. Many of the ‘nations’ who we are instructed to bring the gospel to are now our neighbours. One example of this is the way that a retired missionary from the U.K. has been meeting with a group of Chinese students who are studying at a university in Northern Ireland. Some of them would find it difficult to study at home so freely because of pressures there, but together in a classroom they have worked through David Gooding and John Lennox’s book *The Bible and Ethics*. Each student received a copy of the book for their own further reading. We are praying for real growth in the faith of the students as they encounter the rich truths about morality and ethics as found in Scripture.

Global Langham Partnership

Books for Bible colleges

Langham Partnership is ‘a global fellowship working in pursuit of the vision God entrusted to its founder, John Stott, to strengthen the growth of the church in maturity and Christlikeness through raising the standards of biblical preaching and teaching.’

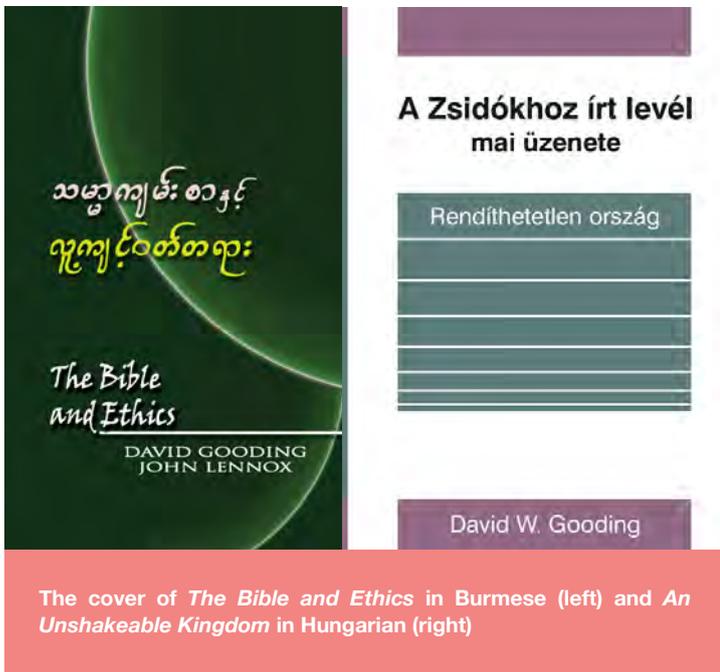
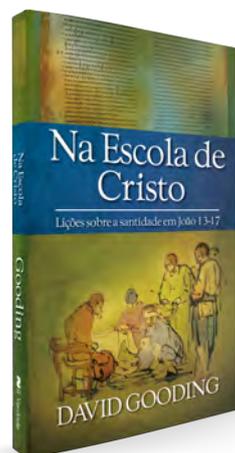
Myrtlefield has had the privilege of partnering with Langham in their yearly programme of distribution of books to accredited Bible colleges and seminaries throughout the majority world. Each year since 2014, over 400 such institutions have received grants of Myrtlefield’s books for their libraries. This has included the Myrtlefield Expositions series, *Key Bible Concepts*, *The Definition of Christianity* and *Christianity: Opium or Truth?* In 2017 *Windows on Paradise* was sent out. We look forward to continuing to provide books in this way and we anticipate that the next books will be from the series *The Quest for Reality and Significance*.

Portuguese In the School of Christ

A New Translation

A recent translation project brings *In the School of Christ* to Portuguese readers. Our friends at A Verdade in Brazil undertook the task of translating and publishing the book and have done a brilliant job. As of writing, 1000 copies of

the book have been published and distributed in Angola and Brazil. You can view the cover to the left. We look forward to seeing *In the School of Christ* make its way through other Portuguese speaking countries and pray that God will richly bless everyone who reads David Gooding’s exposition of ‘Lessons on Holiness in John 13–17’.



The cover of *The Bible and Ethics* in Burmese (left) and *An Unshakeable Kingdom* in Hungarian (right)

Hungary An Unshakeable Kingdom

A New Translation

The Myrtlefield library in Hungarian has grown again. In 2017, *An Unshakeable Kingdom* became available. So far, *The Riches of Divine Wisdom*, *True to the Faith*, *In the School of Christ*, *Windows on Paradise* and *The Bible and Ethics* are all available in Hungarian.

Ireland Agape

Books for Students

Previously known as Campus Crusade for Christ, Agape describe themselves as a ‘Christian movement dedicated to addressing the spiritual needs of Ireland by helping people to see, hear, understand and be forever changed by the person and claims of Jesus.’ Last year we provided twelve copies of *The Riches of Divine Wisdom* to students who were doing a weekend study conference in Dublin (see photo on page 8).

Myrtlefield books around the world

China Two Books

A New Translation

The last newsletter informed you about our project to publish *Key Bible Concepts* and *True to the Faith* in Mandarin. We asked you to pray for the translation and that both books would receive an official ISBN. *Key Bible Concepts* has been translated but it has not yet received an ISBN. *True to the Faith* has not yet been translated into Mandarin. However, we hope to see it translated in 2018. We stand by the verse we quoted in the previous newsletter, 'the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men...' (4:17) and look forward in hope to the day when we can confirm these books have been made available.

Nigeria African Christian Textbooks

Books for Bible colleges

Some encouraging news comes from one of our partners—ACTS in Nigeria. As of September this year over 10,000 copies of the books in the Myrtlefield Expositions and the Myrtlefield Encounters series have been sold around Nigeria. This is in the midst of some serious economic and social problems in the country.

In addition, *Key Bible Concepts* and *The Definition of Christianity* have been translated into one of the main languages in Nigeria: Hausa. It is spoken primarily in the northern regions where Boko Haram are operational. We hope to have these two books published in the new year.

Both ACTS and Myrtlefield value your prayer as this partnership continues. We certainly give God thanks that even in such difficult circumstances the truth about his word continues to be distributed to people all around the world. Two of the men engaged in this partnership had a short meeting with Dr Gooding at his home in July. You can view the photo to the left.

