

Game's Over . . . Time to Party

Matthew 9:1-13

October 26, 2003

Peter Hiatt

[Song - "Top" - A song to be sung to scribes and Pharisees.]

this is not helping me at all
what you are doing here
in the name of god and love
it's the distribution of fear
pyramids, healing wires, analysts with fame
I haven't got your degree
and I forgot your name

pick me up and put me on the ground
set me up and spin me all around
no, you are not the one I wish to see

this is not helping me at all where did we get this plan?
that you could give to me what I might already have
pyramids, healing wires, a musician's fame
I volunteered you my eyes
in place of facing me

oh Hitler, in a robe of truth
my emptiness has built your altar
and I've worshipped myself in you forever
until now!

[Skit: Peter, Susan, Andrew, and Ann walk onto the stage. Each sits in a chair and each has a bucket in front of them. Each bucket is labeled "ME" and contains a little water and a ladle.]

Susan: Hey, it's great to see you guys. We've been praying for the job hunt. *[She puts a little water in Andrew and Ann's buckets.]*

Andrew: Thanks . . . that means a lot to me. You guys are great. *[He puts a little water in Peter's and Susan's buckets.]*

Ann: Yeah, I've really been looking forward to our small group. *[Puts a little water in each person's bucket.]*

Andrew: Before we start, I've got to tell you this joke: There was a brunette, a redhead, and a blonde all going to the desert. The brunette says, "I'll take some water so we don't get dehydrated." The redhead says, "I'll take some suntan lotion so we don't get sunburned." The blonde says, "I'll take a car door . . . so that when it gets hot, I'll roll down the window!" Wasn't that hilarious? *[Takes a little water out of Peter and Ann's buckets; takes two ladles out of Susan's bucket.]*

Susan: Oh yeah, you're a real comedian. *[Takes a ladle out of Andrew's bucket.]*

Ann: Yeah, honey, that was as funny as a heart attack. *[Takes a ladle out of Andrew's bucket.]*

Peter: Hey, guys, come on. Let's edify. Scripture says to build each other up. I need to always be giving, not taking. *[Takes a ladle of water out of each person's bucket.]*

Susan: Oh, you're right. I'll try to be more like you!
[Takes a ladle out of Peter's bucket.]

Peter: Well, how are you all doing in your walk with the Lord? We said that we'd hold each other accountable to always walk in His grace. *[Peter waits . . . then everybody puts some water in Peter's bucket.]*

Ann: That's right. This week I've been fasting. It's changed my life. *[Takes a little water out of everybody's buckets.]*

Andrew: Well, you know that scripture says that the fast God desires is to loose the bonds of wickedness. It's not just about not eating but about getting in touch with your own brokenness. *[Takes a ladle out of Anne's bucket.]*

Peter: Gosh, you're right. This week in prayer I saw my sin and wept for an hour. *[Takes water out of Andrew's bucket.]*

Andrew: I was so broken I wept for *two* hours. *[Takes two ladles out of Peter's bucket.]*

Susan: Wow. You're both really good at that brokenness thing. You're each, like, really, really broken! *[Takes two ladles out of Peter's and Andrew's buckets.]*

Ann: Maybe we ought to just pray. It's not about us in the end. *[Everybody gives Ann some water.]*

Peter: OK, I'll close . . .

Lord, thank you for your great love. You are the great provider, and you really do provide for those you love. Thanks for my job and my house and all the riches with

which you've blessed me. [*Empties Andrew's bucket into his.*]

Lord, thank you that you've saved us with your relentless grace. Thank you that our righteousness doesn't depend on old covenant works of righteousness like . . . oh . . . fasting . . . [*Empties Ann's bucket into his.*]

Lord, thank you for my wonderful wife. Thank you for teaching me patience through her. Thank you for making me like yourself — beaten, whipped, crucified for the sake of loving your bride. Thank you for my small group. I get so much out of it. Amen. [*Empties Susan's bucket into his.*]

Matthew 9:1:

And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."

You know, sin is like an emptiness. St. Augustine wrote, "Evil is not a substance." So perhaps sin in us is the presence of an emptiness. It is our need for God, yet a denial of the need. It's as if long ago our ancestors (Adam and Eve) were, like, part made and tried to complete themselves without God, so they sealed the emptiness inside such that now we need God but deny our need.

So sin is like an emptiness . . . and sins (plural) are like trying to fill the emptiness ourselves *with* ourselves. Sin is why God subjected creation to futility. It's why we experience such pain, hunger, sickness, poverty, and death. Yet it's what drives us fallen children of Adam.

