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LaTAFI

Sermon preached by Pastor J.W. Tyler
on Thursday Evening,
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Lesson. Matthew 26. vv. 47-75.

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me, John 16. 32.

This is one of the most astonishing revelations in the book of God concerning the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. They had been divinely called by Him because of His boundless love fixing on them, predestinating them to be conformed to His glorious image; elect; enjoying the security and stability of the everlasting Covenant: who knew measurably and would know more of all the holy fruits of the Incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death and victory of our Saviour; who were united to Him in an act of amazing grace as His own sons and daughters, no longer in a state of alienation, enmity, death, ignorance, darkness, but in vital union with Him (apart from the one who fell, to go to his own place). The astounding revelation is of the type of our glorious Leader, our blessed Lord and Saviour. "The hour cometh." And the Lord further qualified it. He said; "yea, is now come." That hour was the hour when Christ had entered on the deepest part of all His sufferings, and was drinking of the curse due to our sins and their sins, - His dear chosen ones safe in the Covenant; He was about to proceed to His mock trial; about to be betrayed by one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6.70) The hour had come for Him to be betrayed into the hand of sinners, to go to the mockery of a trial, to be stripped of His garments, mocked by the Roman soldiers, scourged at the pillar, crowned with thorns, bearing His cross at first to go to Calvary. "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come."

What an astonishing, incredible, amazing revelation in two parts. First you may view it as the hymnwriter did, The soldiers of the greatest

captain, the Captain of our salvation leading to battle in that hour, and

"That moment every soldier fled." (153)

If this was on a lower plane on the earth it would be a most serious matter on a human level. On a high level, what do you think of yourselves? What do you think of the human race? of the flesh of the Lord's own people? When our blessed Lord was going to the battle and to His unparalleled volume of sufferings they were all scattered, dispersed. At least, one would anticipate they would have closed their ranks and surrounded their blessed Lord. How do you feel? If you get a taste of His redeeming love in your soul do you not feel in spirit that you would have come so close and not left Him? They were dispersed. The concept seems in disharmony with the concept of the Church of God, because your understanding of the Church of God is a gathering together; a rallying to the banner; to be faithful unto death; to suffer with Him. "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own." You perceive the difficulty of my task, to give a right exposition of the Text. God willing, I will make a few suggestions as we go along.

The second part of the revelation is; "and shall leave me alone." What about it? Are you saying; "What a company of cowards!"; Are you looking on the eleven? Have you no deeper insight into the truth? Do you not see that human nature is portrayed in all its sinful weakness?. This was not isolated relative to the eleven men; it was a sad manifestation of our failures. We are identified with them. Undoubtedly, hundreds and perhaps thousands of times the same spirit has been manifested in us. This is, to say the least, a most mysterious thing. "Ye shall be scattered." They were all gathered before they were born. They were set apart, sanctified by God the Father in eternity. They were all gathered in His heart; now they are scattered. There is nothing honourable about it; they all fled, and went off, I suppose, to the safest place they could find. That is the second part; although I say to you, what provides a bright and beautiful background is, they could never be permanently scattered or dispersed, - only in one sense as to the path God had chosen for every one of them. They could never be scattered permanently; they were gathered. O the blessed company at the sepulchre, and when He was risen, and those around

His cross, and those who visited His tomb. Very beautiful! and then those who were gathered and saw their risen Lord! They did not see Him rise; they saw their risen Lord. And then at Olivet and Pentecost; think of the gathering!

So the second part is, "and shall leave me alone." What a dismal revelation! "and shall leave me alone." Just in the very time when He would come into the greatest depths of all His agony! and now,- "leave me alone." You will remember in St Matthew 26 we read; "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." We shall need special divine light, wisdom and love to expound. Guilty? Are we? A further point: the Lord showed them a most comforting, glorious truth. "and yet I am not alone.- You are leaving me alone; you will have all gone for the time being. I am alone in the midst of my enemies,- and yet I am not alone." This takes us up to the heavens; to the Throne of God; to the Father; to the glorious Trinity in unity; oneness of essence, yet the distinctiveness of the three glorious Persons in a triune Jehovah. Why not alone? "because the Father is with me."

