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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Friday, April 1. 1983.

Lesson. Mark 15. vv.15-47.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. Luke 23, vv.42,43.

We observe in the cases of all those eternally loved of God, the Holy Spirit following conversion, teaches the complete body of divinity; viz, all the holy doctrines of divine grace. So no child of God remains in uncertainty as to the glorious foundation of their salvation, and as to the amazing efficacy of grace which has saved them and the channel of His divine love through which all flows. He also cleanses them in His precious, rich, shed, vital, sin-atoning blood, and clothes their naked souls in the sweet perfection of the obedience of their Surety to the moral, a righteousness provided for His bride. He sanctifies their souls by His pure, spotless body. There is no ambiguity in the souls of those who are going to Heaven, those who have gone to Paradise, as to the exact nature of their eternal salvation. You are not uncertain as to the foundation you are resting on, have built your heavenly hopes on. You are not uncertain concerning that which alone cleanses you from your sins and justifies you as a righteous person before God through the obedience of our blessed Surety. My exercise this morning is, we are here to bless God for the victory of Christ. We are here to sympathise with Him in His bitter Passion. We are here to commemorate the sacred scene of suffering love when the Lord Jesus, our blessed Saviour gave His life a sacrifice, and the sacrificial nature of His death was voluntary and vicarious and expiatory. It is my exercise to find those who are praying for a further revelation that this dear Saviour remembers them, and the divine efficacy of all He accomplished in His priestly work of atonement is applied to their souls by the power and grace of God.

So I hope we have been led to the illustrious, wondrous, miraculous case of the dying malefactor, who received an immediate answer to his

prayer in the few hours from the time when he was quickened on his cross, to the time the Saviour gave His life voluntarily and he himself died, suffering justly. He entered with the Lord Jesus on that day into Paradise. I ask you beloved friends, all of you from the oldest to the youngest, is the cry in your heart "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."? Is not this the epitome of all holy desire created by the Holy Ghost in the souls of quickened sinners, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"? The case is truly remarkable. Let me recount the number of hours our blessed Saviour was on His cross. He was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning, and from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon there was darkness over the whole earth. Our Saviour was on His cross for six hours. It is now nearly eleven-thirty. You may follow the course of the crucifixion of our blessed Redeemer and the order of events by thinking of the time. Did you think of it at nine a.m.? It was then that Jesus at first bearing His cross, and later another, willingly, voluntarily went forth and came to Calvary, Golgotha. Then was the gibbet of wood on the earth, and willingly in His boundless, infinite, everlasting love which is ineffable, we see Him prone on the cross, and the soldiers with hammer and nails nailing His precious hands, the hands that dispense all blessings to the Church of God and heal them; the hands that support you, that plucked you out of the fire; the precious hands that protect and defend you nailed to the gibbet of wood, and His dear feet. Then the cross with Jesus on it was lifted and plunged into its socket. "The pangs of His body were great, but greater the pangs of His mind." Incomprehensible are the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Nine o'clock a.m. If only you could get a faithful view of Him on the cross, and see Him there with His eyes open, the dear windows of His soul; see the divine compassion and mighty love flowing from His precious eyes to your soul, telling you by His look inconceivably that He loves you with everlasting love and your sins which are many are forgiven. You will never forget that look. That was the means employed by the Holy Ghost to give me a living hope. O that precious cross, and that most precious Person hanging there so freely, voluntarily, willingly, lovingly to offer Himself as a Lamb without blemish to God for our sins.

Think of it. Nine o'clock a.m. Now it is eleven-thirty. Think of

His agony, and from now until three darkness was over the whole earth. If Christ had not risen I do not believe the great orb God set in the firmament would ever have risen again. There would have been no gospel, no Church, no hope. Our faith would have been in vain, our preaching in vain, those who have fallen asleep in Him would have perished. Think of His crucifixion. So for six hours He was on His cross. If only we could get near, get a further glimpse of our Saviour, my Saviour, your Saviour, There is salvation there for sinners. Every poor sinner who sees Christ and Him crucified and receives Him will go to Glory. There is hope for the vilest sinner brought to repentance. Here is the foundation for a living hope, a sure expectation of Heaven for those who deserve hell. O the glory of His cross! bearing away all the sins of His people in His own body on the tree. They are gone for ever, expiated, as though they had never been. You will be a happy people if you know your sins were borne away there.

Think of the six hours. According to the evangelists, Matthew and Mark, we understand that both malefactors were in unregeneracy at first, even the one in our text. They 'cast the same in His teeth'. "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." and we read in Mark they railed on Him. So in the six hours of Jesus on His cross did He send the Holy Ghost to 'breathe, O breath divine' into the soul of the malefactor on his cross - in the last hours of his life. It is true and I do not wish to be repetitive, I believe it is a correct sentiment: it is true there is only one such case perhaps in the Scriptures - I do not know fully - so that no sinner should despair. During my time I have come into contact with those the Lord has quickened into life in ^{their} last days, at the end of the journey. So there is only one such case so that no sinner need despair, being brought to repentance and asking the precious Person to remember them, that they should sink into hell though they have lived a life of crime and sin. It is also true there is apparently one case so that none should presume. If the Lord has a favour to you, you will not presume. You will never say, I can enjoy myself in the world and when I get old turn to religion. You may never get old. I will just recount one case from the annals of Zoar Church that will demonstrate the point concerning hope; that no poor sinner seeking to be remembered need be in despair.