Uganda Kampala CU

To every corner of the world

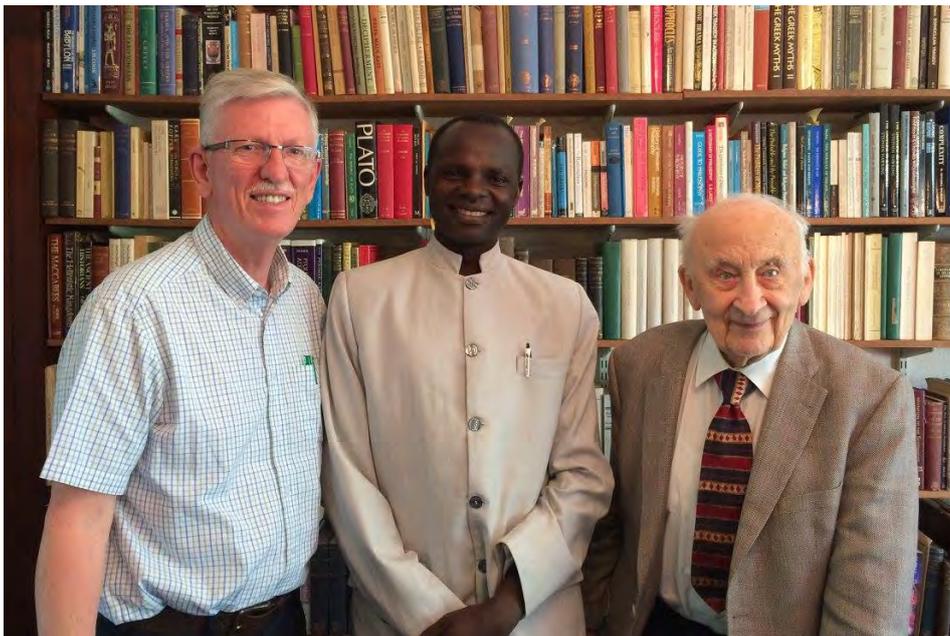
In a previous issue we drew attention to the work of Lars Dahle in Kampala. Lars teaches a course on ethics at Uganda Christian University and has used David Gooding and John Lennox's work *The Bible and Ethics* as a textbook. This year we continued to support his work,

sending a further 50 copies for the new students on his course. We look forward to hearing about the progress of these students as they pursue their studies.

East Africa SIM Distribution

Youth Workers Toolkit

In many parts of the world, circumstances make it difficult for the distribution of Christian resources. Such is the case in East Africa where inflation and political tensions make the work of Christians much harder than in some other parts of the world. We had the opportunity to grant printing rights to Serving in Mission and the Youth Workers Toolkit for *The Bible and Ethics* and *Key Bible Concepts*. So far, 2,500 of the expected 10,000 book sets have been distributed at conferences throughout East Africa. Recent political unrest and economic difficulties have made it challenging for SIM's distribution, but the work is still going on. We continue to pray for this work in East Africa, that God will bless it and bring life and light through his gospel.



Sid Garland (left) and Luka Vandi (centre) visit Dr Gooding (right) at his home.

Myanmar Three Books

The distribution of our books in Myanmar continues to be encouraging. *How to Teach the Tabernacle*, *Key Bible Concepts* and *The Bible and Ethics* are all now being used in the country. The latter has been so well received that there is a need to print another 5,000 copies in the new year. Please pray that the Lord will work in this country despite its many challenges and divisions.

Uganda Books to Local Churches

We are thankful for the work of many individuals in spreading our books. From time to time Christians who have benefited from the books published by Myrtlefield House have taken it upon themselves to introduce them to new places. This year a Christian worker took a copy of each of the books from the Myrtlefield catalogue with him to Uganda. He left them with various Bible teachers in the country and plans to take further copies to distribute during his next visit.

myrtlefieldhouse.com resources on the web

Read. Listen. Share.

A New Website

In May 2017 we released a new, redesigned myrtlefieldhouse.com to the public. A long time in the works, the goal to produce an accessible website that can expand to meet future demands has been achieved. If you haven't already done so, make sure you visit the website to see the new design for yourself.

We have been encouraged to hear from people in different parts of the world who are making use of the free audio and video sermons, sermon transcripts and other Bible study materials. One wrote to say, 'Thank you so much for uploading David Gooding's messages. I can't begin to tell you what a blessing they are to me. Thank you!' A staff member from the Oxford Centre for Apologetics said, 'You've no idea how much I appreciate that website. I'm on it several times each week. I've told all of my colleagues about it and encouraged them to use it.'

Words and Pictures

In May 2017, a new project was started to better utilise the Myrtlefield social media pages. You can view some examples throughout this newsletter. Three times a week we release a graphic featuring a quote from one of the resources available on the website, which links back to the series of transcripts or the book from which they were taken.

The strategy to expose a wider audience to the content of the books and transcripts has evolved in response to user engagement. Myrtlefield 'followers' engage better with longer quotations and so the short sentence on each graphic now comes with a longer paragraph taken from the original transcript or book.

The number of 'followers' on our Facebook page has grown by over 100 people since the first graphic was posted. As more people 'like' and 'share' the graphics the content is distributed further. Each week between 1500 and 3000 people have Myrtlefield content appear in their feed, an encouraging growth.

Our most popular post thus far was uploaded on the 23rd September and contained a quote from David Gooding's testimony. Over 3000 people viewed this single post and many people shared it with their friends and families.

As time goes on we will continue to develop our social media strategy to more effectively reach the existing audience and draw in new people to benefit from the content available on myrtlefieldhouse.com.

'I'm so enjoying these beautiful [graphics featuring] Dr. Gooding's rich thoughts. Thank you for the work involved, and if possible, please keep them coming.'

A recent note from the Facebook Page



Read or Listen

The biggest addition to our online offerings continues to be the growing library of audio sermons and transcripts of David Gooding's Bible teaching. Since the last update, we have continued to add both MP3s and transcripts for free download. The transcripts are available as both e-books and PDFs. Our aim with these, as with all of the resources, is to reach as many people as possible so that they can benefit from this teaching.

The talks currently on the website are listed in full below. Over 80 series consisting of more than 300 individual talks are now available. In order to introduce more people to these resources, we have included the full text of two new transcripts on the following pages. Many people have told us they appreciate having these sermons in this format for their own study and to pass along to others.

If you have any feedback on these or any of our other resources, we are always glad to hear from you. And if you have audio recordings of Dr Gooding that we might not have in our archive, please do get in touch.

E-mail and post are the best ways to reach us, but here are all of the options:

The Myrtlefield Trust

PO Box 2216
BELFAST
BT1 9YR

E-mail

info@myrtlefieldhouse.com

For English e-books and audio sermons

www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

For more languages (and slower connections)

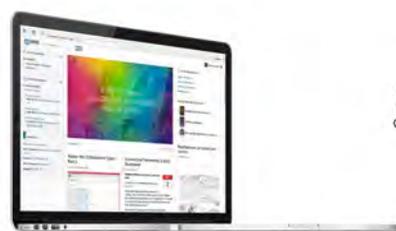
www.keybibleconcepts.org

On Facebook

www.facebook.com/MyrtlefieldHouse/

On Twitter

twitter.com/MyrtlefieldHous



Myrtlefield books
are on Logos.

