



MORNING
and
EVENING

*A New Edition of the Classic Devotional Based on
The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*

Revised and updated by

Alistair Begg

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*“Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.”*

ISAIAH 50:4

*“My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and
my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,
when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night.”*

PSALM 63:5-6

INTRODUCTION

Spurgeon's daily devotional readings have stood the test of time and are unrivaled as an example of deep theological insight and warm pastoral concern. They are so classic that one hesitates to tamper with them.

In revising and updating the material, I have tried to make them more readable without spoiling the splendor of the language. Most of the changes are minor and will go largely undetected. On a few occasions, because of the difference between the King James Version and the English Standard Version, I was forced to take more liberty.

My goal throughout has been to fashion the material in such a way that it will be accessible to a far wider audience than before. Spurgeon's vocabulary is so vast that the reader may still find himself reaching for a dictionary, but this will surely be an added benefit!

Since I did not have the opportunity to ask Spurgeon's permission, when I meet him I will seek his forgiveness if in attempting to bring clarity I have clouded the issue. The reader must judge. My prayer is that another generation will emerge thankful to God for the work of Spurgeon, whose memory we revere and whose example of godly devotion we seek to follow.

ALISTAIR BEGG

January



JANUARY 1

🌿 MORNING 🌿

THEY ATE OF THE FRUIT OF THE LAND OF CANAAN THAT YEAR.

— JOSHUA 5:12

Israel's weary wanderings were all over, and the promised rest was attained. No more moving tents, fiery serpents, fierce Amalekites, and howling wildernesses: They came to the land that flowed with milk and honey, and they ate the old corn of the land. Perhaps this year, beloved Christian reader, this may be your case or mine. Joyful is the prospect, and if faith be in active exercise, it will yield unalloyed delight. To be with Jesus in the rest, which remains for the people of God, is a cheering hope indeed, and to expect this glory so soon is a double bliss. Unbelief shudders at the Jordan that still rolls between us and the goodly land, but let us rest assured that we have already experienced more ills than death at its worst can cause us. Let us banish every fearful thought and rejoice with exceeding great joy in the prospect that this year we shall begin to be "forever with the Lord."

Some of the company will this year remain on earth, to do service for their Lord. If this should fall to our lot, there is no reason why the New Year's text should not still be true. "We who have believed enter that rest." The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance; He gives us glory begun below. In heaven believers are secure, and so are we preserved in Christ Jesus; there they triumph over their enemies, and we have victories too. Celestial spirits enjoy communion with their Lord, and this is not denied to us. They rest in His love, and we have perfect peace in Him; they sing His praise, and it is our privilege to bless Him too. We will this year gather celestial fruits on earthly ground, where faith and hope have made the desert like the garden of the Lord. Man ate angels' food of old, and why not now? O for grace to feed on Jesus, and so to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan this year!

🌿 EVENING 🌿

WE WILL EXULT AND REJOICE IN YOU. — SONG OF SOLOMON 1:4

We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will not open the gates of the year to the sorrowful notes of the organ, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy and the high-sounding cymbals of gladness. "O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."¹ We, the called and faithful and chosen, will drive away our griefs and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles; we with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which You dwell will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. Jesus must have the crown of our heart's delight; we will not dishonor our Bridegroom by mourning in His presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies; let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. We will *exult and rejoice*: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be the sweetest of incense even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? We will be glad and rejoice *in You*. That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, aye, and every drop of their fullness in Him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, You are the present portion of Your people, favor us this year with such a sense of Your preciousness that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in You. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus.

¹Psalm 95:1

JANUARY 2

🌿 MORNING 🌿

CONTINUE STEADFASTLY IN PRAYER. — COLOSSIANS 4:2

It is interesting to consider how large a portion of the Bible is occupied with the subject of prayer, either in furnishing examples, enforcing precepts, or pronouncing promises. We scarcely open the Bible before we read, "People began to call upon the name of the LORD;"¹ and just as we are about to close the volume, the "Amen" of an earnest supplication meets our ear. Instances are plentiful. Here we find a wrestling Jacob—there a Daniel who prayed three times a day—and a David who with all his heart called upon his God. On the mountain we see Elijah; in the dungeon Paul and Silas. We have multitudes of commands, and myriads of promises. What does this teach us, but the sacred importance and necessity of prayer? We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of it. So deep are our necessities that until we are in heaven we must not cease to pray. Do you need nothing? Then I fear you do not know your poverty. Have you no mercy to ask of God? Then may the Lord's mercy show you your misery! A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honor of a Christian. If you are a child of God, you will seek your Father's face and live in your Father's love. Pray that this year you may be holy, humble, zealous, and patient; have closer communion with Christ, and enter more often into the banqueting-house of His love. Pray that you may be an example and a blessing to others, and that you may live more to the glory of your Master. The motto for this year must be, "Continue . . . in prayer."

