

**Devotional Thoughts :: family devotions - By Favell Lee Mortimer (1802—1878)****family devotions - By Favell Lee Mortimer (1802—1878) - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/8/24 14:25**

August 24

John 12:9-19. Christ is honored and hated the more on account of Lazarus.

It was on the Saturday evening that the Lord Jesus supped at Bethany, and was anointed by Mary. The next day was not the Jewish Sabbath. That Sabbath began at six o'clock on Friday evening, and concluded at six o'clock on Saturday evening. It was on Sunday, the first day of the week, that the Lord entered Jerusalem, riding upon a donkey's colt, and accompanied by the joyful multitude. On the first day of the next week he rose from the dead. Between these two joyful days there was a dark interval—a week of unexampled sorrow and suffering.

The acclamations of the multitude on the day the Savior entered Jerusalem, increased the envy of the Pharisees. They said to each other with alarm, "Behold, the world has gone after him." They could not deny that he had raised Lazarus from the tomb; therefore they were determined to blast his growing reputation by violence. They desired not only to put him to death, but Lazarus also—because he was a living monument of his power. But had they accomplished their design, how easy it would have been for the Prince of Life to call him a second time out of his grave!

The sisters little knew, when they applied to Jesus for help in their hour of sorrow, that their brother's resurrection would lead to their Savior's death. They little thought, when they saw that brother seated at the supper at Bethany, that on that day week, his deliverer from the grave would be sleeping in his own! But in the end, they had reason to rejoice, for the death of their Lord was the forerunner of the most joyful event that has happened since the beginning of the world—his resurrection.

Nor was it Lazarus alone that provoked the enmity of the wicked. Mary, by her act of love, was the occasion of stirring up Judas to commit an act of treachery. He was so indignant at the disappointment he sustained, and at the rebuke he received, that he offered, four days afterwards, to betray the Lord into the hands of his enemies. Truly did Mary anoint the Lord for his burial. It was his only anointing, for he was hastily buried, and the ointment that the women prepared was too late. Thus we perceive that the family of Bethany unconsciously roused the indignation of the two chief instruments of the death of their Lord. The service Mary rendered led Judas to propose his betrayal; and the benefit Lazarus received led Caiaphas to suggest his murder.

Such was the mysterious arrangement of God. He who brings real good out of seeming evil—brings seeming evil out of real good. Good deeds are often followed by consequences that appear evil. But the servants of God have no reason to despair, when their attempts to honor their Master increase the malice of his foes. Though Satan may succeed in casting some into prison, or in causing others to be slain, he can never succeed in casting one believing soul into his own prison—the bottomless pit—or in causing him to be hurt by his own death—the second death.

We may conceive what grief Mary would have felt had she known that Judas was incited by her act of love to betray his Lord; yet, when she saw that Lord risen from the dead, would she have grieved then? No doubt it has often happened that the piety of new converts has awakened enmity against their minister, and has even led to his execution. Those converts must have felt acute anguish when they saw their beloved teacher consuming in the flames; but their anguish would be turned into joy could they see him standing before the throne clothed in a white robe, with a palm branch in his hand; or on the sea of glass, with the harp of God; or with the Lamb on Mount Zion singing the new song.

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August 26

Luke 19:37-40. The chorus of praise on Mount Olivet.

The burst of joy that was heard on Mount Olivet, affords a faint picture of the raptures of heaven. On Mount Olivet the whole multitude began to praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen. In heaven an innumerable multitude shall praise Him with a louder voice, for a still mightier work than had ever been seen in Israel.

But even a saint on earth sometimes feels overwhelmed when he reflects upon all the glorious deliverances and unmerited mercies he has received. There are moments, especially towards the close of his pilgrimage, when he sees at one glance the mysterious train of events by which his life has been marked, and when he cannot forbear exclaiming, in the words of David, "How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings."

There were few among that vast multitude on Olivet who had these warm feelings of grateful love; for the greater part, before the week expired, joined in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," But there were a few who praised the Lord with their whole hearts. Was there not among the crowd blind Bartimaeus, who had followed him on the way? Did not the beggar, born blind, go forth to meet him? He had been cast out of the synagogue for his sake, and when he had heard he was the Son of God, he had replied, "Lord, I believe." Was not that courageous and grateful man among those who most heartily praised his name? Was not Lazarus there, who had been raised from the dead? Was not Mary there, who, the evening before, had anointed her Lord with fragrant spikenard? Were not Salome and Joanna there, and Mary Magdalene, and all the faithful little band who had followed him out of Galilee? Was his blessed mother there? Did she behold Him whom, when a babe, she had laid in a manger, acknowledged as the King of Israel?

