

A Birthday Meditation

~Other Speakers S-Z: James Smith:

How great has been the mercy of my God to me--a poor, worthless, ill-deserving worm! I trace his goodness from my birth to the present moment.

I was born in a land of gospel light--when I might have been born in heathen darkness.

I was instructed to read God's holy word--when I might have been left like others, in nature's ignorance.

I was preserved in Christ Jesus during the years of my unregeneracy, when many who were born about the time I was, have been cut down and consigned to the grave.

I was called by the sovereign grace of a covenant God, when running post-haste to eternal destruction.

I was taught by the Holy Spirit my sinful state, the value of my soul, the need of a Savior, the way of escape, and the freeness of salvation.

I was given a saving interest in Christ, and feel love to his dear name, and obtain a knowledge of his saving work.

I was kept by his mighty power in the midst of temptations, persecutions and snares, to publish the glad tidings of salvation.

I was sent to proclaim to poor sinners round the danger they are in, the glorious salvation of the cross, and Jehovah's boundless love. Blessed with many seals to my ministry in different parts of the land, and with repeated testimonies of the power of the word in the hearts of the people of God.

I was preserved from my depraved heart, the various errors that lead multitudes astray, and the opposition of all my foes.

I was supplied with every temporal mercy, gospel privilege, and promised blessing.

I was brought through innumerable trials, difficulties and distresses, to the glory of Jehovah's grace.

I was spared, notwithstanding my hardness, rebellion and backslidings, until I am more than forty years of age.

I appear before God this morning--willing, heartily willing, to be, to do, to suffer whatever he sees proper, so that I may but be kept from sin, and dishonoring his dear name and gospel.

When I reflect upon WHAT I WAS, how circumstanced, and situated, and view the way the Lord has led me, what he has done for me, and what he has done by me--I am astonished! O, that I did but feel humbled, grateful and thankful--as I would I desire to be filled with love to God, zeal for God, and concern to glorify God. I want to be entirely devoted to him, body, soul, and spirit, that my all may be for him and not for another. When I consider my coldness, carelessness, and ingratitude, I cannot but wonder that the Lord has not long ago disowned me! But blessed be his holy name,

"Whom once he loves--he never leaves.
But loves him to the end!"

He changes not--therefore I am not consumed.

O my soul, lay low before the Lord under a sense of your manifold infirmities and follies, and seek grace from Jesus to live holily, righteously, and usefully in this present evil world.

Gracious Lord, grant unto your servant light to see your will, power to do your pleasure, love to follow you wherever you go, and an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of my Lord and Savior. O give me an increasing love to souls, success in your work, and growth in grace, that my own personal concerns be not neglected! O make me like my Savior in spirit, temper and conduct!

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See, gracious God, I do afresh on this my birthday, surrender myself entirely to you to be your servant, to be used as you please, and to be led where you will! O grant that I may serve you with a son's heart, a bride's affection, and a servant's submission! Lord, take me, and enable me to remember evermore that I am yours! May I leave myself and all my concerns in your hands, and go about your business. O save me from every snare, from every foe, and from my wretched self! Get glory in me, by me, and through me--for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.