In Genesis 6, the Lord sees that "every imagination of man's heart was only evil continually." Sin — that restless emptiness — drives us like an addict is driven by his addiction. Sin is the absence of God; a denial of God while craving God, filling the absence with self. Sin is a crime against God. Sin is faith in your *self*.

In Matthew 9, Jesus sees some faith in Himself and says, "Your sins are forgiven" — just like that — free and clear. He doesn't say, "You must sow a seed faith gift" or "Do you understand the implications of what I have just said?" or "Are you willing to submit to believer's baptism and go through our confirmation course?" or "Do you understand the commitment?"

No. Just: "Your sins are forgiven. Take heart." And that's amazing . . . yet the paralytic is still lying on his bed. Jesus acts like the paralysis isn't even the issue. You know, paralysis is a symptom of sin, but not a particular sin. Physical paralysis like death is a sign that we've all sinned. Sin paralyzes all of us — not physically but spiritually. So we can't move in love and live. We're dead . . . the walking dead. Jesus says, "Take heart. Your heart is no longer paralyzed."

Verse 3 . . .

*And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves,
"This man is blaspheming."*

To blaspheme is to refer to yourself as God. The scribes rightly believed that only God could forgive sins. In the capacity of a priest in the temple under the sacrificial system, a man might proclaim God's forgiveness of particular sins, because an atonement has been made through a sacrifice, such as a lamb. But this was different. This man was speaking as God. And there is something very strange about proclaiming forgiveness of others.

If I saw Gary punch Aram, and then I walked up to Gary as Aram lay on the ground with a big, bloody nose and said to Gary, "Gary, be of good cheer! Your sins are forgiven!" . . . well, I imagine Aram might have something to say about that.

The scribes said, "This man is blaspheming."

Verse 4 . . .

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

. . . as if the scribes didn't want this guy to be forgiven.

"For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?"

Most commentators I read answer, "Well, obviously it's easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' because it can't be empirically validated. It could be a lie." But what if you were *the Truth* and therefore couldn't lie? And what if you were *the Way*, the way sins were forgiven, like the lamb that is slain? And what if you were *the Life*, the life that is poured out?

Even for us, which is easier? Sometimes you can heal a person with an aspirin. But forgiveness always requires a cross.

Verse 6:

“But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed and go home.”

“. . . so that they might know the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Healing is a sign that through Christ we rise and go home.

When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

. . . not just to *a* man but to “anthropoi” — *men*. They were afraid. I believe they were afraid because they just witnessed the end of the world as they knew it: the law and the prophets, the old covenant, the sacrificial system, the temple, the principalities and powers, the emptiness that drives the fallen children of Adam.

Game over. What next?

Verse 9:

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

Tax collectors were not only crooks; they were traitors. They were Jews employed by Roman oppressors to extort money from their own countrymen. Tax collectors were utterly despised and judged as ritually unclean. Jesus has just snubbed two very religious and honorable disciples, one of whom was a scribe, saying, “Let the dead bury their own dead” and “the Son of man has no place to lay his head.” He snubs a scribe and calls

a *tax collector*. What could He hope to accomplish with a *tax collector*? Has this Matthew even read *Scripture*?

Well, let's look to scripture, the gospel of Matthew, chapter 9 verse 10:

And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.

Mark and Luke tell us that this was Matthew's house, and they tell us it was a feast or a banquet. This is a picture of the Great Banquet. Jesus has just said in chapter 8, "Many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth."

Verse 11 . . .

And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Just a couple chapters ago, Jesus said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom." The scribes and Pharisees were the religious leaders, as were the elders and priests. In Matthew 22, Jesus says to the chief priests and elders of Israel: "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." It seems the religious leaders were *most sick*.

And now Jesus quotes Hosea saying, “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’”

You’ll remember that the prophet Hosea was commanded to marry a harlot, because God said *He* Himself was married to one: Israel. Harlots sell for money what should only be given by grace, by mercy in covenant love — “khehsed” in Hebrew. God says to Israel, “I desire khehsed not sacrifice” — “knowing me rather than burnt offerings.” Israel had turned God into an industry.

In Hosea 4:7, God says: “The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness.”

1.) “They feed on the sins of my people” — That’s fascinating because in a sense, a Hebrew priest would literally feed on the sins of the people . . . but technically they weren’t to feed on the sins but on the atonement for sins. You see, the idea was that if a person brought a lamb to the temple to be sacrificed, the lamb atoned for that person’s sin, but the priest got to eat the lamb. That wasn’t bad, for in fact God commanded it. But it must have been tempting for the priests to think, “Gosh, I hope people sin . . . so that lamb chops may abound.”

