



LIVING WORDS

A LEGACY OF
QUOTES

HELEN ROSEVEARE

It's not surprising that someone as memorable as Helen Roseveare should be so quotable. Her presence in Sydney in the early 80's helped shape a generation of gospel workers – my wife and I among them. But what is captured in these Living Words is Helen Roseveare's unique ability to be biblical, winsome, honest, warm-hearted, practical, compelling – all at once! She turns the gospel like a treasure in her hands, sharing her wonder at God's goodness in Christ. She fixes the reader with stare that asks, 'If God said it, then what are you and I going to do about it?' Helen Roseveare has the bearing of one refined by hardship, comforted by grace, embraced by God's people, resolute in seeing and sharing and obeying God's word. Her words seem to come off the page with a smile and a mischievous twinkle that says, 'You know, he's good for every one of his promises.'

Colin Buchanan

Christian Children's Recording artist and author, Sydney, Australia



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HELEN ROSEVEARE

CHRISTIAN
FOCUS

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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Living Holiness	9
Living Sacrifice.....	57
Living Faith	73
Living Fellowship.....	93

INTRODUCTION

Helen Roseveare and I were close friends for nearly forty years. We knew that our friendship was a gracious gift from our loving Heavenly Father; so we did not regard it lightly but as something precious, given for our mutual support, encouragement, and strengthening in the Christian faith, but supremely given to be for the praise of His glory.

Helen and I first met at a Christian holiday camp for schoolgirls toward the end of the 1970s; Helen had been invited to this idyllic setting in the Scottish Highlands as a guest of the camp leadership to allow her time to continue convalescence from major surgery she had undergone only a very few weeks earlier. I too was at that camp, as a member of the leadership team in the role of camp medical officer. In addition to looking after any medical needs of the girls, I was asked to keep a careful eye on Helen, ensuring she had all necessary medications and anything else that would assist her recovery. And so in this setting of doctor and patient our long personal friendship was born! We found that right from our first meeting we 'clicked' discovering that we had many common interests – a love of nature and

beautiful things in life, a deep respect for young people with a longing that each person should hear the good news of the Gospel, and not least a sense of humour – I was soon to discover that life with Helen would never be dull! Above all we shared our mutual love for our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word; indeed our shared desire was to live in submission and loving obedience to His plan for each of our lives.

It will not be too surprising to the reader to learn that in the months following, Helen paid my mother and me two or three brief visits when she came to stay with us for the weekend. Indeed Helen often joked, when replying to questions about our friendship, 'I came with my suitcase for the weekend but stayed instead for forty years!'

At the time when our friendship began Helen's life had entered a period of testing and some uncertainty. She had only recently returned to the UK after twenty years of gruelling service in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and with no prospect of an early return she was seeking to know God's will for her future. 'Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ' (WEC), the missionary society of which Helen was a member, would soon rightly decree that she should not return to the DRC for at least five years because of the recent surgery. However, prior to this they had suggested that she might accept an invitation to visit the U.S.A. and undertake some speaking engagements on behalf of the mission to be organised by the American Headquarters. Helen accepted the invitation; the visit

stretched to around 9 months and took her to many parts of that vast country, north, south, west and east; it proved to be a real blessing to many thousands of people across all age groups, occupations, ethnicities and church affiliations.

Helen had only been in America for about two weeks when sadly, she received news of her mother's unexpected death. Despite her grief, the tour continued without interruption; then seven months later, about six weeks from its end, Helen developed her own health problem which she knew would require urgent surgery; she said nothing to anyone about this, completed the programme, and then underwent major surgery straight after her return to the U.K.

It was no coincidence, when precisely at this time, God revealed His plan for the next phase of Helen's life, and in this our developing friendship would have an important part.

Within six months of leaving the U.S.A., invitations to return there and undertake further public ministry were starting to arrive, including one to speak at the biennial Student Conference in Urbana where thousands of Christian students gathered from all over America.

Helen now believed that a public-speaking ministry was indeed God's purpose for at least the next few years – and so with her 'eyes fixed on Jesus' she embarked on a 'race' that was to become one major part of the remarkable next phase of her life, one which would last well over thirty-five years.

In the light of these developments it was decided that Helen would make our home in Northern Ireland her U.K. hub, where she would return at the end of each period of ministry (usually about 6-8 weeks, sometimes longer) to take a well earned rest, recharge her batteries, and prepare for the next tour, often in another part of the world.

In order to give the reader a glimpse of the breadth of the public ministry she undertook, it may be worth mentioning that over the years Helen visited every area of the U.K. and Ireland, also Canada and America, multiple times; her worldwide speaking engagements included also, often more than once, visits to Australia and New Zealand, to Finland, Switzerland, Germany, Poland and Hungary, in Europe; a single trip to Mexico; in Asia she travelled to Singapore, Hong Kong and Afghanistan; she especially enjoyed two return visits to her beloved Nebobongo and Nyankunde, the centres of her twenty years of missionary service, in the DRC.