Scholarly, engaging and accessible. Addressing the mind and heart to increase faith in God and obedience to his Word. Myrtlefield Expositions on the world's premier Bible study software.



available transcripts Old Testament

LINKS TO E-BOOK . KINDLE . PDF

Old Testament Transcripts

We now have transcripts available for 21 Old Testament books. You can find these by visiting our website, myrtlefieldhouse.com. At the top of the homepage select 'Browse Resources' and then from the menu select 'Old Testament.' For those reading an electronic version of this newsletter, you can click below on the link for each transcript.

Genesis

1. [The Book of Genesis](#)
2. [Understanding the Old Testament](#)
3. [Three Talks on Scripture](#)
4. [Creations Voice Proclaims](#)
5. [Family Life with Abraham and Jacob](#)

Exodus

6. [No Longer Bondmen: Studies in Exodus](#)
7. [The Exodus as Epic](#)

Leviticus

8. [The Feasts of the Lord](#)
9. [The Beauty of Holiness](#)

Numbers

10. [Lessons from the Book of Numbers](#)

Deuteronomy

11. [With Moses on the Plains of Moab: Studies in Deuteronomy](#)

Joshua

12. [The Book of Joshua](#)
13. [Entering the Inheritance](#)

Judges

14. [The Book of Judges](#)

Ruth

15. [The Book of Ruth: Naomi's Story](#)
16. [The Book of Ruth: An Inheritance from the Lord](#)

1-2 Samuel

17. [Whose Son is He?](#)
18. [Priesthood and Holiness, Sin and its Consequences, Atonement and Acceptance](#)

1-2 Kings

19. [Apostasy and Revival in the Books of Kings](#)
20. [Revivals in First and Second Kings](#)
21. [Studies in the Life of the Prophet Elisha](#)

1-2 Chronicles

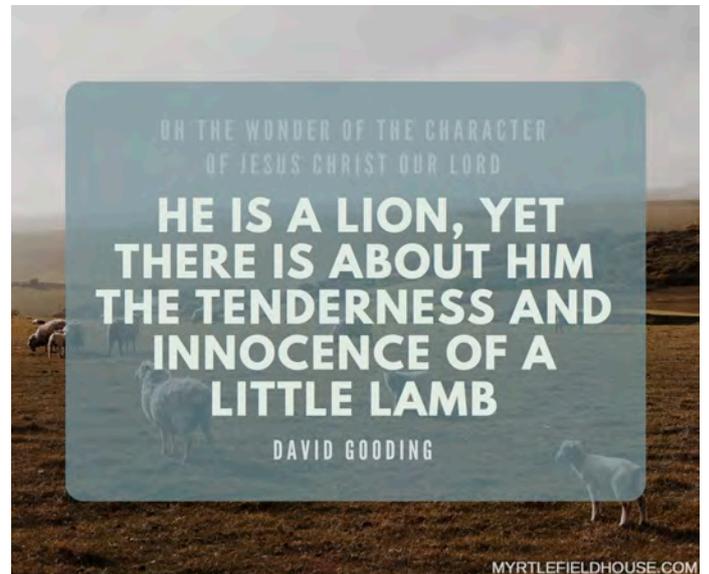
22. [Mankind's Pathway to the Coming Age of Peace: Studies in 1 Chronicles](#)

Psalms

23. [Studies in the Fifth Book of Psalms](#)

Isaiah

24. [Satisfaction in Serving the Lord](#)



Daniel

25. [Daniel and the King's Food](#)
26. [Daniel: Civil Servant and Saint](#)

Micah

27. [Who is like Jehovah? A Meditation on the Prophecy of Micah](#)

Haggai

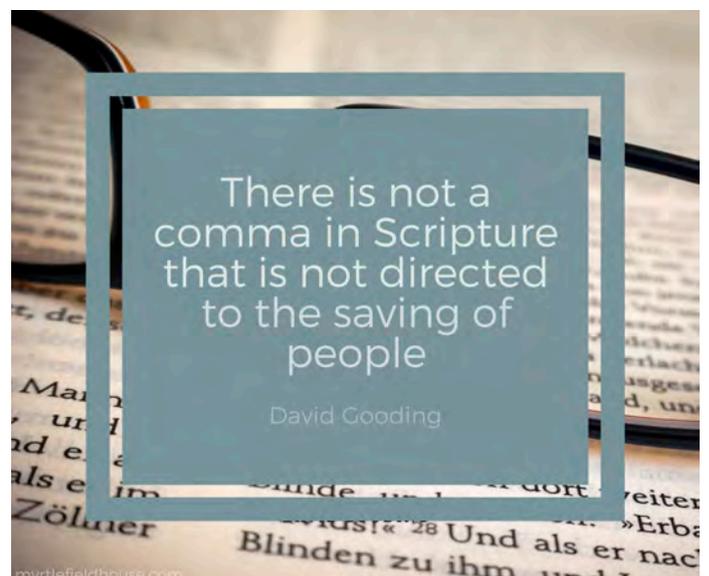
28. [The God of New Beginnings and Restoration: The Prophet Haggai's Four Messages](#)

Zechariah

29. [Studies in Zechariah](#)

Malachi

30. [Malachi](#)



available transcripts New Testament

LINKS TO E-BOOK . KINDLE . PDF



New Testament Transcripts

We currently have transcripts available for 14 New Testament books. You can find these by visiting our website, myrtlefieldhouse.com. At the top of the homepage select 'Browse Resources' and then from the menu select 'New Testament' or click below.

Matthew

1. [The Gospel of Authority and the Path of Discipleship](#)

Luke

2. [A Well-balanced Mind](#)

Acts

3. [The Defence and Confirmation of the Gospel](#)

Romans

4. [Romans Survey](#)
5. [The Weakness and Ungodliness of Sin](#)

1 Corinthians

6. [The Christian Philosophy of Man: A question of loyalty to Christ his Head](#)
7. [First Epistle to the Corinthians: Implications of the Great Sacrifice of Christ](#)

Galatians

8. [Galatians](#)

Colossians

9. [How can Colossians help me?](#)
10. [Studies in Colossians](#)

2 Thessalonians

11. [Eternal Encouragement and Good Hope](#)

Hebrews

12. [What it Means to be a Believer: Hebrews 11 Defines the Term](#)

James

13. [James's Vision of the Perfect Man and Woman](#)

1 Peter

14. [The Sufferings of Christ: Studies in 1 Peter](#)
15. [The Saving and Losing of a Soul](#)
16. [Peter: Scholar and Teacher in the School of Suffering](#)

1 John

17. [Life in the Family of God](#)

Jude

18. [The Epistle of Jude: How Religion Goes Wrong](#)

Revelation

19. [The Apocalypse: A Brief Literary Structure of the Book of Revelation](#)
20. [The Second Coming of Christ](#)
21. [An Introduction to the Letters to the Seven Churches](#)
22. [Two Gospel Addresses: Drawn from the book of Revelation](#)



