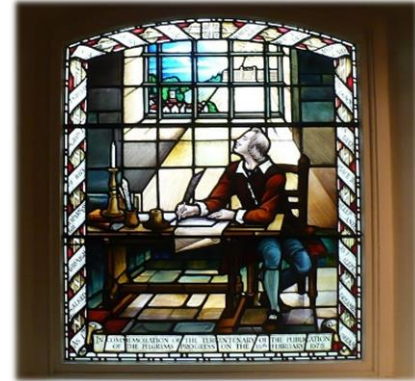


June 16, 2020

Good morning, Everybody.

Recently I read the account of a missionary to China many years ago who met a woman whose peaceful life in the midst of daily noise and bustle was remarkable.



She was an inn-keeper's wife. Day and night people were coming and going. Bad language, brawls and confusion mingled with incessant demands for service. Yet, whether cooking, supplying constant demands for tea, or making room for new arrivals when every corner seemed full, the inn-keeper's wife was quiet and kindly, with a light on her face that told she was a Christian.

"How do you keep so peaceful in it all?" one asked in wonder.

"lu fah-tsi," she replied. "There is a way. I use up many Bibles!"

Then she showed me a corner to which she often retired, a little space behind some feeding troughs and lumber. There, out of sight, the pages of her New Testament were searched so frequently that the thin Chinese paper wore to shreds as the inspired words brought help and comfort. She was proving the truth of Rom. 15:4, which in the Chinese version reads, "Patience and comfort **born of the Scriptures.**"

That's a great expression, isn't it? ***Born of the Scriptures.*** The Greek text is simply, *of the scriptures* (the NASB; ESV and NIV capitalize; *Scriptures*). But what the Chinese version was doing was trying to express the usage of the "of" in that Greek phrase. Because the information every Bible reader needs when he sees that verse is, "What is the relationship between my receiving 'patience and comfort' and the 'Scriptures' which I'm reading?" Or to put it the other way round, "When I read my Bible, how is it that I'm fortified with patience

(endurance) or that I'm comforted?" What's the relationship between my Bible and those two experiences?

Well, the "of" is expressing it. But *what* is it expressing? *What* is it saying is the relationship?

Most probably in this case it's identifying the Scriptures as the *source* of our being fortified with patience and receiving comfort. In other words, if right now, today, I desperately need perseverance in some trial or comfort for some sorrow, where do I go to find it? What would be the **source** to which I would look? A soap opera? My bank account and investments? A hobby? A movie? Etc.?

This verse says that the *source*, or in the Chinese understanding, *the mother who gives birth* to these two things is the Bible. God's Word. The Holy Scriptures. It's really a very satisfyingly suggestive way of rendering the "of." Maybe think of that the next time you read your Bible; of its giving *birth* to the things your spirit needs right while you're reading it. See if it happens (smile).

Someone once bore testimony to his constant experience of this when he was asked how he could face his appalling conditions of life with such calm and courage. He answered, ***I live in my Bible.***

Have we learned that there **are** ways to do that? Unbelief objects that it cannot be done unless, of course, one is living an uncommon life; confined by sickness, isolated on a remote foreign field, retired, called to study. But actually, when you talk with Christians in any of those conditions you discover that their lives are generally just as overrun as anyone else's with what, to them at least, are urgencies and anxieties. There really is no such thing as an undisturbed life. The *cares of life* are common to all. And the battle with them is always in the mind.

We would all do well to scheme more and better ways to **live in** our Bibles. Not just *live* them (that's vital, yes), but **live in** them (surely the secret to living them).

One woman I heard of years ago (I don't recall who she was) kept open Bibles in all the rooms of her home, so that as she went about housework and the mothering of her children she could steal a glance at scripture wherever she was. Verses on cards in my shirt pockets have often worked well for me. More

recently I really enjoy listening to an audio Bible while I'm driving or working around the house or yard. But the most satisfying method for walking around with the Word all day is to get it lodged firmly in memory.

One of the greatest blessings to me during this current situation is to hear again and again from many of you that you're memorizing scripture; especially Psalm 91. It seems as though someone tells me about that after every service at church now. And other testimonies come through e-mail or second hand from someone else that you've told. I just really can't tell you how uplifting it is to my own spirit every time I hear of another person doing it. John the Apostle said, *I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth* (III John 4), and I feel a happiness that must be something very much like that when there's word of yet one more person who is memorizing scripture and coming to love doing it.

Well . . . tonight we'll plan on working away at Psalm 91. Let's see if we can do thirteen verses. Or, for those who aren't quite that far along, we'll see if you can do as much as you've learned. Everybody, from those who can do just one verse, to those who can do the whole psalm, can work away together tonight.

Tonight

This evening, Ethan Hamilton is going to bring a message to us. We can be sure that he'd be glad for our prayers (smile). Then I also want to take at least a moment to talk with you briefly about the Supreme Court ruling on Monday. It was momentous and will almost certainly eventuate in being one of the most serious threats to Christian institutions within our lifetimes. But after noting that, we'll do together just as the early church did, and we'll **pray**. *And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord. . .* (Acts 4:24). Three of our men will lead us, and we'll join our hearts at the Throne of grace, where all is well and all is light and love.

Between now and tonight, may the Lord enable you to live in your Bible, to walk a path of righteousness, and to keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 21).

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick