

Exhortation: Bournville

Date 5/10/08

Title: He is able

We have come once again B & S to remember our Heavenly Father's faithfulness as exhibited in the emblems before us upon the table. Our fellowship together in **remembrance** is not only of our Heavenly Fathers and our beloved Master's sacrifice. But it is, also importantly a reminder of the certainty of the fulfilment of the purpose of God, because of that sacrifice, we are shortly to remember.

The Eternal Spirit through Luke records "*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" Indeed our Heavenly Father has tasked his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ with the privilege and responsibility of making **that good pleasure** come to pass in the lives of each one of us, my dear brethren and sisters.

In Hebrews Chapter 7 and Verses 24 – 27

*"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore **he is able also to save them to the uttermost** that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."*

The Master is at the right hand of our Heavenly Father, working on behalf of those in that day He will style his brethren. This then is a key part of the current work of our Lord, this work brethren and sisters you do not hear very often mentioned. We very rarely talk about it either from our platforms or even in quiet conversation. Yet this intercessory work when considered is of immense personal comfort to each one of us.

*Wherefore **he is able also to save them to the uttermost** that come unto God by him.*

The scripture is telling us plainly brethren and sisters. That our Master the one, we are here to remember in these emblems of bread and wine is up for the job, He is fit for this purpose. We can have total confidence in him. What is He then **able** to perform, well as the verse continues "*to save us to the uttermost*", or as it can be translated "*completely, perfectly*" in other words so we reach full maturity in him.

The sense of the Greek is to finish or full end, in other words, when we too in the mercy of our Heavenly Father have been conferred upon with age lasting life and a body like unto our Master. My dear brethren and sisters our Lord is able the emblems upon the table are witnesses to this fact. The question is, *do you and I believe it enough?*

Now none of us have any problem in seeing how our Lord Jesus Christ was fit for the purpose of being that perfect sacrifice for sin we are here to remember. Because we are looking backwards, that sacrifice is now history, although its efficacy thankfully stretches down to our own day and beyond.

But if we are honest brethren and sisters we all have doubts in our darkest moments that our Lord might not be able to redeem us from our selves and the burden of our own sinfulness. Yet the scriptures powerfully portray that the one we are here to remember is more than able to the task. He indeed is able, we read in verse twenty-five of Hebrews chapter seven.

Now this word “*able*” in the Greek denotes four characteristic’s **ability, power, authority** and **desire** to perform something. Let us examine each of these four points in turn, so we might come to understand just how able our Master is brethren and sisters.

Firstly then our Master has the **ability**, this is seen in two ways firstly in that He ever liveth and secondly in that He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec.

In that the Lord Jesus Christ ever liveth we see how our beloved Master became an able intercessor for those who he styles his brethren. In presenting himself as a sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God that he might be able to continually intercede and to finally heal the breach that Adam caused.

Now as a priest his roll is to instruct the people, to teach them the knowledge of God, not only that, but its correct application in daily life. For the purpose of leading those that would draw near away from sin and that they might have full and uninterrupted fellowship with our Heavenly Father.

In Hebrews Chapter 5 and Verses 1 – 2

“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity”.

Note carefully brethren and sisters the key quality of the priest here is to have **compassion**. Compassion is a quality brethren and sisters that is anything, but passive for when it is aroused it demands an active and practical outworking and that outworking is more often than not immediate. Compassion then requires the priest to intervene, to make intercession on behalf of the one in need.

Now it has to be said here that this word is not one of the normal words rendered “*compassion*” in the New Testament. It is a different and unrelated word meaning “*one who is not unduly disturbed by the errors, faults, sins of others, but bears them gently*”. It speaks of the ability to have a balanced reaction to problems, errors, sins and faults of others, so as to provide the correct response to the needs of the person.

Nevertheless an immediate intercession is still seen in the use of this word and in this we have *compassion* in the normal sense of the term. Our Lord learned to be a priest in the days of his flesh in and through his interactions with others, putting his Father's word into practice day by day. In this we are given an example that we should follow in his footsteps. Thus the key for us is **what did the Master actually do?** For in the examination of his life and that of his followers recorded within the scriptures we have the answers for our day to day existence brethren and sisters.

Thus our Lord Jesus Christ my dear brethren and sisters does indeed possess both the ability and the skills necessary to save us to the uttermost in accordance with our Heavenly Father's good pleasure.

Moving on then for when we examine the second characteristic of **power**, we find that our Lord is “*far above*” all forms of power not only in this present age, but also with regards to the glorious age to come.

