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J. W. Sperling - Tyler

Prayer Meeting Address given by our Pastor

on November 5, 1974.

Lesson. Lamentations 3. vv.1-8 & 22-39.

You will observe the tremendous contrast between the first and second sections of this remarkable chapter in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Let us place two verses in contrast: one you will anticipate from the hymn (749) "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer." This is one of the lowest, darkest, most agonising places God's children ever come into, A dead professor is totally ignorant of this. It is the saints of God who come feelingly into it, and come into the experience we sometimes do. "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer."

The other verse is the last one. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Let us summarise the two sections. First, the prophet is bewailing his calamities. What a place to be in! to bewail our calamities. In the second section he has found the mercy of God. He is not bewailing his calamities; he is justifying God. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" What he is doing is celebrating the sweet mercy of God.

I want to say, we shall get nowhere if we just remain bewailing our calamities. A good place to be found in calamity and in trouble is near Gethsemene, or at the foot of the cross: to really have contemplation and a realisation in sweet sympathy with a suffering Redeemer of what He bore. Then we shall not concentrate on our calamities and bewail them. We shall feel three things. One; "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." Two; we are out of hell. Three; we shall feel our calamities are so very, very small and they will fade as wax to some degree, and we shall feel in our souls a sweet sympathy with the Passion and agony of our Saviour. It is then your prayers will pass through.

A few words further. It is to be well understood and believed that the saints of God are blessed with a measure of discernment that will enable them to know surely (you test yourself on this) when they have sweet access at the Throne of Grace. You will feel as you approach God the Father through the mediation of His dear Son sweet access, and you will say; "I believe the Lord has blessed me with access." You know when you are in bondage. It is a point where your understanding completely fails. You may be thinking; "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer," You feel as King Hezekiah did. This was his estimation of his own prayer; "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter." This is where discernment seems to fail. You think God is not listening; that He does not hear your cry, and your prayers are so poor, they are like the chattering of a crane or a swallow. The Lord

said to Isaiah, "Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears."

So I want you to understand although you have a very, very low estimation of your prayers,- you hardly call it prayer; it is ejaculations, twitterings loud clamouring cries, and you think the Lord will not hear you. My friends, He does, and you will prove it. You wonder why in various parts of Scripture the people of God found difficulty in getting what they needed and desired. The woman from the sea coast of Syria came concerning her daughter, "and he answered her not a word." She still pressed on. "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." Then there ^{was} the reference to the dogs, and that suited her, and eventually, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

You find in the case of Jacob, "Let me go," said the Lord, "for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

When the two on the Emmaus road came to the end of their journey Christ made as if He was going on, but they constrained Him. How may this be interpreted? One way: the Lord has purposed your faith should make its effort a supreme effort; that your faith should be exercised to the maximum. I will tell you this, the more travail, the more effort, the more difficult your case, the more you plead, groan, cry, the more precious the blessing will be when you receive it. Amen.