Have you ever thought,
“Shall I sin that grace may abound?”

Well anyway, these priests fed on the sins and relished the wickedness. You know, the whole sacrificial system — the temple, the priest, the law — the whole thing ran on emptiness and sin. That was the name of the game. The priest fed on sins.

2.) And the scribes and Pharisees fed on sins. It was the religion game. They needed lepers, Roman centurions, mother-in-laws, demoniacs, paralytics, tax collectors, and hookers. All those sinners made them feel better about themselves. All those sinners defined them as *good* and justified their existence. Their religious institution ran on sin and emptiness . . .

3.) . . . kind of like the Roman Catholic Church ran on sin in the Middle Ages. They outlawed scripture for common folks; they even stopped offering wine at communion. They said they were concerned a layman might spill it, as if the blood was very fragile, extremely scarce, and they controlled whatever mercy there was.

They literally financed the Church with sins. In 1517, a Dominican friar named Tetzl was hawking indulgences in Wittenberg, Germany. (An indulgence was forgiveness for sale.) The money was being used to finance the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Thesis to the Wittenberg church door and started the Reformation. I think that really ticked Satan off!

So celebrate grace this Friday, October 31, and tick Satan off some more.

Susan and I went and saw the movie *Luther* a few weeks ago. I'd always thought of indulgences as thoroughly ancient and absurd. But as I watched Tetzl hawk indulgences on the screen, I couldn't help thinking, "This is entirely familiar." But it didn't remind me of the Roman Catholic Church . . .

4.) It reminded me of the American Evangelical Church. At first it reminded me of late night TV preachers promising anxious insomniacs that they'll get their miracle or receive their blessing if only they'll sow a "seed faith gift."

But then it reminded me of the mainline evangelical religion industry with all our practical application points and programs for success and “how to” books . . . *How to Complete Yourself, How to Make Yourself Good, How to Meet Your Needs, Conquer Your Sin, and Fill Your Emptiness* . . . by self, with self . . . for only \$19.95.

And if you’re thinking, “Yeah, the religious industries and those stupid TV preachers! Those guys don’t get it!” . . . well, does it kind of make you feel good that they don’t get it? It kind of makes me feel good that they don’t get it and *I do*. AGHHH! I’m feeding on their sins! I’m a Pharisee feeding on Pharisees! I’m taking from their emptiness to try and fill my own emptiness, but it only means I’m full of myself! — which is all that much more empty.

We live our lives like that skit of my small group: We’re driven by the emptiness. It’s like we’re addicts — addicted to the “fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” trying to steal good and make ourselves good and, in the process, only making ourselves more evil and more empty, enslaved to the emptiness.

We’re trapped in self, constantly worried about self, afraid for self. We sure can’t *give away* self . . .

- If I give a compliment, it’s calculated in order to get a compliment.
- If I give encouragement, it’s only to get encouragement.
- If I offer criticism, it’s always tainted with hatred, like a psychopath trying to be a surgeon.
- I certainly can’t receive criticism. I assume they’re trying to steal from my bucket.
- I can’t enjoy another, except to feed on another.
- I assume love is hunger, so I can’t really love or be loved.

- I can't party. I wreck parties, because I can't even *see* parties.
- I can't see the kingdom, the kingdom that is "at hand" (like Jesus said).
- I certainly can't see the King. I won't look at the King. He is love, but I assume He only wants to take from my bucket.
- I take everything personally in fear, for my person is an empty bucket, for if I saw the emptiness, I'd die . . . or realize I'm already dead.

Pharisees are imprisoned to the emptiness. They hate the emptiness but won't stop trying to fill the emptiness. For if they stop playing that game, they think they'll die. They think the game is *life*.

In the twentieth century, scientists declared that the game is life, that "survival of the fittest" is life. The Church may renounce Darwin, but we advertise his theory. Have you seen those bumper stickers where the Christian fish is eating the Darwin fish? If it were *really* a Christian fish, perhaps the Darwin fish would be crucifying the Christian fish while the Christian fish says, "Father, forgive them."

Forgiveness. Do you see that forgiveness wrecks the game? Why did the Pharisees get so mad that Jesus forgave the paralytic, Matthew, and the sinners? Because it wrecked the game. They thought the game was life. And they thought *they* were winning even though they were already dead.

Why did they get mad when Jesus forgave?