Some students pictured using *The Riches of Divine Wisdom* while attending a summer school at Agape, Ireland. Read more on page 4.



available transcripts Topics

LINKS TO E-BOOK . KINDLE . PDF

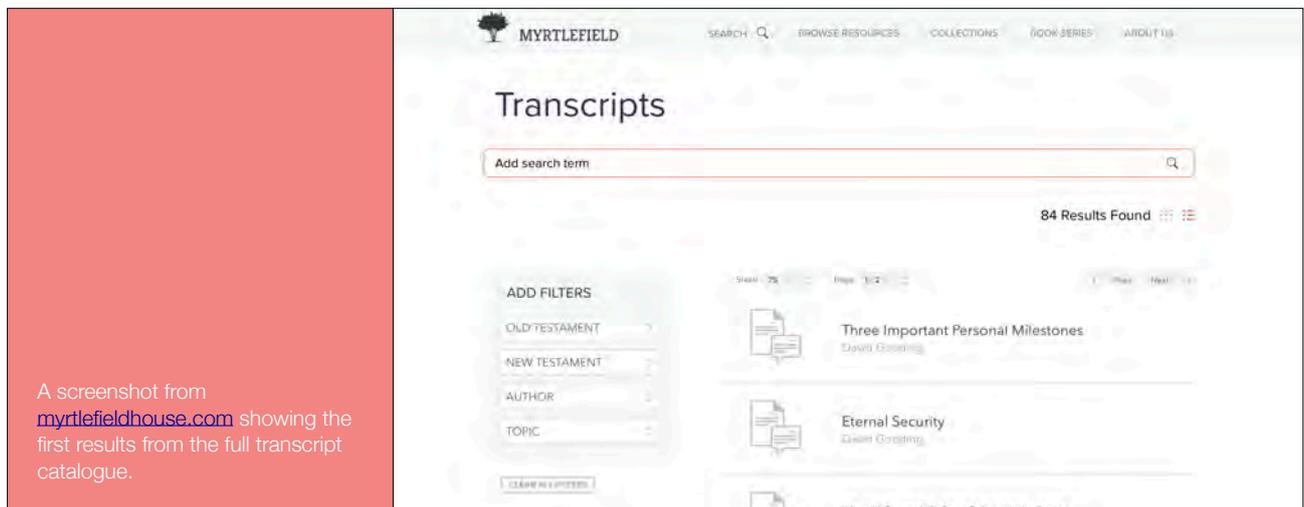


We also have transcripts available for a range of topics. These cover areas such as Apologetics, Bibliology, the Church, God and Prophecy. You can find these by clicking on the 'Browse Resources' tab on our website and selecting 'Topics' from the menu or clicking below.



1. [Bible Study Methods](#)
2. [Can a Child of God ever be Lost?](#)
3. [Christ is the Lord of Space, Time and History](#)
4. [Eternal Security](#)
5. [How to Study the Bible](#)
6. [Is Hell a Reality?](#)
7. [Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God](#)
1. [Jesus Himself](#)
2. [Lessons from Old Testament Characters](#)
3. [Rise up and Walk: The Gentile Mind and the Gentile World](#)
4. [Serving God: The Local Church and Worldwide Mission](#)
5. [Standing on the Other Side](#)
6. [David Gooding's Testimony](#)
7. [The Approach to God](#)
8. [The Battle in Gethsemane](#)
9. [The Church](#)
10. [The Final Judgment](#)
11. [The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit](#)
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Testimony

by David Gooding

John has invited me to come and give my testimony, but most people who give their testimony have a very dramatic story to tell.

We seem to like people who used to beat their wives or get stone drunk, or something like that. Those who were in dire trouble and found the Saviour. They are good stories, aren't they, because they remind us of the reality of Christ's power to save.

I feel shy, therefore, giving my testimony because I got saved at the age of ten. When all is said and done, most ten-year-olds haven't gone deeply into drinking and drugs and beating their wives and other such occupations. How do they get saved, then? And is it real?

I've got some special friends here tonight. I've been talking to them outside the tent. They're boys and girls, about ten of them, that Miss Gregg brings regularly every night. They come from Saintfield. They've been to the tent every night, and that's marvellous. It's lovely to see you, and we thank Miss Gregg, as you wanted us to, for bringing you. And I'm going to tell you, boys and girls, how you could be saved.

I was saved when I was your age, only it isn't very dramatic because I was brought up by a father and mother who told me the gospel and I can't remember a time when I didn't know the gospel and how to be saved.

So you say, 'Well, how were you saved then?'

One night—I can remember it clearly, I was in bed and my father came up and prayed by my bedside, as he did every night. I can't say I was listening; he prayed so much I didn't often listen. But, as he prayed, a verse of the Bible came into my boyish head:

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9)

I said to myself, 'Yes. I do believe that Jesus is God's Son and he rose from the dead, and I do believe in my heart.' And in my childish way, I said, 'Well, Lord, I believe, and your word says I'm saved.'

I didn't even remember the first bit about confessing it; I didn't tell anybody. I just turned over and went to sleep.

I want to tell you that what happened there to me, as a young boy of ten in my bed that night, has lasted sixty-four years plus. And in those years I have faced criticisms about God and the Bible from some of the most sophisticated brains in this world, having given myself to the study of the word of God and the manuscripts in which it comes. And my testimony would be that, the more I have studied the Bible, the more I have found that it is the authentic word of the living God. It is that which has kept my faith as an anchor throughout all my life—my professional academic life, and elsewhere.

There might be some here tonight who know the gospel, and what you're saying in your heart is, 'But what have I got to do to be saved?'

What have you got to do? Well, let me point to myself as one testimony. You have to just take Christ at his word, and say, 'Lord, you say it and I believe you.'

You say, 'Is that all you've got to do?'

Well, yes. You could be saved tonight too, couldn't you? You know that you are a sinner and that you need to be saved. and that Christ has come and died for you.

myrtlefield transcripts **Testimony**

by David Gooding

What do you have to do? Well, you have to receive him; hear what he says and respond to him by saying, 'Lord, I believe you and I believe your word, come into my heart.'

It's as simple as that. There could be many here tonight, who haven't any great dramatic testimony to give of the most deep-seated sin. Men and women and boys and girls need only to know that they are sinners and they need a saviour. And it's so simple, you could be saved this very night.

So as we pray, let's ask the Lord to show us how tonight we could pass from death to life, from being lost to being found, from being unbelievers to being personal believers in the Lord Jesus.

Shall we pray.

Our Father, we thank thee for the love and kindness of our friends who have organised these meetings here in this tent this week. And we thank thee for thy word that has been preached in our hearing so clearly and effectively.