🌿 EVENING 🌿

LET THE PEOPLES RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. — ISAIAH 41:1

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continues by itself. "You renew the face of the ground,"² was the psalmist's utterance. Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labor, must drink of the rain of heaven and draw from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap freshly drawn from the earth. Neither can man's life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances. How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starving souls they are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon Him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strife within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that has not sucked up fresh sap and grasped the rock with many inter-twisted roots. When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and as a result a painful desolation and a lamentable disgrace may follow. Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfillment of the promise, "They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength."³

¹Genesis 4:26 ²Psalms 104:30 ³Isaiah 40:31

Jesus Christ is Himself the sum and substance of the covenant, and as one of its gifts He is the property of every believer. Believer, can you estimate what you have received in Christ? “In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”¹ Consider the word “God” and its infinity, and then meditate upon “perfect man” and all His beauty; for all that Christ, as God and man, ever had, or can have, is yours—out of pure free favor, given to you to be your entailed property forever. Our blessed Jesus, as God, is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Will it not console you to know that all these great and glorious attributes are altogether yours? Has He power? That power is yours to support and strengthen you, to overcome your enemies, and to preserve you even to the end. Has He love? Well, there is not a drop of love in His heart that is not yours; you may dive into the immense ocean of His love, and you may say of it all, “It is mine.” Has He justice? It may seem a stern attribute, but even that is yours, for He will by His justice see to it that all that is promised to you in the covenant of grace shall be most certainly secured to you. And all that He has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man the Father’s delight was upon Him. He stood accepted by the Most High. O believer, God’s acceptance of Christ is your acceptance; for the love that the Father set on a perfect Christ, He sets on you now. For all that Christ did is yours. That perfect righteousness which Jesus worked out, when through His stainless life He kept the law and made it honorable, is yours and is imputed to you. Christ is in the covenant.

*My God, I am Thine—what a comfort divine!
 What a blessing to know that the Savior is mine!
 In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am,
 And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.*


 EVENING
 

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS:
 ‘PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD,
 MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’” — LUKE 3:4

The voice crying in the wilderness demanded *a way for the Lord, a way prepared, and a way prepared in the wilderness*. I would be attentive to the Master’s proclamation and give Him a road into my heart, cast up by gracious operations, through the desert of my nature. The four directions in the text² must have my serious attention.

Every valley must be exalted. Low and groveling thoughts of God must be given up; doubting and despairing must be removed; and self-seeking and carnal delights must be forsaken. Across these deep valleys a glorious causeway of grace must be raised.

Every mountain and hill shall be laid low. Proud creature-sufficiency, and boastful self-righteousness, must be leveled, to make a highway for the King of kings. Divine fellowship is never promised to haughty, high-minded sinners. The Lord has respect to the lowly and visits the contrite in heart, but the lofty are an abomination unto Him. My soul, beseech the Holy Spirit to set you right in this respect.

The crooked shall be made straight. The wavering heart must have a straight path of decision for God and holiness marked out for it. Double-minded men are strangers to the God of truth. My soul, take heed that in everything you are honest and true, as in the sight of the heart-searching God.

The rough places shall be made smooth. Stumbling-blocks of sin must be removed, and thorns and briars of rebellion must be uprooted. So great a visitor must not find miry ways and stony places when He comes to honor His favored ones with His company. Oh, that this evening the Lord may find in my heart a highway made ready by His grace, that He may make a triumphal progress through the utmost bounds of my soul, from the beginning of this year even to the end of it.

¹ Colossians 2:9 ² Isaiah 40

JANUARY 4

☞ MORNING ☞

GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR
LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. — 2 PETER 3:18

Grow in grace”—not in one grace only, but in all grace. Grow in that root-grace, *faith*. Believe the promises more firmly than you have done. Let faith increase in fullness, constancy, simplicity. Grow also in *love*. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word, and deed. Grow likewise in *humility*. Seek to lie very low and know more of your own nothingness. As you grow *downward* in humility, seek also to grow *upward*—having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to “*grow in . . . the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.*” He who grows not in the knowledge of Jesus, refuses to be blessed. To know Him is “life eternal,” and to advance in the knowledge of Him is to increase in happiness. He who does not long to know more of Christ, knows nothing of Him yet. Whoever has sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ does satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction that the appetite is not choked, but whetted. If you know the love of Jesus as the hart pants for the water-brooks, so will you pant after deeper draughts of His love. If you do not desire to know Him better, then you love Him not, for love always cries, “Nearer, nearer.” Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven. Do not rest content without an increasing acquaintance with Jesus. Seek to know more of Him in His divine nature, in His human relationship, in His finished work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His present glorious intercession, and in His future royal advent. Live close to the Cross, and search the mystery of His wounds. An increase of love to Jesus and a more perfect apprehension of His love to us is one of the best tests of growth in grace.

