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The Presbyterian Church, Portersville, Pa....Tom V. Taylor***

The Positional Realities of the Christian

I. Some General Introductory Material

A. Who, or what, is a Christian?

The term defines one who personally trusts Jesus Christ as Savior and is, in that sense, a "little Christ". Some elaboration of this will follow.

B. What is a positional reality?

The term defines the condition of life in which one is found. Every profession or occupation will bring some positional reality to the holder. Those that pertain to the Christian are largely spiritual and define the benefits of the Christian for the present time, and in some sense, for eternity. A little confusing perhaps but we can work with it.

II. Item # 1: Now are We the Sons of God

1 John 3:1-2

A. The Reality:

1. 1 John 3:1-2....the statement..based on the words of Jesus in John 1:12. All people are created under the aegis of God but only those who believe in Jesus have the power to become

the sons (children) of God in a family sense.

2. Romans 8 shows us that Christians have the Holy Spirit (vss 14-15) and are thereby adopted or placed as sons in the Divine family. The witness of the Spirit is given to them to confirm this truth as they are “adopted” or placed in the divine family (vs 15) and the reality of “heirship” is also part of the family relationship.
3. Galatians 3:26 confirms the reality of the children of God while the fact of adoption is again stated in Galatians 4:5-6.
4. In summary, those who believe are the children of God. They believe on the Son, are adopted by the Father, and made secure by the Spirit.

B. The Prospects

1. 1 John 3:1-2...When He shall appear, we shall be “like Him.”
2. Philippians 3:21..We shall be changed after the likeness of Him (1 Corinthians 15:51 as well)
3. 1 Corinthians 15:49: We shall be perfected.
4. 1 Thessalonians 4:17: We shall be with Him forever.
5. There are many things not made explicit about this coming reality and the eternal state. We will need to wait them out to see the fullness...but in

the meantime, our prospects are nothing less than spectacular.

C. The Practical Meaning:

1. We should not be boastful about our blessing but humble in that it is “given” to us.
2. We are treated, taught, and directed as “sons” Hebrews 12:5-8
3. We should be witnesses of His work and glorify Him. Matthew 5:13-16, 1 Corinthians 6:20

D. Conclusion: To know who and what you are is the first step in any phase of living. Growth and productivity are built on that. Alas, in all of church history a major problem has been in identification. Let it not be so with us. We are--

III. Item # 2: We, who believe, are in His Hand.

John 10:28-30

*(An inserted note about **speech figures**. These are literary devices often used to describe something in a pictorial way and manner may be literal or figurative depending on the intention. The following four talks all build on Biblical speech figures used to define the Lord in human terms and if you want the technical terms you may ask me for them and anything may result. But the chief figures used in Scripture for these discussions are “hand”, indicating the security given by God, “wing” the protective care of God, “eye” the omniscience and guidance of God, and*

“arm” speaking of the power and might of God. I will be happy to discuss these with anyone in a non-pedantic fashion.}

A. The Reality:

1. John 10:28-29

We are assured by the Lord Jesus that we are held in the “hand of God.” The thought is that we are held by Him and we are in a secure position due to the strength of His hand. That is the figure...we know that God is not limited to a single hand! But He holds us...and that is a great truth to people who have trouble hanging on to anything.

2. In the Old Testament the hand of God is seen as a source of:

- a. personal aid, Ps. 10:12
- b. refuge, Ps. 31:5
- c. care: 31:15
- d. justice: Ps 75:8
- e. power or authority: Ps. 89:13
- f. ownership: Ps. 95:4-5, 7; Ps 119:73
- g. general help Ps. 119:173
- h. guidance Ps 139:10

3. In the New Testament we find:

- a. providential appointment: Acts 4:26

- b. deliverance: Acts 7:25
- c. assistance; Acts 11:21; 13:1 ff
- d. creatorship: Hebrews 1:10

And these are just short (and not always perfectly accurate of vivid Biblical pictures).

B. The Prospects:

- 1. His hand is governed, to some extent, by
 - belief
 - obedience
 - providential design
- 2.. But we will never be forsaken, forgotten, etc.
- 3. We cannot presume, however, on grace that is automatic and compulsive but we can depend on God for strength, power, direction and oversight.
- 3. In the Old Testament, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are great texts on this issue.

C. The Practical Meaning:

- 1. We do not fear the future nor the present.
- 2. We happily resign ourselves to the Lord's will.
- 3. We commit to an active stewardship, trusting God.
- 4. We are led of His Spirit and governed by His Word.

D. Conclusion

The more we trust Him and experience His hand the more secure we find ourselves and the more able to participate in His service....and the enjoyment of spiritual life.

IV. Item # 3 We are Under His Wing.

Psalm 91:4, 36:7, etc.

(Before I begin the "official" discussion I need to tell you my experience with this psalm and with the popular Gospel song associated with it. I cannot memorialize all the stories but this one is necessary.)

A. The Reality:

The concept in this speech figure is one of shelter and protection. In a figurative sense we are covered by the grace of God and so are under His wing. The bird imagery is found in this analogy and I will probably tell a pheasant story at this time. It looks like a long night for stories.