Imagine the Kansas City Chiefs are in town. It's been a hard fought game. The Chiefs are losing 17-19, but they have the ball on the Bronco 15 yard line with eight seconds to play. Morten Anderson makes a chip shot, but it sails wide right. The stands

begin to erupt . . . but just then, the head ref throws a flag, runs out on the field, and they line up again. The ref speaks over the intercom: “We will kick again . . . because . . . I ah . . . forgive Morten that bad kick.”

Well, there would be a *full-scale riot* at the stadium. Even if the ref said, “Tell you what — I forgive *all* of you . . . you *all win!* Let’s party!” . . . Denver and Kansas City would crucify that ref.

Now, that’s just a game. What if you thought that game was life, or life was that game?

Well, imagine it’s been a hard-fought fight. You’ve worked for Jesus, and now you arrive at the pearly gates. You walk into the Great Banquet, and there’s Abraham—that old pagan, and Jacob—the old liar, and the leper and the centurion and your mother-in-law, the paralytic, Matthew, Mary Magdalene, Paul—the murderer, Peter—the coward . . .

. . . and next to him your most ardent enemy
 . . . and next to him the person you despised most in this world
 . . . and next to him Jesus

And Jesus stands up and stretches out His hands. The nail marks are still fresh in His bleeding flesh. He yells, “Welcome to the party, my friend! Just look! I’ve forgiven them all! None have perished! Everybody wins!”

What if?

Just *what if?*

Would you still want to go to the party?

Would you?

Be careful, my friends. You may be judging yourself out of the party and into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. God wishes that *none* should perish. Shouldn't you? Or are you an accuser . . . a "diabolos" . . . a devil? Would you be mad at Jesus for forgiving too much?

Do you remember who crucified Jesus? — scribes, Pharisees, elders, priests. They crucified Jesus because He was forgiving *too much*. They crucified Jesus for He fulfilled the law, set the captives free, and proclaimed the Year of Jubilee. He preached, "Game over! Time to party!"

They crucified Jesus, yet when they did their worst, He did His best. We tried to feed on Him, but He is our atonement. He gives us His body to eat and His blood to drink. He conquers us with mercy—"khehsed." He comes to my small group and says:

Susan, you are forgiven. I'm filling you up with my blood. There is no shortage of my blood, my grace, my love, my mercy. There is a winepress outside Jerusalem, and there I was crucified. A river of blood flows and fills Israel to the depth of a horse's bridle. The war horses are stopped in a river of my blood. Game over. *[Peter is filling her bucket with wine.]*

Ann, you are forgiven. I'm filling you with wine. I am good. I make you good. I have filled you with my goodness. Time to party! *[Peter fills her bucket with wine.]*

Andrew, you are forgiven. You doubted my love in a garden long ago. That is sin. You tried to complete yourself. That's more sin. But I complete you; I make you; I am the love of your Father poured out. *[Peter fills his bucket with wine.]*

Peter, you are forgiven. But look: You are full of yourself. You must die to yourself so I can fill you with myself. I'll drain you of self so I can fill you with myself. Even more, I'll turn the old water into great wine, like I did at the wedding in Cana. I'll make a marriage feast for my bride out of your old legalisms, sins, and failures. I'll turn your water to wine.

See, I don't desire your sacrifice. *I am* the sacrifice. No more deals, no more striving, no more competing. I don't want sacrifice but khehsed—covenant love and mercy. I fill you with khehsed that you would overflow with khehsed. [*Peter has dumped out all the water and filled the bucket with wine.*]

When I believe the Gospel, I live out of fullness. I'm full of mercy, so I overflow with mercy. I love because He first loved me. When I believe the Gospel, I'm full of Jesus. Then who I am is not *me* but *He*. So I can forget about me — be detached from me, not even take me personally, for my person is not me but He. "It's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." And there's a lot of *He*.

I must remember I'm full, so I don't need to suck the life out of others. I'm so full I have authority to forgive — enough blood that it can splash out of me onto others. It's called *grace*. In fact, that blood is my weapon against evil . . . in others and in me.

So whenever I feel condemned, I must remember I'm full. I must go to war. I can stand before the Evil One himself, the prince of darkness grim, the father of lies, and hold up my bucket—my heart—and yell, "Look, Satan! Look, Devil! Look, Accuser! Look at my bucket! It's full of blood—*Jesus'* blood! Your game's over. And it's time to party!"