What is the message to be conveyed to night? First, we would view our beloved Redeemer in His sufferings, and then, a part of His sufferings. The Man Christ Jesus had holy emotions and a pure susceptibility to the feeling of suffering pain, and while it is quite possible for us to overlook the fact of His holy, sacred humanity and view His Deity and then seem to think; "He is God." Yes, God; but think of the susceptibility of His holy humanity in suffering to the feelings of pain and distress; to acute feeling. How can it be translated? By lifting before you His desire. In the same chapter, Matthew 26 we read that when He went to the gloomy garden He took the favoured trio, Peter, James, and John. I can do no better than refer to the language in the hymn;

"He wished, at least, they would condole
(Twas all they could) His tortured soul." (153)

The presence of dear ones in deep agony is consoling. The presence of love, tenderness, devotion of feeling and of loyalty is wonderful. His holy humanity desired their presence near Him, and for all those to sleep! although St Luke has kindly revealed to us that they slept for

sorrow. I am glad of that. It was not a sleep that resulted from lack of feeling; they slept for sorrow. Before we go further let us make one application of this. You may well expect in a deeper path before you come to the Kingdom to taste the same, because in communion, in participation of sympathy is great comfort and strength. Because He desired their presence there think how acute His feeling was when they all forsook Him and fled! Thinking in terms of His holy, pure humanity, what an acute feeling of pain it must have been to Him when He saw them all forsake Him, every one! Yet they had said, Peter the leader and spokesman and all concurred in saying they would not leave Him; they would go with Him to prison and to death. There was no lack of sincerity or love in these statements by the eleven; that is to say, in the sincerity of their desire to Christ in affection. They were insufficiently aware of their sinful weakness: they did not know what they were as men as they did afterwards.

I thought as I read just now; "They all forsook him; and fled." - my friends, you need more than free-will, don't you? You need a Saviour who will cling to you even when you have forsaken Him and fled. You need immutable love; not something that is fragile, pendant on man. If it was so, where would these have been? If they were pendant on free-will, where would they have been? what would have happened? It is immutable, boundless love. "O Love, that will not let me go!" This is the bedrock. The Lord will cling to you even ^{when} you forsake Him and flee from Him, and deny Him. I did not say betray Him. The temptation will be there in some of the deepest experiences of your lives to betray Him. If you could, I do not see how hope can be presented. The devil will test you. He will show you all the kingdoms of the world and its wealth. It will be a dreadful time when "Thy soul, full of woe, shall pass as through hell." (297) And carefully follow; he will show you these things; the proviso is, - "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Am I speaking the truth? That would be betraying Christ. You might have the world, wealth, riches, all your heart craves for, but the burning coals of the pit are already in you. It is a close thing when you come into fiery temptations, and I could not name this if I had no experience of it. You could have it, but the devil will say; "You must worship me,

fall down before me." If you do you have betrayed Christ, and that is the end: there was never anything real in you. It is dreadful to have known the rudiments of truth in one's mind and to be a reprobate, to go down to the pit. God only knows the awfulness of the hell those suffer who have known the truth nominally and have betrayed Him. No sins of ignorance there, but wilful sins against ^{the Holy Ghost} ~~a holy God~~. Let us think and tremble. I suggest to you there will be times before you get to the Kingdom when you have combats and pass through awful things in life which few have any understanding of. This is one of the worst of all. You can have it, but you must fall down to Satan. When you think of all the horrors in the deep caverns of the pit, and mortals shrink and recoil in terror while the deep cavern opens wide and swallows people,- religious people who have gone back and walked no more with Him; they have betrayed Him. (I had not thought to make these comments.)

There is hope for poor sinners who have been left to deny Him. There is hope for poor sinners who may have been left to forsake Him and flee. I cannot proclaim hope for those who have betrayed Him. So you may find yourself analysing your own case and wondering how you stand before God. There are two things that are most amazing to you who are so sorely tried that you have committed the unpardonable sin; that you have forsaken Him, sinned against Him and He will never have anything to do with you; that He will give you up.