1. Psalm 91:4..under His wings
2. Psalm 36:7: movement for security. See also
Psalms 17:8, 57:1, 61:4
3. A practical observation: Ruth 2:12. "under whose wings you have come to trust."
4. Some primary illustrations:
Deuteronomy 32:11-12
Matthew 23:37 (Luke 13:34)

B. The Prospects:

1. We are His family..He has gathered us under His protective love and mercy
2. God knows how to care...we may not understand His ways (Jeremiah 29) but His love is over us, under us, around us. We are never out of His sight. We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand (Ps. 95)
3. Adversities will come....All that live godly in Christ Jesus.....
4. And the plan of life may not always be as clear and certain as we would prefer it to be
5. But purpose and direction will always be there...we are under His wings. We will not be detached from Him by forces above and our position beneath is almost invisible.

C. Some Practical Application:

1. We trust but we do not presume (I have said it before)
2. We watch and build a fund of knowledge of Divine intervention....both in our lives and in the experiences of others.
3. We assume a worshipful posture before Him and exercise the truth of the Great Command. "Thou shalt love....."

D. Conclusion: There are, in this discussion, some deep, personal questions not easily answered by us. But when we know whose we are and

how we are watched, the “sun shall not smite us by day nor the moon by night.”

Psalm 121:6

V. Item # 4: We are Guided by His Eye

Psalm 32:8

The need for guidance on the daily path is very great. God's will is easily discerned in the Bible (if you doubt that, ask me!) but God's guidance is a day by day thing not so easily seen. We come to many points of life where a decision is critical and we may not be certain where to turn. God will guide but I confess there is sometimes waiting, pleading, and attempting, in determining this leading. Usually when everything is over...it does appear the leading was clear but there are times in the progress that it does not seem so to be.

A. The Reality: God will guide

1. Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 30:21
2. Some Biblical pictures (illustrations)
 - a. Genesis 24:27..Abraham's servant
 - b. Ezra 5:6...the return to Judah
 - c. Joshua 1:7..the conquest and compare with Deuteronomy 5:32
 - d. Acts 16:9
3. And an illustration from the life of Patrick..the missionary in Ireland.
4. The eye, remember, symbolizes intelligence and guidance....

B. The Prospects:

1. A disclaimer is in order...it is easy to claim guidance on a basis of circumstance but before doing this make sure the circumstance is harmonious with the Word of God.
2. God will give us a clear path (Isaiah 30:21) and it will be open for us to follow (Hebrews 12:13)
3. God will perfect the things that concerne us (Psalm 138:8)
4. He will keep things in order beyond our vision but there is a perceptivity to His direction (Romans 8:28)
5. He will give us the assurance of peace (Psalm 33:18) (1 Peter 3:2)

C. Some Practical Application:

1. Stay in compliance with the will of God:
 - a. be thankful 1 Thessalonians 5:18
 - b. stay pure 1 Thessalonians 4:3
 - c. be committed: Romans 12:1-2
 - d. live a testimony: 1 Peter 2:15
 - e. worship: John 4:23-24
2. Be obedient to His leading (Joshua 1:7)
3. Keep your hand on the plow (Luke 9:62)
In other words, stick at it...Galatians 6, etc.
4. Lean not to your own understanding
Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 37:4-7
5. Stay alert to the opportunities to serve...
1 Corinthians 16:13-14

D. Conclusion: There is no doubt as to where we are going but the path seems to have many turnings so be sure to follow His guidance...given with His eye...the omniscient program of God that we, being in the way, the Lord will lead us.

VI. Item # 5: We are Upheld by His Arm

Deuteronomy 33:26-29

There are some hermeneutical (matters of interpretation) that trouble us at times. It may be said this promise was given to Israel, how can we take it for ourselves? In historical context we cannot but in practical consideration we can in the light of the fact that God does not change! His merits are constant. Should that be perplexing to any in our audience, I will be glad to discuss it (really!) on a person to person basis. The promises of God must be seen in the light of historic occurrence but the character of God is not a changing thing from day to day or age to age. We will see Him upholding His people by His power in every age...and we will know that He does not weaken at any time.

A. The Reality

1. The arm is a great symbol of underlying power. Some key texts that show us this are
 - a. Exodus 6:6
 - b. Deuteronomy 4:34
 - c. 2 Kings 17:36
 - d. Psalm 4:3

2. The personal strengthening power of God's arm is seen in Psalm 89:21

3. The power conquest is in Psalm 98:1

And probably an illustration from the Pentateuch with Moses' arms....

B. The Prospects

1. We will be given strength as we need it.

2. His grace will be sufficient for every need:
See the following texts: Deuteronomy 33:25.

2 Samuel 22:33, Psalm 28:7. 2 Timothy 4:17

3. The Lord will face the challenge with us
and for us.

4. We are limited in resources only by the
Divine intention or, in some cases, by our lack
of obedience and trust.

5. And we know in New Testament language
we are more than conquerors...Romans 8:37

C. Some Practical Application

1. Strengthen yourself in the Lord: Ephesians
6:10ff; 3:16; 1 Samuel 23:16

2. Take full advantage of the help He provides
2 Peter 1, Ephesians 6

3. Give yourself fully to the challenge at hand
1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 2

D. Conclusion: His arm will not fail...we have no need
to fear falling or failure resting on Him.

VII. Conclusion: We who believe are secure eternally,
pragmatically and logistically. We need to live with
confidence in the Lord using the position He has given us.
It will enrich our testimony, our joy in the Lord and our
anticipation of His blessing.