Tonight, Lord, we come to do business with thee. Impress upon all our hearts, we pray, that there is something we have to do. We have to meet the Saviour; we have to come to the Saviour; we have to receive the Saviour. We have business to do with thee. So help us now, we pray.

Take from our minds and hearts all those things that will distract us. We have business problems, maybe, and family affairs, and one thousand and one things to think of regarding this temporary and passing world. Tonight, in thy mercy, take our burdens from our shoulders and from our minds so that we may concentrate on things that are eternal, and help us to see what we have to do.

Put within our hearts that determination to seek the Lord while he may be found, to seek thy salvation, to give all earnestness to making sure we have entered the door of salvation, so that tonight we may go away as saved men and women and boys and girls.

To that end, give us good understanding, and, by thy Spirit, illumination in our hearts.

Meet with us, blessed Lord Jesus Christ, we pray, for thou hast come not only to save, but to seek and to save those that are lost. Seek our hearts tonight and grant that we all, according to our needs, may respond. And those who need to find thee for the first time as Saviour shall this very night find thee and be found by thee.

We ask it for thy name's sake. Amen.



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The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

David Gooding

Readings: 1 Corinthians 12:12–13; Ephesians 1:15–23; 3:14–21

We have been thinking together about the great gift that God has given to all who trust Jesus Christ our Lord—the gift of his Holy Spirit. In a previous talk we were thinking in particular of that Holy Spirit being given to us for our spiritual good, for our personal spiritual edification.

In this talk we are to think in particular later on of the Holy Spirit giving all who trust Christ certain gifts so that we, in turn, may be able to help other people, for the work of the Holy Spirit within us is twofold. First of all, he is given to us so that we ourselves may benefit, and then he gives us gifts so that we may benefit other people.

But we ran out of time, so, before we come to talk about the gifts that Christ has given to us in order that we may help others, let us think for a short while longer of the Holy Spirit as the gift God has given to those who trust Christ for their spiritual edification.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit to all who trust Christ

We observed, firstly, that God gives his Holy Spirit to everyone that trusts Christ as Saviour. Paul says:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (Rom 8:9)

This is a categorical statement that gets us clear in our thinking from the start. If a believer is in Christ, then he is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in him. You can't have the one without the other.

Secondly, we were noticing the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit, pouring out the love of God in our hearts (5:5), being the very root and ground of our spiritual life. Acting as our guide, our comforter and advocate, he leads us step by step through life to the final goal of being conformed to the image of God's Son; praying his prayers alongside our prayers until we learn to make his prayers our own prayers (8:26). So that by our activity, and yet by his activity—his activity coming to be our activity—we make progress along the path of Christian holiness until finally we shall be conformed to the image of God's Son (v. 29).

We talked about his ministry of witnessing directly to the believer's spirit that he or she is a child of God (v. 15). Witnessing through the holy word of the Prophets that God has covenanted in Jesus Christ our Lord to write his laws upon our hearts. And what is sublimely wonderful, he has covenanted that he will remember our sins and iniquities no more (Heb 8:10–12; cf. Jer 31:33).

Deeper experiences of the Holy Spirit

But someone may say, 'If I received the Holy Spirit when I first trusted Christ, believed in him and received eternal life, is that gift a static thing that I had then, and I had it all? Or are there deeper experiences of God's Holy Spirit waiting for me as a believer, if only I had the grace and sense to see them?'

And the answer to that question is, yes, indeed there are deeper experiences of God's Holy Spirit waiting for us. That is why I read those two passages in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, in which he prays for a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit's power in the lives of believers.

The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit page 2

But let me remind you what he says to these people: 'Because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus' (1:15). So they were already Christians; they had already trusted in Christ, and in trusting Christ they had received the Holy Spirit. But for these people, who were already believers and already had been sealed with the Holy Spirit, Paul prays a deeper experience of that same Holy Spirit.

Let us consider what that experience is. In his first prayer he tells us:

[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know . . . (1:17-18)

He goes on then to enumerate three things that it is the Spirit's ministry to make known to the believer—not merely to a believer's mind and intellect, but to make them known to his heart; to 'open the eyes of his heart,' as Paul puts it. So that with his whole being he grasps these things and they become a real part of his existence. He sees them, not just with his mind, but with his whole being.

1. The hope to which he has called you
2. The riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints
3. The immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe

Now, it is the fact that when people seek a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit, very often they will say that they are seeking greater power—they wish for greater spiritual power. God bless them; we could all do with more genuine spiritual power. But would you notice that that is third in the list and not first. So, let us look at the first two.

1. The hope and purpose to which he has called you

The first thing that we need to know—and know it with our very hearts—is the hope to which he has called us. That is to say, the reason and purpose for which God has saved us and called us.

May I ask you something? You, who claim to have trusted in Christ; you have been saved, you have been called, thank God—*what are you saved for?*

You say, 'That's easy. I'm saved to serve. Why, evangelists galore have told me that I am saved to serve—to help to bring others to Christ.'

And may God help you to do it. But half a minute! With everybody saved that's going to be saved, then what are we going to do? *What's the point in getting them saved?* What is the hope of our calling? Where are we going to?

I know it's lovely to have a lot of power at your disposal, isn't it? Suppose you had one of these mighty great Mercedes-Benz cars and you put the pedal down, and whoomph, off it goes! Yes, but before you put the pedal down it might be wise to know where you were going. Power just for the sake of power isn't any good. So, first we need our hearts enlightened to know the hope to which he has called us.

What is the purpose of our salvation?

Paul gives us the answer.

1. That we should satisfy God: 'That we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us . . .' (Eph 1:4).

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That we should be able to meet all the interests and demands of God our Creator. He made us for himself, for his own enjoyment; and the first great purpose of salvation is that we should meet all his desires, all his pleasures, all his interests, and satisfy his heart.

And we have failed miserably, haven't we? Even since I have come to know Christ, how easy it is for me to turn inward upon myself. I am grateful for forgiveness because it makes me feel good and I seek experience of the Holy Spirit because it makes me feel good, but we have to be careful lest in our spiritual experience we become self-centred, merely seeking our own satisfaction; whereas the purpose of our being saved is that we should satisfy God.

2. That we should be fit to serve in the ages to come: 'So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus' (2:7).

It is the purpose of God, for the organisation and the administration of the ages to come, to head up all things in Christ. That is his concept. God isn't done with this world yet, nor will he be for a long while, but God is yet going to fulfil the purpose that he had when he made the world.

What is that purpose? We remember that the early chapters of Genesis tell us that when God made this world, he put people on it and he said to Adam, the first man, 'Look, Adam, I have put you into a garden here.' God planted a garden in Eden, which shows the rest of it wasn't a garden, doesn't it? 'Now,' he said, 'Adam, you get on and develop it. I want you to have dominion and fill the earth—I want you to run the place and administer the earth for my pleasure.'

