

“Consciousness and Awareness”
 Pastor Sam Richards
 Sermon for 14 July 2024
 Text: Psalm 24:1-6

That God should create in His image and out of dust a conscious being, one who is conscious of self and aware of His Creator is stupendously amazing! It is a miracle wrapped in wonder! And if that, for starters, were not enough, God also redeemed that creature and made possible for what was created mortal to attain eternal life, occupancy of heaven and a glory filled with joy, delight and bliss exceeds in quality and essence the primal miracle of our creation. In the mix of this we should note that creation was not an isolated event, but an initiation of relationship between God and man, heaven and earth which is fraught with, packed full of revelation, glory—we were created for the praise and for the glory of God! ***That as we grow in knowledge of Him, we grow in self-knowledge!*** The end point of that growth is perfect knowledge. As C. S. Lewis asserted, we have never seen a mere mortal—an ordinary human being! Paul, I think, expressed it well, when, in 1 Cor. 15 he wrote:

53 For this [a]perishable must put on [b]the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this [c]perishable will have put on [d]the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord¹.

To accomplish so great a redemption, God had had to remove all impediments—hindrances, personal and spiritual, brought about by sin, the flesh, the world and the devil!

About these hindrances much can be said; much that bears repetition and reiteration because in counting our blessings, we should exercise care not to neglect how great, and many they are. For instance, guilt, shame, blame, sin and addiction are impediments, hindrances which are both personal and spiritual. The Father on a mercy, rescue mission, sent the Son of God. He was crucified, put to death our guilt, shame, blame and sin. The truth is that these hindrances/our transgressions were actually nailed to the cross where they became “dead things.” They are dead in themselves and dead to us—meaning they are taken out of the way, cancelled and removed **as far as the east is from the west.** (Psalm 103:12) ***Because they are dead to us, we should be dead to them—it is from hence that most of our spiritual troubles arise.*** We

¹ Footnotes

- a. 1 Corinthians 15:53 Lit *corruptible*
- b. 1 Corinthians 15:53 Lit *incorruption*
- c. 1 Corinthians 15:54 V 53, note 1
- d. 1 Corinthians 15:54 V 53, note 2

are forgiven, but we do not live as if we are forgiven—no, we continue to walk in guilt, shame, blame and sin out of habituation. It is ironic that we talk about addiction as if it were a “habit.” We are so used to walking in guilt, shame, blame and sin that we simply carry on as if Christ’s sacrifice had not been done, *as if it were not done, had never occurred*. I distinctly recall, the healing of the man born lame. He stood up, his ankles were strengthened and although he had never stepped a foot forward in his entire life, he ran, **leaping, and jumping and praising God into the very temple** that his former disability had previously barred him from! His days of exclusion were over and he was rendered by grace, through faith **entirely well**. His days as a cripple were also ended presumptively in that hour! The precedent for this miracle was Jesus’ healing of the paralytic who formerly lay beside the pool of Bethesda. (John 5:1-16) That man didn’t resume his former posture, did he? No, he took up his pallet/bedding and walked home despite it being the Sabbath because **the Lord of the Sabbath** told him, so. Does anyone suppose that his whole perspective on life was altered from that day onward?!

I am drawing your attention to the instantaneousness of these healings, because in the moment we are saved, we attain a change of status, of standing. We no longer are what we were before and our self-understanding registers this change on the spot! Even our minds are renewed so that our hearing is enhanced by understanding.

**Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord’s, and [a]all it contains,
The world, and those who dwell in it.**

**2 For He has founded it upon the seas
And established it upon the rivers.**

**3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?
And who may stand in His holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul [b]to falsehood
And has not sworn deceitfully.**

**5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord
And [c]righteousness from the God of his salvation.**

**6 [d]This is the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face—even Jacob. [e] Selah.²**

The first line of this great psalm tells us three things that the Lord possesses: a. The earth, b. the fullness thereof and c. the souls of those who dwell in that world *as well as all creature life*. God superintends these possessions with never-ceasing care and infinite kindness; and that is what we call providence. The Lord’s right to possession

² Footnotes

- a. Psalm 24:1 Lit *its fullness*
- b. Psalm 24:4 Or *in vain*
- c. Psalm 24:5 I.e. as vindicated
- d. Psalm 24:6 Or *Such*
- e. Psalm 24:6 *Selah* may mean: *Pause, Crescendo or Musical interlude*

includes the right of disposal, should He so choose, are properties of God's threefold possession: the earth, the fullness and those who dwell therein! *And as these are His, because he created them all, He is free to do with them whatsoever He pleases.*

That truth need not be terrifying, but in times of judgment, it surely can be so—we are His for Him to dispose of as, and where, and when God so chooses. **He is therefore the chief Owner, the head Proprietor of the entire Creation.** “All” covers the extent, and “owner” covers the manner of His proprietorship. As owner God can determine who lives where and for how long they might do so. God disposed of Canaan (conveying it first by promises and subsequently by conquest and occupation by the Jews—or Israelites more properly speaking—from the Canaanites to His people!

Does **divine ownership** not include the discretion to make such a transaction? Human claims to ownership are always subordinate to God's sovereign ownership. We are “tenants at will” at best and He is our Landlord. Respect, honor and rent are all due Him—in a manner of speaking—on time and in full. The analogy is, of course, not perfect; but it is helpful.

Fullness. This word conveys a sense of plenitude, abundance, the replenish-ability of the earth, the soil, water and air. Fullness is also a divine possession. “We give Thee but Thy own; What ere the gift might be.”

Founded upon the waters (floods, or torrents) is a cosmological revelation. That there are waters above and waters below seem to be expressed in scripture—but only God can establish sure foundations **upon the waters**. Our physical existence is supernatural, or so it would seem.

When we come to verses 3 and 4, we come to a description of whom God wants to stand before Himself **in His hill, or holy mountain**. And we should not be amazed to see ourselves as redeemed saints pictured there! **Clean hands** and a **pure heart** signify our redeemed state: we are cleansed and we are purified by Christ's blood—we attain our new status and from there it is matter of walking in it. Living as if our hands are clean and can't be turned to evil; our hearts being purified should, going forward, entertain no impurity. It is not even to be looked upon. It is a matter of character, the character of a saint *which, of course, is who we are in Christ from the moment we are saved*. We are saved to become holy worshippers of God, to increase His praise, enlarge His kingdom and to serve our Lord and Savior. We are to be pure, not vain (that is sensual, or fleshly in orientation) and our hands should never be turned to evil doings. Purity of speech is rooted in sincerity and truthfulness. Amen. The enormity of these aspirations cannot be lost upon us—Frankly, we cannot perform any or even some of it without its coming from heaven, or God to us as a gift. If we stand in righteousness, it is a righteousness that God supplies—we are wearing garments provided by the host of the banquet! God asks the impossible of us, subsequently gives it to us, and then *rewards us for walking in it!* I see no grounds for boasting in this—absolutely none. Salvation is of God and of God alone.

Amen