Ephesians Chapter 1 and verses 20 - 21

*“When he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far **above all** principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”*

That phrase “*far above*” means to exceed in both rank and power, nothing in this present evil age can be against us, if He and our Heavenly Father are for us.

There is no power brethren and sisters that our Master does not providential control over, **except one – our free will**. Our Heavenly Father has bound himself in regards to our free will and the Master too is bound by this same ability given to us to choose. They both would have us choose the good and abhor the evil and through their providential care, they work through the angels, even through one another and the by the effect of the word on our lives to influence us to choose the good.

Now there is tremendous comfort here brethren and sisters, although our flesh is weak, our spirit we read elsewhere is willing. We have control of this power of our free will and if we let the word, guide our lives then the mind of the spirit will be formed in us and we will be labourers together with our Heavenly Father and our Master to complete the work.

Philippians Chapter 1 and Verse 6

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”.

So our beloved Master then is more than able, He is above all forms of power and might and He has access to unlimited power to subdue all things to himself.

Turning to the third characteristic that of **authority**. We might ask the question is the one we have come to remember in a position to utilise the power we have just spoken about on our behalf.

Matthew Chapter 28 and Verse 18

“Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

“*All power*” has been granted unto him, by our Heavenly Father to complete his plan and purpose, even, the new creation in his Son. That word “*power*”, means “*authority*” our Master then possesses the full authority of Almighty God himself and the word “*all*” clearly indicates to us that nothing has been left out, there is no authority that is not under his providential control (*with the exception of the Father himself*). The scriptures speak of him having the pre-eminence in all things.

In 1st Peter Chapter 3 and verse 22

“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

So our Lord possesses the skills or ability; He likewise has the power and we have just seen that He has been empowered with the authority to deliver us to the uttermost. The question remains my dear brethren and sisters. *Does the Lord Jesus Christ have the desire?*

Now of all of these four characteristics we find contained in that small word “*able*”, this surely is the one that none of us brethren and sisters should have any doubts about. In the record through John the Master said “*my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*”. Now the word “*finish*” there in that verse is a closely related to the word “*uttermost*”, we encountered earlier.

In Hebrews Chapter 2 and Verses 17 – 18

*“Wherefore in all things **it behoved him** to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, **he is able** to succour them that are tempted”.*

There are two points here we want to focus upon; firstly we read “*it behoved him*”, this word carries the sense of it was his duty or he owed it to those who will be his brethren in that day to be like unto his brethren. In other words the Master **concurred** with his Father’s plan and purpose and agreed that this was the best way it could be achieved. His motivation was one of love for his Father first and for those who will make up his bride. After all brethren and sisters there is no greater motivational power than love.

The second point in that quotation concerns our Lord’s identification with his brethren. When you think about Gethsemane brethren and sisters and the tremendous trial of the garden in which our Lord overcame his fear and secured his will to that of the Father’s. No wonder this passage in Hebrews continues “*for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, **he is able** to succour them that are tempted.*”

Did you **notice** our little phrase in that final part of the verse brethren and sisters “*He is able to succour them that are tempted*”? This phrase here is identical to the one we

saw earlier in chapter seven of Hebrews. Thus we have a High Priest that truly understands and is both sympathetic and empathetic to our trials and needs.

Now to emphasise the point of our Master's desire we **note** that in the Greek this word "*able*" is in the middle voice, indicating to us, the personal choice of our Master. Now this is a personal choice, which is ongoing, brethren and sisters in that we are all still being tempted and are each in daily need of succour. That word "*succour*" mean's "*to run to their aid*". Here we see the disposition of the Master towards us brethren and sisters and never let us forget that this is indeed the case.

In Isaiah Chapter 53 and at Verses 9 – 10

*"Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand. **He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:** by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities".*

My beloved brethren and sisters there is no problem with our Lord's **desire**. In Romans we read "*who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*".

Well now we have briefly considered these four characteristics of **ability, power, authority** and **desire** and we have clearly seen in each case the Master is more than equipped and **able** to perform the work of our redemption.

How should each one of us respond to these truths and the desire of our Master, as witnessed in these emblems upon the table to bring us to God?

There are two passages, which show the response of the Apostle Paul to these things.

In Galatians Chapter 2 and Verse 20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me".

Firstly in Galatians the Eternal Spirit records how the Apostle "*lived by the faith of the Son of God*". Now the word "*faith*" here can be translated "*faithfulness*", the Apostle could entrust his Master, because that same Master had modelled the very same trust in his Father and as a result of his faith, He overcame and proved himself

likewise “*faithful*”. Thus we too are encouraged and exhorted to place our faith in the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to save us to the uttermost.