What fun it would have been to have been presented with a brand new earth, only you in it and you have the responsibility of developing the whole show! Where would you start? God gave Adam 'a helper fit for him' (2:18). Her name was Eve and she helped Adam as God's viceroy to develop this planet. They very soon found that developing this planet isn't altogether child's play. You don't get very far down the road before suddenly very big, large moral problems come up. Whose world is it, and who's to have the say how it should be run? As we know, they disobeyed God and miserably fell, and introduced into our world the chaos that we now see around us.

And so it has continued until in this year, 1974, we are approaching a peak of economic crisis, not only in these islands but around the whole world. In spite of our computers and in spite of economists, we've got vast deserts in our world that the nations daren't try and cope with, because, if the Americans got the Sahara into shape, then the Russians would be jealous of the Americans and who knows what the Chinese would say. We've got millions of folks starving, though there's enough food for everybody, but man's selfishness won't let it go round. We've got our world into an impossible tangle.

You say, 'What's God going to do with it? Ditch it?'

Oh, no, not ditch it. God isn't going to be defeated like that. God originally put man in charge. As the psalmist observes:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet. (Ps 8:3-6)

Mankind was to run it, and the New Testament observes, 'At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him' (Heb 2:8). We see a groaning creation, travailing in sorrow, blasted with disease and blight, and torn with war, greed and jealousy. We do not yet see all things put under him, but—

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and here's the wonderful bit—God hasn't given up. We do see one man who for a little while was made a little lower than the angels, a genuine man, and he's named Jesus (v. 9). It was because of the suffering of death that we see him already crowned with glory and honour and one day all things shall be put under his feet.

For he who taught us to pray, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10), was not teaching us to pray some vain repetition that never would be fulfilled on earth; he was teaching us to pray for a purpose of God that shall be fulfilled—his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. In that glorious day, it is God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ. In heaven, yes—but on earth as well. It isn't God's purpose to ditch this world and we all go floating up to heaven and say, 'Thank God that nightmare is over. No more earth, please.'

It is God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ, both in heaven and earth, and in that day our blessed Lord shall have a helper fit for him, as Adam did.

And [God] put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Eph 1:22–23)

Why do you need to have your eyes opened to see the power of God available to you?

Because you have a colossal responsibility awaiting you, away there in the future, to reign with Christ, to administer this world with him and for him. You need to be taking the steps to prepare yourself—or to let God prepare you—for the tasks that lie ahead.

Be assured, my dear Christian, that the old hymns that talk of us going home to heaven, taking our shoes off, putting our feet up and resting at last for ever, are a little bit oversentimental. When you get home to heaven you won't want to rest anyway; there's work to be done. We shall reign with Christ.

Listen to Paul again:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom 8:19–21)

And oh how creation shall sing then to the praise of its Creator. But it waits. Why not yet? Why not already? It waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. Note the term, not the baby children, but the *sons*: the full grown sons that have achieved spiritual maturity and have been made exactly like Christ. One day those sons will be ready, conformed to the image of God's own personal Son, and God shall hand over creation to them.

When I think of it, sometimes I suddenly have cold feet. I say, 'My boy, you're getting long in the tooth, you know. You're getting old at an alarming rate, you haven't got much more time.' Oh, that God would open the eyes of my heart to see what is the hope of my calling, and that I don't waste away my time here on little nothings, when I ought to be getting ready to take over the government of earth.

2. The riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints

And then I shall need to know a second thing. If the first thing is getting to know the hope and purpose of his calling, the second thing is *not* to know what great power is available—not yet. We are so impatient to get our hands on the power, aren't we? But power can be dangerous stuff.

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God's people are of measureless value to him

So, before we allow too much power into our hands, let's see what we need to know. We need the eyes of our hearts enlightened, so that we may know what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Eph 1:18)—which, all being interpreted, means that we need our eyes opened to see what a valuable treasure Mrs Smith down the road is. If you can't see that every redeemed soul represents to God a measureless treasure, perhaps you'd better not be allowed to have any power, because if you don't come to value people you can hurt them.

Power isn't given to me to make me feel good; power is given so I should help other folks. If I'm going to help them, I shall need to have my eyes open to their real value. It's difficult to see, is it not? If you lived with me you'd find it more difficult every day; and, I'm not joking, you would need your eyes open to see it. For the mere charm, if I had any, of outward exterior soon wears very thin. You wouldn't need to be a week with me before you'd begin to get a little irritated by my funny mannerisms, and a good deal else that's worse than mannerisms. And then you would need spiritual enlightenment to see that, in spite of all that, I represent to God what he regards (who can tell why?) as the riches of his glorious inheritance—even in such a one as I.

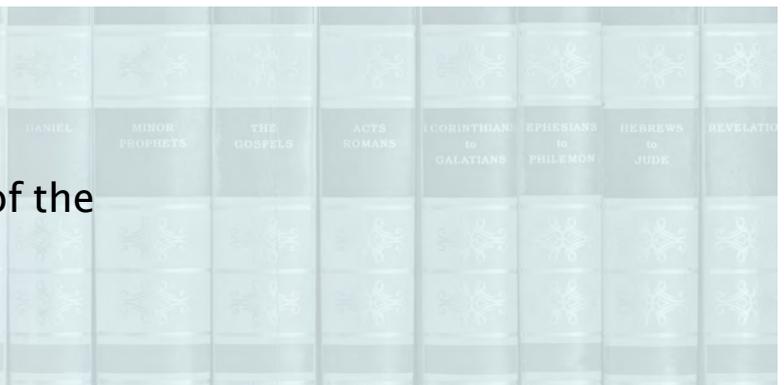
Oh, if I have no understanding of the value of dear Christian people to God, I'd better do without the power. But if I have some concept, by the help of the Spirit within me, of the hope of my calling and the tremendous value of God's people to him, then, for my own progress and to fulfil my responsibilities to them, I shall need to know the power available to me. It is a power so wonderful that, if you want to know how big it is, it is the power that raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead (v. 20). 'That's what I'm praying for you,' says Paul; and we, as Christians, would do well to pray it for our fellow Christians, shouldn't we?

How we should pray for our fellow Christians

I don't know about your prayers, but so many of my prayers for my fellow Christians and friends run like this, 'Oh, Lord, help Tom to get a job; help my sister to get better from the flu.' But if I got my proportions right, above and beyond and before all those things, it would be, 'Open the eyes of my friends' hearts to know the hope of their calling and to grasp the glory of the riches of your inheritance in the saints.' So that we're not always criticising one another, endlessly, but have opened eyes to see the value of one another realistically; not pretending that we have no faults, but in spite of it seeing the work of God in us.