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And in the same way after supper, He took the cup and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me. I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

That’s going to be quite a party! And at one point Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

And now you may say, “*Hey — Aren’t we* the religion industry? — new building, programs, big budget? Don’t *we* run on fear and feed on sin?” I’m sure we do sometimes. But I hope we run on mercy (khehsed) and feed on forgiven sin (atonement), body broken and blood shed.

Last year in worship a friend had a vision. Immense crowds were filing into a huge, new arena. A large sign read, “How to find God.” There were other buildings and signs in an immense courtyard. The signs read, “How to Find God in Science,” “How to Find God in the Earth,” “How to Find God in Yourself.” My friend dropped to his knees and cried, “God, where are you?” At that, a little girl found him, gave him a big hug, and said, “Look over there.” She pointed to a tiny, dilapidated shack. Its sign read, “Are you thirsty? Free blood.” He looked inside and saw some of us handing out drinks. It was Lookout Mountain Community Church.

What do you want? Are you thirsty? We’re offering the blood of the only begotten Son of God. The problem—the stumbling block—the insult—is: It’s *free*.

Drink up that you may be free. In Jesus' name, amen.

Further Reading

“I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.”

-Matthew 8:11-12

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

-Matthew 5:20

Jesus said to them [chief priests and elders], “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

-Matthew 21:31b

“The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness. And it will be: Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds. They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to prostitution What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears. Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth; my judgments flashed like lightning upon you. For I desire mercy [khehsed], not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”

-Hosea 4:7-11a, 6:4-6

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, "I pray thee, LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love [khehsed], and repentest of evil."

-Jonah 3:10-4:2

"What is this I see? What is this delicious bouquet I inhale? Can it be? . . . I see, and smell, that even under wartime conditions the College cellar still has a few dozen of sound old vintage *Pharisee*. Well, well, well. This is like old times. Hold it beneath your nostrils for a moment, gentledevils. Hold it up to the light. Look at those fiery streaks that writhe and tangle in its dark heart, as if they were contending. And so they are. You know how this wine is blended? Different types of Pharisee have been harvested, trodden, and fermented together to produce its subtle flavour. Types that were most antagonistic to one another on Earth. Some were all rules and relics and rosaries; others were all drab clothes, long faces, and petty traditional abstinences from wine or cards or the theatre. Both had in common their self-righteousness and the almost infinite distance between their actual outlook and anything the Enemy really is or commands. The wickedness of other religions was the really live doctrine in the religious of each; slander was its gospel and denigration its litany. . . . All said and done, my friend, it will be an ill day for us if what most humans mean by "religion" ever vanishes from the Earth. It can still send us the truly delicious sins. The fine flower of unholiness can grow only in the close neighbourhood of the Holy. Nowhere do we

tempt so successfully as on the very steps of the altar.”

-C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*

Without Christ a man must fail miserably or succeed even more miserably.

-George MacDonald

Sin is a denial, a refusal, of the providence of God. Sin is the deprivation of goodness. Therefore sin is a choice of departure from God, and his care of us in the totality of his goodness, into nothingness. “Evil is not a substance,” wrote Augustine. “The whole difficulty of understanding Hell is that the thing to be understood is so nearly Nothing,” wrote C. S. Lewis. God made his creation very good, “so we must conclude that if things are deprived of all good, they cease altogether to be” (Augustine, Confessions VII:12).

-John Nelson, *Julian of Norwich: Journeys into Joy*

I looked attentively, knowing and recognizing in this vision that he does all that is done. I marveled at this sight with quiet awe, and I thought, “What is sin?” For I saw truly that God does everything, no matter how small. And nothing happens by accident or luck, but by the eternal providence of God’s wisdom. Therefore I was obliged to accept that everything which is done is well done, and I was sure that God never sins. Therefore it seemed to me that sin is nothing, for in all this vision no sin appeared. . . .

And after this I saw, as I watched, the body of Christ bleeding abundantly, hot and freshly and vividly, just as I saw the head before. And I saw the blood coming from weals from the scourging, and in my vision it ran so abundantly that it seemed to me that if at that moment it had been natural blood, the whole bed would have been blood-soaked and even the floor around. God has provided us on earth with abundant water for our use and bodily refreshment, because of the tender love he

has for us, yet it pleases him better that we should freely take his holy blood to wash away our sins; for there is no liquid created which he likes to give us so much, for it is so plentiful and it shares our nature.

After this, before God revealed any words, he allowed me to contemplate longer all that I had seen, and all that was in it. And then, without any voice or opening of lips, there were formed in my soul these words: “By this is the Fiend overcome.”

-Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*

And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse’s bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia.

-Revelation 14:20

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.

-Ephesians 3:14-19

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