If that is the cry from your heart you are not dead. No dead sinner ever asked the Lord to remember them. No dead sinner ever justified God in his sufferings and saw what the malefactor saw by divine revelation. The case in my mind is of Mr Fairall at Hawkswood. His wife was a dear godly soul, a member of this Church. He lived without God and never attended the House of God. His dear wife died and after her death he went through her personal effects. He came across a letter she had written, so it came back to her. In the letter the dear wife said to a close, godly friend how she believed God had a favour to her poor husband and he would be called. As he read the letter God called him. He was over eighty and the Lord worked blessedly in his soul, and after a little while he went through the Baptismal pool.

My friends, this is the glorious gospel of our blessed God. Any and every sinner on the face of the planet, if they feel their deep need of the Lord, if they mourn over their sins and are brought to repentance, brokenness of spirit, and led by the Spirit ask the precious Person to remember them will go to Heaven. You will never sink to the pit, never be lost, never die eternally. This is the quintessence of the gospel and very wonderful. We will issue a word of warning again. Do not presume on the mercy of God. It is one of the masterpieces of the devil to entice you and ensnare you, to whisper that God is merciful. He says to you, You enjoy yourself and go back when you are old. Never presume on the mercy of God. If you are born again you will not. You will want to be forgiven, to live a holy life, upright and godly. Sin will be vile to you. You will love holiness. So do not presume on the mercy of God. Don't think you will go on in the world and enjoy all your carnal mind is occupied with and turn to God at the last. It is likely that God will cut you down suddenly. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." If He cut you down it will be hell. I shall be pure from your blood, I trust.

An illustrious case this is of the grace of God. It shows the divine efficacy of grace in saving the vilest sinners. You may say, "I am looking at the malefactor. He was a great sinner." Five hundred pence? What are you then, fifty? Are you saying, "I am nothing like such a sinner"? Let us put it plainly. Bless God if He preserves us in

moral rectitude, in upright living. It is something to be thankful for: there is no salvation in it. This man was a malefactor, and you will see all the sins committed in the world in your heart and nature. So are you able to say,

"I love to meet among them now,
Before Thy gracious feet to bow, - do not say it if
you are not able - Though vilest of them all." ?

You will not always be there. A few points relative to the wondrous case of one called during the few hours the Saviour was on His cross. He said when He was crucified, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This malefactor was included in that prayer. "Father, forgive them, for they know what they do." Dying Stephen as he was stoned knelt down and said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." and how in the case of the illustrious apostle of ours, Paul, the Lord knew how to answer that prayer! You never know, my friends. Some of the greatest ^{become the greatest} friends. J.K.P. always said that God could make an enemy a friend by doing one thing; slaying enmity. He will not leave a vacuum, He will give a spirit of amity, love. Who are you praying for? any poor sinner as well as yourself, those a long way off? We have proved our prayers are not in vain. We have proved the miracles of grace God has performed even when it seemed they were nearly gone and God called them. So the malefactor was quickened into life by the Spirit.

Let us lift up some of the salient points of the narrative. When he was quickened, how he felt the holiness of God and consequently the heinousness of sin. Sin became terrible to him, and his fellow malefactor was railing on Christ. He did not want to be guilty of the sin of omission. Some of us know what that is. We have come out with a load of guilt on our heart, the sin of omission. There are times when you feel so guilty because you were silent. He was not silent. The first thing he did was to rebuke his fellow. He would stand for the honour and glory of a precious Christ on the cross. Do you ever in your daily contacts with the world feel strong enough to rebuke those who use profane language? There are many nice people, good at their work. It is a habit with them to use swear words. Do you ever put a hand on the shoulder of one and say, "Don't swear. Pray. Don't use those words. Try and pray"? He rebuked the sinner. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation"? He justified God in his sufferings. "And we indeed

justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." It is a great thing to justify God in suffering; not murmur, rebel, repine. Job justified God in all he suffered. In your affliction, trouble, suffering do you justify God, or repine? "We indeed justly." One remarkable thing concerning the dying malefactor is the degree of revelation he received. He said, "This man hath done nothing amiss. He is innocent, pure, holy." If you look on it in depth you will see if He has done nothing amiss yet He is crucified, there is only one deduction. He is hanging there as a Surety. That is the only deduction. He has done nothing amiss, yet He is crucified. So he could see the Lord Jesus Christ was a Substitute and Surety for others. It was not for what He had done. He saw the vicarious nature of the dolorous Passion of the Lord Jesus. "This man hath done nothing amiss." He was spotless, innocent and pure. He saw the dear One as Surety and Substitute, and he saw the purpose of His assumption of a holy humanity. "This man." He saw His Deity, for the next thing was, he said to the Lord Jesus, "Lord. King." Here is His Deity. He appealed to the One who was able and almighty to save in His sufferings and death, full of holy efficacy to salvation. He said - do you say to Him? - he said to Jesus, the Friend of sinners, "Lord, remember me." There is everything in it. It means, Remember me in Thy boundless love, because Thou hast eternally loved me. Remember me and give me the divine efficacy of the fruits of Thy vicarious Passion; the fruit of pardon, justification, sealing. Remember me." It is a lovely prayer. It is so concise, comprehensive; it covers all. Remember me in Thy compassion and tenderness, love, infinite goodness, faithfulness. Remember me in all my troubles, sorrows, woes, exercises, concerns, weakness, insufficiency. Remember me, a sinner weak and vile, deserving hell, yet remember me. "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Blessed be God.