Not only does Paul pray this for those that already have been saved, but in chapter 3 he prays for another, deeper experience of God's Holy Spirit for them.

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For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph 3:14–19)

What Paul is praying for is not some sudden experience. He is praying for a process: ‘that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.’ I know that we are very often impatient. I would like to pray, ‘Oh, God, make me perfect,’ and he would immediately do it. But I am an absolute sinner, and forty years of being a Christian has shown me that there’s little hope of that. I ought to have known it, because the word of God indicates the same. God is interested in carrying out a process in my heart, steadily strengthening my inner being by his Spirit. What for? Well, that Christ might dwell in my heart.

Somebody says, ‘But that’s curious, because the moment I trusted Christ, Christ came and dwelt in my heart. The preacher told me the words, didn’t he? Christ says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20). I did that: I opened the door and Christ came in. Why does Paul need to pray for me now that Christ will dwell in my heart?’

The simple answer is this: that the word Paul uses here means, not merely that Christ should have come in, but that he should take up his residence in every part of my being.

Now, for that to happen it will require a process and there are no short cuts to it that I know of. You see, it’s one thing to know with my head that Christ is in me—one thing for Christ actually to be in me—I can grasp that. He’s in me because I asked him to come in and I received him—he’s in me, and I know he’s in me. It’s another thing to know it so that, in everything I do, every moment of the day, I am conscious of it.

Have you arrived there yet? I haven’t. I get talking with a fellow believer about a difficult passage of Scripture. Now I am indeed very spiritual—I’m talking about Scripture. Suddenly he disagrees: ‘You’ve got it wrong,’ he says. So he must be told the truth, and the stupid man can’t see the truth! And then he has a view of his own—well, he has no right to have a view of his own—and, before I know it, I get steamed up. I’d quite forgotten for the time being that Christ is meant to be dwelling in my heart as well as his. We’ve been discussing theology, but Christ is meant to dwell even among theology, let alone when it comes to clearing away the breakfast things or something like that.

It’s lovely to have exciting meetings, isn’t it, and marvellous feelings. Well, let’s hope Christ is in them. It’s also good if Christ is in your feelings when you’re clearing away the breakfast on Monday morning, and when the business is difficult, and when you’re trying to deal with the shop steward, if you happen to be the managing director of a firm.

‘That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith’ (Eph 3:17). To come to that position it will mean my inner self being strengthened, and that is a long drawn-out process; but God does perform it in the hearts of his people, bit by bit, by bit, by bit. If we want a deeper experience of God’s Holy Spirit, we would be well advised to listen to what Paul is praying on his knees—this is the experience of the Holy Spirit.

The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit page 7

The gifts given by the Holy Spirit to all who trust Christ

But I must return, as I promised, to the question of those gifts that Christ gives through the Holy Spirit to his people for the helping of others. Isn't it our duty as believers, every one of us, to help other folks? But while that is our duty, we shall be given different gifts and we shall help them in different ways.

You say, 'Now this is interesting because I've always wanted to do Christian work.'

Yes, but may I remind you of what Paul said in that passage we read: if you want to do Christian work, you must first become a Christian (Eph 1:15). You don't become a Christian by doing Christian work; you first become a Christian and then you do the Christian work.

So let's hear Paul tell us about these gifts that God gives, and how we get them. He puts it this way:

For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:12–13)

If you want to do Christian work, then you must let Christ put you into the Christian body, make you part of the body of Christ. For it is by being in the body of Christ, members of that body, that we each then have a gift. Says Paul, 'It's like the human body: the human body is one, yet it has many members.' The fingers have one job and the toes have another, the hand does one job and the brain does another. All sorts of different jobs to do and gifts and faculties, and each member of the body gets those faculties when it becomes a member of the body.

How do we become members of the body of Christ?

Paul tells us here of those two fundamental operations that are necessary if any man or woman is to become a member of the body of Christ.

1. For by one Spirit are we *all* baptised into one body
2. and have been *all* made to drink into one Spirit.

Shall we notice then, for clarity's sake, that Paul, in writing to these dear Christians at Corinth, affirms that all believers have been baptised in the Holy Spirit and all have been made to drink of that Spirit. If anyone has not been baptised in the Holy Spirit, or been made to drink of the Holy Spirit, then he or she is not in the body of Christ and is not a believer at all.

What does it mean? Well, let's take the first one first, and notice there are two things.

'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body'

You were baptised in the Holy Spirit. This is done by Christ, as John the Baptist prophesied. You will remember how John the Baptist baptised people in water, but he said:

After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you [in] the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1:7–8)

And we can begin to get some idea of it, can't we? Let's think of John for a minute. If you came to John, John got hold of you and he put you in the water—John baptised you in water. 'Now, like I baptised *you* in water,' says John, 'Christ, when he comes, will baptise *you* in the Holy Spirit.' Clear, isn't it?

The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit page 8

You will notice:

1. It's not the Holy Spirit who baptises, it's the Lord Jesus who baptises you.
2. Just as John baptised people in water, so the Lord Jesus baptises people in the Spirit. That is, when you come to Christ, Christ gets you and he puts you in his Spirit.

'And have been all made to drink into one Spirit'

Christ makes us drink of that Spirit, and when we drink of the Spirit, the Spirit goes into us.

If I drink some water, where's the water gone?

'Well, it's gone into you.'

Yes. And when Christ makes me to drink of his Spirit, his Spirit goes into me, so it does two things. Marvellous, isn't it? And you have to have both things at the same time, of course.

1. He baptises me in his Spirit—he puts me in the Spirit.
2. He makes me drink of the Spirit—he puts the Spirit in me. That is indeed the only way you could have a spiritual body.

An analogy

What is it that keeps all these members together in my physical body, this one body?

Don't say, 'It's the bones and the muscles,' because they don't really. If you shot a bullet through my head and laid me out on the floor and came back in nine months, I'm afraid the fingers would be off the body, muscles and bones notwithstanding.

You say, 'Well then, what is it that keeps all these members together and makes them one body, though they are many members?'

The simple fact is that I'm standing here in the air and as I breathe I am in the air and the air is in me. Yes? And as the air goes into me, it carries the oxygen through my blood stream, right down to the tips of my little fingers and my little toes, and keeps it all together. If you were to cut off that supply of air to my little finger, it would go gangrenous and fall off.

So, in order to have a human body, I must have two things at once. I must be in the air and the air must be in me. It's no good having one at a time, is it? Try it—well, maybe don't try it! Suppose I'm here in the air, but you tie something round my throat and the air can't get into me, so I'm in the air but the air isn't in me—well, I'd go blue in the face.

Try it the other way round. The Americans decide to shoot me into space and they say, 'Take a deep breath, old boy!' The air goes into me and then they shoot me out into space, but I'm not in the air—well, then I'd go *pop*.