"How shall I give thee up?"

(Tis Jesus speaks the word)

"I am the sinner's only hope;

I am thy gracious Lord.

Rebellious thou hast been,

And art rebellious still;

But since in love I took thee in,

My promise I'll fulfil." (1032)

Listen; you will get your heart broken with the love of God to you many a time. "Why, O Lord, such love to me?" (766) You will be melted at His dear feet, to think that He is so faithful; to think of His immutability. You have sinned so much; you are such a failure; you have professed the

Name of God, and you look on your life with dismay. You feel the frown of God and He is silent to you and you are not surprised. Your heart is hard and your mind dark, and the devil says you have not a particle of living religion, and you are inclined to agree. He almost seems to mock your feelings. You almost see your funeral procession, and hear the people and the minister speak of you as a child of God, and the devil says; "Yes, and with all that you will be in the pit."

I intended to say one of the most amazing things will be when the Lord melts your heart at His dear feet and His love flows into your heart and His mercy heals you. You say; "Blessed be God; I know He has not cast me away." It is heavenly. I do not think you would wish (although there are things to hold you) but you would not wish to stay long but to go to Him.

"Hail, blessed time! Lord, bid me come,
And enter my celestial home."

Do you know the feeling? That is the message for you; it may be a message of hope. As to some application of it, it will only be a tiny droplet in the ocean. The word 'alone' stands out, and then 'not alone'. If I take it ^{concerning} up the Lord Jesus it will be obvious to you there could be no other. "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me." (Isa. 63.3) Why? Because no one could be with Him. He alone could tread the winepress; no one could assist Him. It is obvious to you in the singular position of the Son of God incarnate, in the economy ~~of~~ of salvation only He could accomplish, - the infinite One. His dear disciples were finite, limited; they could never go there. They stood here, and He went a little ~~far~~ further. They could not go; He alone could tread there, being who He is. Yet He said; "I am not alone." That is a wonderful truth. "because the Father is with me. - as My Father unbegotten; I His only begotten Son." "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." said the Father to Him, as we read in the Psalms. 'This day' is eternity. As to His Deity His Father was always with Him, but He was with Him as our Mediator, as His Father's servant. In His holy humanity His Father was with Him because He declared it so. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold." (Isa. 42.1) (It is amazing how quickly that hand goes round.)

I will make a brief application. We come to this in our measure as a part of the fellowship of His sufferings. That is the best part of it. There are many facets of being alone in creatureship. Being alone we are alone before God. No one can assist you in standing before God. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." (Psa. 49.7) nor for his children. It is complete loneliness. We are alone; we die alone, we go into eternity alone, and in the deepest part of our personalities we go through the world alone. You realise there is much in your path where you walk alone. There are things you cannot speak of, and before God you walk alone. This is the loving discipline of God to strip His people of all other props within and without. You find you get more to the realisation that you are alone. Yet the more you come into this the more you will enjoy fellowship with Christ and His dear established people and you are alone. No one can bridge the gap into your heart without love in their souls and some knowledge of your path by walking the same type.

So you see from that angle you may get caught up with the generations. It is a strange thing: the young do not understand you, and you are different from the old ones. I have lived in this path nearly all my life. Some of you will appreciate this. There are several other things where you walk alone. You have trials but it would not be fair to burden your children with them or to burden others. So to open your mouth and pour out your complaints is not fair, nor to go into your brother's house. You will find it agony to be alone; to be despised and rejected. This sounds a trite observation, but do you believe this? One said to me this week; ~~IN~~ "In a deeper path as people get nearer eternity they can count their friends on one hand." This is no lack of feeling to hundreds of people, but those who are close to you, how few they are! When the dear Lord comes He strips you so you enjoy more of His blessed presence, and He endears Himself to you. I have always felt thankful to God that before He put me in the ministry He brought me where I walked alone, and this has been of outstanding benefit to me. It is bliss to be alone when the dear Lord comes. A child of God coming into a deeper part of the journey knows something of what our Saviour said. "And shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Amen.