

*If only I knew . . .*



I dreamt I was a man condemned who stood before the judgment seat of God, and could not run away. His all-surrounding presence bore down upon my sinful self. There was no place to hide my face. I was exposed to the piercing rays of His perfect holiness. How I loathed those righteous beams which emanated from Him. How uncomfortable and despairing I was, without hope of deliverance from the awesome presence of God. I felt as if I was darkness, even sin itself, repulsive in His holy sight: what a grievous and unenviable position to be in!

*“O woe is me,”* I said, *“I would rather be in a thousand perilous places than to be here before the throne of God!”* Compared to this, those places would be welcome joy and respite from the unbearable burden of my sin, made even heavier by the great gravity of His Holiness.

I agonized as I thought of the life I had already spent: If only I knew then about what I am facing now! How could I have been so deluded as to think that my righteous deeds could support me at this hour? How grossly had I underestimated His righteous demands. All my puny efforts which I thought could establish my righteousness before His sight have turned out to be as filthy rags. They have all come to naught! I never sought the Lord;

so how could I know Him? Since I never knew Him, how could I love Him? And if I did not love Him, how could I honour Him? Yet nothing else but this would qualify me to stand blameless before God. There is so much that I should have done, but the opportunity is now gone. But even if the opportunity is given, and I am allowed by his grace to live my life through again, I could never attain to even a shadow of His righteous demands, because sin is in my flesh!

***“I invested in corruptible goods, transient pleasures, vain ambitions and empty achievements. Where are they now? All have come to nothing!”***

Now each and every ungodly and unholy deed I had committed proclaim my guilt to me, like a myriad voices overwhelming me. How easy and convenient it was to commit them, and then to forget them or else excuse myself for them: I had pushed them aside and called them lapses in my life. *“It’s human to make such mistakes, and besides, I’m not as bad as other people,”* I reasoned. But look now: All of them have come together with a vengeance and appear in stark

contrast because of God's holiness. O woe is me! How can I bear the unending accusations of all my sins?

If only I knew then, what I know now, I would surely have spent my time more wisely. How blind I was to the things of eternal value. I invested in corruptible goods, transient pleasures, vain ambitions and empty achievements. Where are they now? All have come to nothing! My whole personal empire of accumulated wealth and experience have all been consumed in death: they were all gone in a moment! What wasted effort; what wasted time! All that my mind and heart delighted in, and all the pomp, complexity and intricacy which I had taken great pride in, have proved to be mere illusions. So here I stand, empty-handed and disappointed, with nothing to shield me from the wrath of God.

There is nothing I can do now. There is no one who can help. The only one with power to help is God Himself. But since He is now the One against me, there is no one else. This is my lot therefore, and there is no escape from it. Despair shall be my theme forever...

And then I realized that this was all but a dream. Oh what a dream! I am now exceedingly glad it was not real. I began to weep in

thanksgiving for the grace that has become my portion; the grace which will assuredly support me against that Day; the grace which is given to me in Jesus Christ alone! For by the saving power of His death He has made His righteousness my own, so that I can stand blameless before the throne of God. Therefore the rays of holiness will prove to be pleasant and joyful instead of unbearable and loathsome. How sweet is the assurance of eternal joy in God's presence, instead of eternal torment. How wonderful it is to be guiltless, and my sins far-removed and forgotten through the justifying power of the cross!

***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . .” (Romans 8:1)***

*“O Jesus, my life and my salvation, how thoroughly indebted I am unto Thee. Thou art my wonderful help and Redeemer, my perfect Mediator and High Priest before God for me. How shall I not give thanks unceasingly to thee!”* Jesus Christ! That name above all names! The name that makes the difference between eternal despair and eternal joy! Let me resolve to love that name forever!

Dear reader, you will one day be standing before God, and it will not be a dream. That day may come sooner than you think. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for you against your condemnation. Won't you come to Him today?

*Charles Seet*

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