Helen's writing ministry, the second and perhaps more important part, of her working life during these forty years, was no less productive! Her first autobiography *Give me this Mountain* telling the story of the first 10 years in the Congo, including her capture during the Simba uprising, had been published in 1966; its sequel, *He gave us a Valley*, describes events she experienced in this devastated war-torn country in the immediate post-rebellion years after Belgium granted it independence. This book first appeared in 1980 around the start of her public ministry. Currently

nine of Helen's works are in print, including her final book *Count it all Joy* published posthumously in 2017.

It might be of interest to the reader to learn that it was during the few short weeks between speaking engagements, (usually around 4-6) that Helen made the time to undertake most of her subsequent writing. She had an amazing capacity to 'switch off' from the present occupation in order to grasp any opportunity, however short, to get apart to write another few paragraphs or finish a chapter.

Between the years 1980 and 1992 the four 'living books' appeared and were initially published by Hodder and Stoughton. Their titles were derived from four foundational principles of WEC, sacrifice, faith, holiness and fellowship which the membership was expected to endorse. Helen, apparently, once suggested to the senior leadership of WEC rather casually, that perhaps it was time to rewrite these 'four pillars' as they were known for a new generation of 'Weccers'. The result – you have probably guessed – was the gift to a wider Christian world of *Living Sacrifice*, *Living Faith*, *Living Holiness* and *Living Fellowship*.

In my opinion, and I know that of others also, the 'living books' are amongst the *very best* of all Helen's writings. It was a great joy to her when after the publication of the third autobiography, *Digging Ditches*, in 2005, Christian Focus decided to reprint all the 'living series' also, and these appeared in their new format between 2006 and 2008. This meant that another generation of Christians could

benefit from an enriched knowledge of the great doctrinal truths these books addressed, and *crucially* understanding of the doctrine demands its practical application to the individual's life; thus, with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, a gradual transformation nearer to the likeness of Jesus will take place; a life-changer that our heavenly Father had always purposed should become a 'living reality' brought about in the life of every one of His children, solely because of the Gospel.

In this new book *Living Words* Carine Mackenzie has given us a lovely gift, another 'jewel in the crown', and another opportunity to make the 'living books' more widely known and appreciated. *Living Words* is primarily a devotional book; it challenges us to repent of the paucity of our personal response to the Gospel which rightly demands the dedication of everything we are and have to the Lord Jesus Christ. As C. T. Studd, the founder of WEC, has famously stated: 'If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him'.

I loved re-reading *Living Sacrifice*, *Living Faith*, *Living Holiness* and *Living Fellowship* in this new presentation. It helped me to appreciate these glorious truths which we can so easily take for granted and to meditate in awesome wonder at the sheer vastness of the breadth and depth of the Salvation procured for us, but at what cost!

The Bible verse at the end of each chosen paragraph is another 'precious jewel' the book gives us, as it confirms that Helen's human words, though fallible, are indeed

consistent with God's eternal infallible Truth. Much more importantly the Bible verse quoted exposes our minds and wills to the 'living Word' to do its own work in hearts and lives. As the Scripture says 'The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword ... discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart' (Heb. 4: 12, ESV).

Helen went to be forever with her beloved Lord and Master in December 2016; today she is alive and rejoicing in His nearer Presence where she longed to be. Among the many tributes paid to her, reference often was made to Abel as he is mentioned in the list of heroes of the faith by the writer to the Hebrews: 'And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead' (Heb. 11:4). Helen Roseveare still speaks today, and she will continue to do so because of the example of the inspirational life she lived, poured out in love and costly service to King Jesus; she speaks today also through her published works, as this book *Living Words* so clearly demonstrates, by the words that she wrote.

Pat Morton
September 2018

SOLI DEO GLORIA –
TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY.

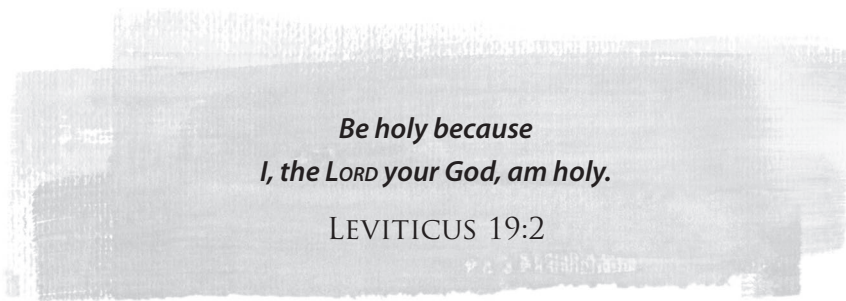


LIVING HOLINESS

But as I studied, I began to realise that love, like all the other attributes of God, is part of the greatest attribute of all, the HOLINESS of God.

