



150 POCKET THOUGHTS
RICHARD BEWES
LET THE BIBLE REINVIGORATE YOUR DAY



CHRISTIAN FOCUS





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INTRODUCTION

The telephone shrilled by my bedside. It seemed incredibly early. It was Christine Morgan of the BBC.

‘Richard? I’m sorry to rouse you – but your “Thought for the Day” is going to have to be changed. The Gulf War is over!’

‘Over? Oh my! I’ll get cracking immediately.’

My producer and I had been getting the script finalised at 11.00 pm the night before. ‘Thought for the Day’ always went out live on BBC’s Today programme, and – coming as it did somewhere between news summaries and the weather forecast – you were expected to be right up-to-the-minute, with relevant, animated chatter. Now, on the morning itself, everything had to be changed.

‘You’ll still be in your pyjamas,’ went on Christine, ‘but can you start right away on the script, while I find out more about the situation? Then I’ll get back to you for a check on how you’re doing. I’ll give you forty minutes. You’ll just have time then to get dressed. We’ll send a taxi to bring you in to Broadcasting House!’

I’ve been delivering ‘thoughts’ for years. In more recent times many of them have been web-site contributions. The fact is that ‘thoughts’ are coming at us throughout the day, and all that is required is to develop an instinct for them. The Kikuyu people of Kenya have a special word for such thoughts. It is ‘Meciria’ (‘Mesheeria’), creative thoughts, deep thoughts, powerful and penetrating – even life-transforming in their effect.

Sometimes I have received little warning, and have had to come up with what is virtually an *instant thought*. And yet – however sudden the call – such thoughts are never instant, not really. They come out of a regular drawing upon an inexhaustible reservoir – the Bible; the very thoughts of God himself.





How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you (Psalm 139:17).

Nothing that God has said is feeble. The Scriptures are teeming with stories, divine promises, vivid characters and sentences that glow with significance, if only we have an eye for them.

Understand these as *God's* thoughts, and – however short their duration – they will never be trite or trivial. God can arrest us with just a word! Ten minutes' thought may well be enough to comfort, challenge or change an individual for ever. It has happened so often.

I take a pocket Bible into every day with me – do you? In carrying the Scriptures on my person I know that I have a fathomless resource right at hand – and I can refer to it; on the underground train, in the lunch break or speaking with an individual. 'Thoughts' then begin to surface. Little incidents get attached to them. It is an art that we can develop – of making something out of apparently nothing!

Use these hundred and fifty 'thoughts' as you will. While they are not sermons, nevertheless there could be readers who wish to turn some of them into more developed messages; go right ahead. D.L. Moody of Chicago once gave this advice, 'If you have something that is good for anything at all, pass it around!'

Richard Bewes
All Souls Church
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1. Begin with Jesus

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (*John 1:1*).

People sometimes complain, *I can't see where Jesus fits in*. A theologian called Athanasius, Egyptian by birth and Greek by education, gave the answer sixteen hundred years ago: 'The only system of thought into which Jesus Christ will fit is the one in which He is the starting point'.

If we've begun with our own human-based attempt at the understanding of life and its meaning, we will actually never get it right – let alone the place that Christ occupies. We will be like the man who tries to do up his shirt buttons, **beginning with the wrong button**. He may hope that it will end up all right in the end ... but it never will!

This is the great point of John chapter 1. *Begin with Jesus*, ('the Word', who brings about and executes God's saving plan from of old) and you'll get it right. The existence of Christ didn't start at Bethlehem! From eternity, His was the executive role in the three Persons of the only true and Trinitarian God. Without Him we could never have even seen God. But through Him, *God is brought within touching distance*. Read John chapter 1, and you'll see!

Through Him, God is brought within touching distance.





2. Leadership and service

So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, 'Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey' (Revelation 10:9).

Leadership and service are so important to Christians, they could almost be said to be our food. In a letter of 1757 William Grimshaw, the celebrated Vicar of Haworth in Yorkshire wrote, 'Preaching is health, food and physic to me'.

Here in Revelation 10, the call of the evangelist John is confirmed, with the giving to him of a 'little scroll'. This is his commission – and it is to become his food.

But John's work will taste bitter-sweet. Do you know this yourself, Christian? Is it not the sweetest, the most wonderful work of all, to be in service to the Master of the World? At the same time, does it not present us with a bitter tang, when we find ourselves on the receiving end of the anger that Christ's mission generates? It is all to do with the Cross.

Don't be surprised. If your work for Him is authentic, you will be aware of pain, running alongside the joy. When that happens, you will know yourself to be confirmed in the same calling that was John's!

To look up: John 4:34

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