

PROVERBS 25

THE FAITHFUL MESSENGER

Apples of gold in pictures of silver (verse 11)

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

The allusion here is to intricately-designed baskets of silver network, in which delicious fruits were served up. The beauty of the texture set off the fruit with additional charms. In the same way, a lovely channel enhances the attractiveness of truth. Gospel preachers should strive to speak “acceptable words” – “words fitly spoken,” which give each person their proper food “in due season,” and which are suited to their ages and difference of temperament. Our Lord Jesus Himself was gifted with a tongue that spoke the right words at the right time. His discourses upon the Living Water and the Bread of Life arose naturally out of His conversation; and therefore, they were full of arresting applications. Paul powerfully charged superstition upon the Athenians by an inscription that he saw upon one of their own altars, and he strengthened his reasoning by quoting from one of their own poets. And to a corrupt and immoral judge, he preached about righteousness, temperance, and coming judgment. In general, effective communication greatly depends upon the words that are spoken, the occasion of speaking them, and the spirit of speaking them. We may think to relieve our consciences by speaking our minds. But to do so rudely and harshly may put a stumbling-block in our brother’s way. The “apples of gold” in their beautiful cover of silver evidently imply good sense and good taste, in addition to the good things themselves.

The faithful Messenger (verse 13)

“As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.”

The American missionary Adoniram Judson was imprisoned in Burma, and doomed to death. Alone in the hands of heathen savages, that Christian witness could do nothing to preserve his own life. He learned in prison that a British warship was in the Burmese waters. Both the power and the desire to save him were at hand; but all might have miscarried if no messenger had been found, or if the messenger who was sent had not proven himself to be faithful. The Lord had given the missionary favor in the eyes of some who had access to the prison. Having entrusted the vital message to one of these persons, he entrusted himself to his Father in heaven, and awaited the result in patience. The next day, the boom of a cannon from the sea fell upon the ear of the missionary as he lay in his dark, hot dungeon. It was a token that the knowledge of his danger had reached the British ship-captain! The messenger had been faithful, and that faithfulness was like snow in summer to Judson’s weary heart! When the message was delivered, all the rest was easy. The warship soon wrenched the Christian captive from the hands of the barbaric tyrant who ruled the land!

Such a history might be written of similar critical messages carried by very faithful messengers, and a thrilling history it would be! But the position and power of the oppressor are sometimes such that a mere messenger – however faithful he may be – cannot in any way contribute to the deliverance of the captive. When an enemy’s hosts girdle a besieged city – to carry a message out of it is certain death to the one who



bears it. This is the condition of the sinful world by nature, and this is what our Lord Jesus – the “Messenger of the Covenant” – endured in His saving work. He is the Brother born for the adversity in which we lay. He is faithful to carry tidings of the danger, and He is mighty to save us from death. But Jesus is also a Messenger in another way! He is our Mediator. He lays his hand upon both God and ourselves. He brings the Lord’s message to us, and carries our words back to God. “We have an Advocate with the Father.” “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Through Him, the lowliest believer may send his petition safely to the Lord of Hosts. The Messenger is faithful, and will certainly refresh the souls of those who entrust their petitions into His hand. He carried the tidings of mercy to us, although the wrath due to a world’s sin blocked up the way; how much more will He carry our request to the Father, now that His suffering is over and His everlasting joy has begun! All who are weary and heavy-laden may send in their requests by His faithful hand. He will refresh the souls of those who send Him.

Our help is laid upon One Who is mighty. He is both the Messenger and the Conqueror! There is none other Who is able and willing to save. He stands now at the door of a closed heart – ready to carry a message from the perishing soul to the throne of grace, and pleading for such a message to carry! He tearfully cries again and again to those who are careless about their souls, “Here am I; send me!” He promises to pray to the Father for us, and we know that His prayer prevails indeed. He has already come as the Prophet, making known the way of salvation; now He enters as the Great High Priest within the veil, carrying His people’s requests for grace; and in the end, He will come again as King, and bring His people themselves into glory!

Christ is the faithful Messenger, and “now is the accepted time!” The separation which sin has made between us and God is inconceivably great, but there is a living Way that stretches over it – by which petitions are even now going for grace, and by which the petitioners shall follow to glory. Weary pilgrims! Find refreshment for your souls by coming unto the Father through Jesus, for there is no other name under heaven whereby we *must* be saved! (Acts 4:12)

Lord Jesus, we praise You as the faithful Messenger Who came into the world to make God’s mercy known to us. Thank You for being our Mediator and our Advocate before the Father’s throne of grace! Amen.