'God is holy.'

This fact shines out of every page of the Scriptures, brilliant as the midday sun. It begins to blind one to all the other factors. Just as the sun's light is broken down by a raindrop into the separate colours of the spectrum, so the HOLINESS of God is broken down, so to speak, into the many-coloured spectrum of all His attributes – His goodness and mercy, His loving-kindness and forbearance, His righteousness and justice, His truth and wrath – so that we can see and understand what makes up this HOLINESS.



***Be holy because
I, the LORD your God, am holy.***

LEVITICUS 19:2

No one told me that this longing in my heart was the work of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of what is called 'sanctification' – the process of making me holy, like unto the Lord Jesus. In fact, no one told me that this sanctifying work of the Spirit in my heart was the essential proof that He had regenerated my life. As soon as one is justified and saved, the work of sanctification must begin, and it is the Holy Spirit Himself who causes one to 'hunger after righteousness', to want to be good, as He makes real in one's heart that which God sees to be good; and to want to cease to be bad, as He shows one those things that displease God.

No. I did not understand that then; but I just knew, with a deep inner consciousness, that there must BE a goal to which my whole Christian life should be directed. Even though I hardly knew the word, let alone what it meant, I sensed that the goal was HOLINESS. So it came about that after the overwhelming joy of realising that my sins had been forgiven, I started out on a long quest after HOLINESS.

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13

We constantly need to 'add to...' if we are to grow. He stresses that, far from being negligent in doing this, we should remember His teaching, that we might be stirred up to even greater endeavour.

'Add to...' That phrase kept coming back to me. It was a simple, straightforward thought. I was reasonably good at mathematics, and understood the basic concept of addition.

Then, two days later, I came to another phrase: 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. 3:18). Equally, I knew enough about biology to understand the concept of growth!

Addition and growth. Physical and biological. The two concepts, taking root in my heart within one month of becoming a Christian, were to be the first stepping stones in my search for HOLINESS. I spent all the time I could, mornings and evenings, studying the Bible, 'soaking up', like the proverbial sponge, the Word of God. It excited me and challenged me, convinced me and stirred me. Every day I sought to 'add to' my knowledge and understanding of God and to 'grow in' grace and in the outworking of Scriptural principles in daily conduct.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge.

2 PETER 1:5

Is it that we Christians today have an inadequate understanding of God's HOLINESS and therefore of His wrath against sin and of the awfulness of a Christless eternity? If we were gripped by two facts – of the necessity for judgment of sin because God is holy; and of the necessity of HOLINESS in the Christian that he may represent such a God to others – would we not 'hunger and thirst after righteousness' whatever the cost, and would not others then see Christ in us, and be drawn to Him?

In other words, if we were to rightly present the Scriptural teaching on the need of HOLINESS in the life of every believer, we should not need to plead for missionaries. Would the former not result in the latter?

***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness, for they will be filled.***

MATTHEW 5:6

If we have begun to appreciate the awful sinfulness of sin, and that the only way a holy God could save us from its guilt and penalty was by the death – the actual, physical, brutal death – of His only Son, we would realise *from what* He had redeemed us. Understanding this, would we not then understand *for what* He had redeemed us – for unremitting service, as His ambassadors, telling others, while it is yet the day of grace, of the wonderful news of Christ’s death for sinners?

If we are to fulfil this purpose for which we are saved, not only must the emphasis be on the *fact* of HOLINESS as seen in Christ, but also on the essential *need* of HOLINESS in our lives that we may properly reveal Christ to others.

A testimony to salvation without a resultant HOLINESS of character and conduct is a contradiction. It is, as St James says, a dead faith, if it has not the witness of works.

With all my heart, I endorse the fact that we are not, and never can be, saved by good works; we are saved and redeemed because Christ died on the Cross of Calvary in our place, becoming our sin, our great Substitute:

*Bearing scorn and scoffing rude
In my place condemned He stood.*

We are saved as the result of Redemption, wrought for us by our Saviour alone. We are no longer our own. We have been bought at a price, the price of His shed blood. We are now His, our bodies indwelt by the risen Saviour through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He, working in

us and through us, will do the 'yet greater works' that He promised, and our faith, which has brought us to know and acknowledge our Redeemer, will reveal itself alive and active by the fruit that is seen in our character, and the acts that transform our conduct.

By their fruit you will recognise them (Matt. 7:20).

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

JOHN 14:12