☞ EVENING ☞

AND JOSEPH RECOGNIZED HIS BROTHERS,
BUT THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM. — GENESIS 42:8

This morning our desires went forth for growth in our acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; it may be well tonight to consider a kindred topic, namely, *our heavenly Joseph's knowledge of us*. This was most blessedly perfect long before we had the slightest knowledge of Him. “Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.”¹ Before we had a being in the world we had a being in His heart. When we were enemies to Him, He knew us, our misery, our madness, and our wickedness. When we wept bitterly in despairing repentance, and viewed Him only as a judge and a ruler, He viewed us as His brethren well beloved, and His heart yearned toward us. He never mistook His chosen but always beheld them as objects of His infinite affection. “The Lord knows those who are his”² is as true of the prodigals who are feeding pigs as of the children who sit at the table.

But, sadly *we did not know our royal Brother*, and out of this ignorance grew a host of sins. We withheld our hearts from Him and allowed Him no entrance to our love. We mistrusted Him and gave no credit to His words. We rebelled against Him and paid Him no loving homage. The Sun of Righteousness shone forth, and we could not see Him. Heaven came down to earth, and earth perceived it not. Let God be praised, those days are over with us; yet even now what we know of Jesus is small compared with what He knows of us. We have only begun to study Him, but He knows us altogether. It is a blessed circumstance that the ignorance is not on His side, for then it would be a hopeless case for us. He will not say to us, “I never knew you,” but He will confess our names in the day of His appearing, and meanwhile will show Himself to us as He does not to the world.

¹Psalm 139:16 ²2 Timothy 2:19

JANUARY 5

 MORNING 

AND GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS GOOD.

AND GOD SEPARATED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS. — GENESIS 1:4

Light might well be good since it sprang from that fiat of goodness, “Let there be light.” We who enjoy it should be more grateful for it than we are, and see more of God in it and by it. *Physical* light is said by Solomon to be sweet, but *gospel* light is infinitely more precious, for it reveals eternal things and ministers to our immortal natures. When the Holy Spirit gives us *spiritual* light and opens our eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we behold sin in its true colors, and ourselves in our real position; we see the Most Holy God as He reveals Himself, the plan of mercy as He propounds it, and the world to come as the Word describes it. Spiritual light has many beams and prismatic colors, but whether they be knowledge, joy, holiness, or life, all are divinely good. If the light received be thus good, what must the *essential* light be, and how glorious must be the place where He reveals Himself. O Lord, since light is so good, give us more of it, and more of Yourself, the true light.

No sooner is there a good thing in the world than a *division is necessary*. Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them—let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines, or deceits of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest, and bold in their Lord’s work, leaving the works of darkness to those who will dwell in it forever. Our churches should by discipline divide the light from the darkness, and we should by our distinct separation from the world do the same. In judgment, in action, in hearing, in teaching, in association, we must discern between the precious and the vile, and maintain the great distinction that the Lord made upon the world’s first day. O Lord Jesus, be our light throughout the whole of this day, for Your light is the light of men.

 EVENING 

AND GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS GOOD. — GENESIS 1:4

This morning we noticed the goodness of the light, and the Lord’s dividing it from the darkness. We now note the special eye that the Lord had for the light. “God saw the light”—He looked at it with complacency, gazed upon it with pleasure, saw that it “was good.” If the Lord has given you light, dear reader, He looks on that light with peculiar interest; for not only is it dear to Him as His own handiwork, but it is like Himself, for “God is light.” It is pleasant for the believer to know that God’s eye tenderly observes that work of grace that He has begun. He never loses sight of the treasure that He has placed in our earthen vessels. Sometimes we cannot see the light, but God always sees the light, and that is much better than our seeing it. Better for the judge to see my innocence than for me to think I see it. It is very comfortable for me to know that I am one of God’s people—but whether *I* know it or not, if the Lord knows it, I am still safe. This is the foundation, “The Lord knows those who are his.”¹ You may be sighing and groaning because of inbred sin, and mourning over your darkness; yet the Lord sees “light” in your heart, for He has put it there, and all the cloudiness and gloom of your soul cannot conceal your light from His gracious eye. You may have sunk low in despondency, and even despair; but if your soul has any longing toward Christ, and if you are seeking to rest in His finished work, God sees the “light.” He not only *sees* it, but He also *preserves* it in you. “I, the Lord, do keep it.” This is a precious thought to those who, after anxious watching and guarding of themselves, feel their own powerlessness to do so. The light thus preserved by His grace, He will one day develop into the splendor of noonday, and the fullness of glory. The light within is the dawn of the eternal day.

¹2 Timothy 2:19