These inquiries we cannot answer; we know the names of none who composed that joyful company, excepting those of the apostles. But this we know—there were some present who hated to hear the praises of the Son of God. These Pharisees said, "Master, rebuke your disciples." Had they heard the songs that once delighted the shepherds at Bethlehem, they would have desired to stop the angelic chorus. But the Savior would not check the overflowing feelings of the multitude, but replied, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Were not the Pharisees more senseless than stones, for they had seen the most glorious miracles, and yet refused to honor Him who had wrought them? How unfit were they to enter heaven, where no tongue is mute in the Savior's praise! All are unfit for that blessed place who delight not in magnifying the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are there not many who have experienced his goodness from their earliest infancy, and who yet praise him not, thank him not? Are there not many who have heard of his dying love, who "hold their peace" on this glorious subject, and neither thank him in public nor in private? Are there not lips that have never, with warmth and sincerity, blessed the holy name of Christ the Savior? Are any of us among the number of those silent, ungrateful, and guilty creatures, who never thank their Lord, their Redeemer? While angels rest not day nor night in worshiping the Lord, shall a sinner for whom Christ died, refuse to utter one note of heartfelt praise?

Re: family devotions - By Favell Lee Mortimer (1802—1878) - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/8/27 4:38

August 27

Luke 19:41-44. Christ weeps over Jerusalem.

The world in which we live has been often called a "valley of tears." Each of us has shed tears, and will shed them again. But what are the circumstances which draw forth our tears? Do we not often weep for some trifling cause, some selfish reason, some sinful feeling? There are the tears of mortified pride, the tears of discontent, the tears of rebellion. All these are sinful tears. There are the tears of disappointment, of anxiety, of pain, and of grief. These are natural tears. There are the tears of sympathy. Jesus shed those when accompanying the mourners to the tomb of Lazarus. There are the tears of penitence—these the Savior could not shed, for he was not a sinner; but he delights in these tears, and with them he once permitted a weeping penitent to wash his blessed feet.

But the tears that he shed over Jerusalem were the tears of generous love—love for his enemies. Have we ever shed such tears? There are Christians who have so imbibed the Spirit of their Master, that they retire to pray, and even to weep for those who hate and revile them, and who will not pray, nor weep for themselves. But all true Christians have not attained to this height of divine compassion.

How strange it must have appeared to those who were singing his praises, and adorning his path with green and flowery branches, to see the Redeemer stop and gaze and weep! In the midst of their joyful hosannas, the sorrowful tones of his voice were heard, saying, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace!" Thus he spoke to the daughter of Zion, (for cities are often compared to women in Scripture, and the inhabitants are called their children.) Truly we may say, "Behold how he loved her!" He did not weep because he saw, from the top of Olivet, the place of his own sufferings; because he saw at its foot Gethsemane, that doleful garden where the first drops of his blood would fall; nor because he saw beyond the city, Calvary, that dismal spot, where the last drops would flow at the touch of the soldier's spear. He wept because he foresaw the calamities that would overtake his murderers. Though now the city sat majestically upon her seven hills, yet soon he knew she would lie prostrate in the dust. How grand and beautiful she appeared when viewed from the heights of Mount Olivet! Her lofty rocks, her massive towers, and, above all, the glittering dome of her snow-white temple, generally excited admiration; but now they called forth lamentation. It was in these defenses she trusted, instead of in the living God. But neither her rocks nor her towers, nor even her holy temple, could save her when the Romans came and besieged the city. Her God had departed from her. Then her walls were thrown down, her temple burnt, and more than one million of her inhabitants destroyed by famine and pestilence, by fire and sword.

At this moment the Savior knows the fate of every city upon earth. He knows what will befall London, and Paris, and Rome. Every city that, like Jerusalem, trusts in her own strength, and refuses to obey Christ, must fall, as she has done. Those who love their native land ought to use every effort to spread the Gospel among their countrymen.

But Christ not only knows the fate of every city; he knows also the fate of every individual in every city, and village, and hamlet. Sometimes, perhaps, when we see a person in the enjoyment of riches, and health, and honor—surrounded by smiling children, and admiring friends—we are ready to cry, "If I were in your place, I should be happy." But is this person forgetful of his Savior? Then it may be that Christ is saying to him, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong to your peace." We behold the present scene, but Jesus beholds the future also. He sees—not only the table amply spread, but the dying bed that will succeed; he hears—not only the voice of merriment that now prevails, but the faint groan that will close the scene. Can he count those happy, whose misery is every hour drawing nearer? Surely the compassionate Savior feels for all who soon will exclaim, in another world, "If I had known, even I in that my day, the things which belonged unto my peace, but now—they are hidden from my eyes!"