No, I've got to have both things, and I must have both at once: *I am in the air and the air is in me.*

And, my dear Christian friends, so it is with this matter. How are we made into the body of Christ? Christ baptises us in his Spirit—he puts us in the Holy Spirit; and at the same time he puts his Spirit in us and makes us drink of the Holy Spirit. *I am in the Spirit and the Spirit is in me.*

Don't let anybody tell you that you could have the Spirit in you and not yet be baptised in the Spirit, because that's nonsense. You might as well talk of having a human body with the air in the body, but the body not yet in the air—that's nonsense too.

Oh, what a glorious thing it is: every believer is baptised in the Holy Spirit and made to drink of that Spirit. Let the wonder of it grip our souls.

The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit page 9

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit isn't so much stuff; the Holy Spirit is a divine person. See, then, what a grand thing God has done for us miserable sinners. When we trusted Christ, he not only forgave our sins, but Christ was authorised to put us in the blessed person of the divine Holy Spirit, incorporated into the very Godhead.

Can you see how the body of Christ is born? I trusted Christ and he put me in the Spirit and the Spirit in me. Have you trusted Christ? Then he baptised you in the Spirit and put the Spirit in you. So you are in the Spirit and I'm in the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is one person, so we are in the same person. The same life that throbs through and around you throbs around and in me. We are literally members of that great supra personality, the body of Christ.

The motive in seeking extra gifts

And thus we get on to the gifts: one has this gift, one that. There's no need for us to feel that we must have all the gifts there are. I have one gift, you have another. I can't say I don't need your gift any more than my hand can say it doesn't need my foot. Similarly, if I think my own gift is pretty small, I mustn't say, 'Oh, well, I haven't got a very big gift so I'm not in the body.' That's nonsense too. Every single member is needed and every gift is needed.

'But,' you say, 'once we have become Christians and are members of the body of Christ, is there no room for seeking other gifts?'

Yes, there's room for seeking. We are to 'earnestly desire the spiritual gifts,' said the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 14:1). Just like my hand has a general gift of grasping things; it can learn to grasp a pen, a paintbrush or the wheel of a car, so it is possible for us to seek gifts, abilities and faculties, and if it so pleases God he may add them to us. But let us again be humble enough to listen to God telling us the motive that must be ours when we seek extra gifts.

The prime motive is love

As always in Christian things, it must be. But it is here pre-eminently that we must see to it that, in seeking for gifts, our motive is love, for the simple reason that the whole purpose of a gift is to help others.

What would you think of me at the breakfast table tomorrow if I had Kellogg's Cornflakes and I didn't swallow the stuff?

'Yum, yum,' my mouth is having a glorious time!

My stomach says, 'Pass it on, pass it on.'

'No,' says the mouth, 'I'm going to do it for my own sake.'

That's nonsense. Yes, certainly the mouth enjoys the Kellogg's Cornflakes, but the whole purpose of the operation is to get the stuff to the stomach and the stomach to pass it on to all the rest.

In the exercise of your gift you will be edified, but that wasn't the purpose of giving it to you. The purpose of the gift is to help the other person, and if you seek a gift without the motive of helping others you are sinning against the basic principle of life. 'Earnestly desire the higher gifts . . . especially that you may prophesy,' because prophecy helps other folk (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1). If you've got a gift that doesn't help others, be very careful how you use it, lest you offend against the basic spiritual principle of love.

The Gift and Gifts of the Holy Spirit page 10

The purpose of gifts is to edify others

So let me make it clear. There are two things the Holy Spirit does. He is given to me to help me, and for that I don't need any special gifts. For instance, if I am a sinner and I need salvation, I must understand the gospel, receive the gospel and be saved. But I don't have to have the gift of an evangelist to understand the gospel and get saved, do I? I don't need any gift.

If there's somebody here who is not saved and you can't make out what all these gifts are about, you can have salvation this very moment—you don't have to have any Christian gift in order to get it. But, on the other hand, if I'm going to be used of God to bring the gospel to somebody else, yes, I shall need the gift of evangelism. The gift is not to help me; it's to help the other person.

As a believer, do you want to understand the word of God? Well, you can come to the word of God directly, and God has given you his Holy Spirit so that you may understand the things that are freely given to you of God—you don't have to have the gift of a teacher before you can begin to understand the word of God. God has given his Spirit to all believers so that we might freely understand the things that God has written in his word. But if you are going to teach other folks, you will need a gift of teacher. Once again, the gift is not to help you, but the others. Let us see that, in seeking for spiritual things, we maintain this divinely appointed order.

Let us seek all those deeper experiences of God's Spirit that are given for our upbuilding, the enlightening and the strengthening of our hearts. Let us use the gifts that God has given us by putting us in the body of Christ. And, if we need it, let us seek other gifts. But if you are seeking gifts, I repeat, be sure that you only seek them in order to use them to benefit other people; and if they can't help, don't seek them and don't use them.

The parable of the Ten Virgins

We must draw this long study to a close. As I do so, and as we have thought of the Holy Spirit, my mind goes to the ancient parable taught by Jesus Christ our Lord. Turning our minds to his second coming and our need to be prepared for that coming, he said:

Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. (Matt 25:1-4)

In the symbolic parts of Scripture, the Bible indicates to us that oil used in lamps is a symbol of God's Holy Spirit. Let us use the parable to that practical end now.

Suddenly, the shout was heard, 'Here is the bridegroom!' and the virgins awoke out of sleep to get ready, and they began to light their lamps. Five lamps began to burn very brightly and the other five lamps petered out. 'Our lamps are going out,' they cried, and they hadn't any large supply of oil. As they went to try and get oil, the bridegroom came, the door was shut and they were outside.

Christ is coming back. Are you ready to meet him? Do you mind my asking, have you been born again of God's Holy Spirit? Have you that 'living well of water' that is the Holy Spirit in your life? (see John 7:38-39.) Do you know what it means, then, Christ saying he shall be in you and he shall be with you forever?

Yes, you have some life and we all have it. You have a Bible in your hand that was inspired by the Holy Spirit. You've got some life, haven't you? You had a hymn book just now in your hand and you were singing glorious Christian hymns.

Yes, you have some life, but having just that bit isn't enough, you know. You need to be linked with the infinite supply: you need to let Christ put you in the Spirit and his Spirit in you, and you need to be 'born of water and Spirit' (John 3:5).

Let us all, with these closing words, ask God to show us our hearts, to show us where we really stand, and when Christ comes may we be ready.



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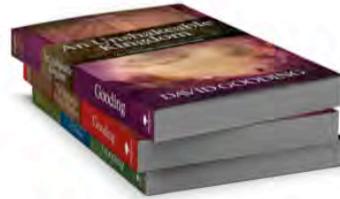
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