Now the second passage from 2nd Timothy is speaking directly of our Heavenly Father, but never the less what is true here of the Father is also true of the Son.

2nd Timothy Chapter 1 and Verse 12

*“For I know whom I have **believed**, and am **persuaded** that **he is able** to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”.*

Again did you **note** our phrase for examination “*he is able*”? We have to say the word “*able*” here is another related word meaning “*to be mighty and to excel in order to perform something*”.

Here the Apostle emphatically states the confidence of his hope and the basis of his own faithfulness. Here we see the Apostle following in the footsteps of his and our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul is not speaking here of what he believes, but whom he believes in. He is speaking of a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father and his Son. **Note carefully** the Father is not remote here, rather there is an intimacy of relationship.

Consider what is recorded here:

- Firstly He **knows** the Father by *experience*
- Secondly He **believes** the Father (*has faith and trust in him*)
- Thirdly He is **fully persuaded** by the Father (*his reason is satisfied*)
- Fourthly He **commits** himself fully into our Heavenly Father’s care

The verbs “*know, believe and persuaded*” here in the Greek are all active and in the perfect tense. What He is saying is that at an earlier time he came to these conclusions and placed his trust in our Heavenly Father and nothing in his experience has changed to change his mind. No matter what he suffers for the truth, that relationship is solid.

Is this our personal experience brethren and sisters? Do we each have the faith to commit ourselves in this same way?

Let us follow here brethren and sisters in the footsteps of both our Master and the Apostle and “let us too *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)*”.

Now there is one more passage concerning the work of the Master, where we find this phrase “*he is able*”.

In Philippians Chapter 3 and Verses 20 – 21

*“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working **whereby he is able** even to subdue all things unto himself”.*

The passage points us into the immediate future of our Lord’s return. It provides us with a point of focus for what we shall shortly partake in, “*for we shew the Lord’s death till he come*” as, we read elsewhere.

The blessing of having our bodies of humiliation transformed, to be conformed like unto his majestic body is the final act in the process of saving each one of us to the uttermost. It is hard to imagine brethren and sisters what this event will be like.

In 1st John Chapter 3 and Verses 2 - 3

*“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”.*

1st John informs us that those who have this hope are to endeavour to purify themselves now, even as the Lord Jesus Christ is pure. This is the faithful response if we **know**, if we **believe** and if we are fully **persuaded** that He indeed **is able** to subdue our vile bodies unto himself.

Returning to Philippians chapter three, we find that although this change of nature is expressed as a future event in the Greek, yet the final section of **verse 21**, “*according to the working whereby **he is able** even to subdue all things unto himself*”.

This final section is actually expressed in the present, indicating that our Master already has the **ability**, the **power**, the **authority** and the **desire** to perform this final blessing. Our Lord upon whom we wait brethren and sisters is himself merely awaiting the command of our Heavenly Father to make this promise a reality in our lives.

Now since the task of the subjection of all things is the work of the Millennium. What then is the Master presently engaged in to subdue unto him?

Surely it must be the ecclesia, his bride. For that word “*subdue*” is a military term meaning to arrange men into troops under their commander, to bring them into rank and line. We have come full circle in that we return to the current work of the Master as our High Priest making compassionate intercession on our behalf.

Turn with me to Hebrews Chapter 4 and Verses 14 – 16

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”.

Let us brethren and sisters have the same faith and supreme confidence in our Lord, which we saw earlier in the Apostle Paul. As we now come to remember him and his faithfulness in the appointed way brethren and sisters, let us each acknowledge that the Master is indeed the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

His role is absolutely instrumental in our salvation, not just as our sacrificed saviour, but equally and importantly as our ever-living High Priest. This priestly function is not a passive role, but as we have seen brethren and sisters, it is a vibrant, active engagement totally in keeping with his exalted status, as the Son of God.

So as we now consider these emblems of bread and wine before us. Let each one of us clearly see **the bread**, which speaks here of the love of our Heavenly Father in Christ, expressed in his word. That word, which is able to transform and renew our minds and characters to be, like his.

Likewise with the cup, for **the wine** speaks to each one of us, of the outworking of that word in a life poured out. **Firstly** in the Master’s sacrifice and **secondly** in his ongoing High Priestly intercession on our behalf to our eternal wellbeing in the Father’s mercy and ultimately to our Heavenly Father’s glory. In the wine then we see the example of how we are to lay down our lives one for another and so learn to be priests, as he did.

Let us now go brethren and sisters and live by the faithfulness of the Son of God who loved us, and gave himself for us, and has washed us from our sins in his own blood.

