

21,566 t
LaT971

Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor *Mr. J. W. Sparkling-Tyler*
on Thursday Evening, April 20, 1978. *at The Dickes*

Lesson. Matthew 24. vv.1-35.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Mark 13. 13.

There are two places in the gospels where this Scripture is before us, as spoken by the dear Lord Himself. In the Lesson we have a subject that is obviously painfully, very solemnly true; namely, iniquity abounding, so now it would appear that the very earth and the human race are saturated with iniquity. It is a solemn fact that flesh and blood becomes after a while accustomed to degrading and shocking things, and the sharp edge of distress, anxiety and deep concern considerably lose their edge. So this is the day the Lord was speaking of, when iniquity abounds. There is in the context a wonderful, shining example of the sovereign efficacy of divine grace in a faithful few, and those are the souls in the Text; those who endure to the end and are saved. In the chapter in St Mark the context is different: it belongs to the same days. There is every facet of deterioration and acceleration towards the end of this dispensation; namely, His dear people will be hated of all men for His sake. Monstrous crimes are perpetrated; members of families rising up against parents and others, causing them to be put to death. It is almost too monstrous to contemplate, and as I have said, it is a sign of deterioration and acceleration towards the end of this dispensation. His people are surrounded with a flood of iniquity in a dying world, and exposed measurably to great hatred and persecution. We have precious, chosen characters of divine grace whose lamps are burning, whose light shines in a dark world: through divine grace and sovereign efficacy they endure to the end, notwithstanding all they have to pass through. Our beloved friends know well the truthfulness of these statements, because these things are with us in these last days, in the dregs of time. Our deep concern is that we have confirmation and blessed proof in our lives every day that we are among those who, by His love, fear, and indwelling Spirit are enabled to endure unto the end.

There is another consideration that will affect the Lord's dear people, and has done in all ages. It is this: two cases I will quote. We find when the Lord Jesus began to teach the sacred doctrine of eating His flesh and drinking His blood there was a solemn issue. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." - professed disciples, men and women who had been following Him, went back, and walked no more with Him. That was the end of their religion. After all the fair pretensions of earlier days they went back. What a terrible thing is apostasy! to renounce completely a professed faith, and it appeared that it was final: they walked no more with Him. Think of the terrible end of such people! think of the dying moments of such souls; hell's deep caverns opening wide. This concerns the Lord's people, for He made application to His own disciples of the incisive word of inquiry "Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." O the wonder of being among those who endure to the end and are saved! The other case I have in mind is in the parable of the Sower and the stony ground hearers. "Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth." and initially the Lord said they heard the word with joy. It is all false; it is excitement superficial; no reality in it. It is recorded concerning such, "When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." That is the end of it. My Text speaks of those blessed characters who by sovereign, powerful, efficacious, divine, invincible grace endure to the end and are saved, not on the ground of endurance; on the ground of the merits of Christ, but their endurance is proof of the sovereign power of His grace in them.

I hope the Lord will help me to speak to the word. It is exceedingly deep and it is a wonderful foundation for the people of God, and a glorious example of enduring to the end. First of all, what does it mean to endure? To last; to hold on our way, and to come to a blessed issue. It means to run the race and reach the blessed mark and obtain the prize: to fight the good fight of faith and to overcome. It means the Lord enabling us by the sovereign efficacy of all the graces of His Spirit and by the power of grace and enduring mercy and the immutability of His

love and the experience of divine faithfulness, for a poor sinner to be brought to a victorious issue. I want to refer, if I may, and I shall fail;- to the glorious example that is before us of enduring to the end,- our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, born at Bethlehem, made of a woman, made under the law; coming with a specific mission, and coming with a glorious objective. You see, it is absolutely valueless, nebulous, void to go on if you have no glorious objective and no blessed object. Why hold out or hold on if you have nothing in view? It is absolutely vain, impotent: there is nothing in it. We know from the depth of the divine revelation we are unworthy to read, that the Lord Jesus had a glorious, specific objective. He came to accomplish something - the whole of His priestly work of atonement; and we know, and it is a sublime word, He had a wonderful joy set before Him. He could see it through the sea of His sufferings and agony. He saw the wonderful joy and He endured to the end. We have the wonderful, outstanding word in the Scriptures of what He said when He came to the end. When He had received the vinegar He said. "It is finished." He endured to the end, my friends. "and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." This is the foundation. The very word end, - He endured the cross, - suggests that there is much to pass through and bear and suffer. The life of a child of God is not easy: there is much I will name to you for you to pass through. Wondrous is endurance.

May I reverently name before you something of what the Saviour endured. He endured the curse, the contradiction of sinners against himself. He endured the cross. O the agony of our Saviour! And He endured all the malice and vicious spleen of the pit. Think of all the the Lord Jesus passed through; what He endured! Forty days and nights with no food, and the devil came to Him. He was with the wild beasts, and angels ministered to Him. The enmity and malice and spleen of the human race He endured. A few believed in Him and loved Him. The majority cried, "Away with Him; crucify Him." Think of the ignominy He endured. They smote Him; they spat in His face; they mocked Him, derided Him, contradicted Him; they denied all He said. Think of what He endured! It is impossible for me to say much: it is infinitely deep, but it is the foundation of our salvation. He endured the crown of thorns, the

purple robe, the scourging at the pillar. The ploughers made long their furrows on His precious body. His body was completely broken as in the Communion. I am sure this will affect you. Think of what your Saviour endured to take you to Heaven! And as we know well, and yet so little because of its infinite depth, He endured the curse of God, and He suffered the condition of the lost in His holy soul. He endured it. The cry of triumph from His holy soul,- how wondrous!- it signified that He had endured to the end. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." He saw before Him the wonder of what He would accomplish,- the Church washed, redeemed, purified, made white and glorious, so He could say, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." forgiven, justified; His bride, His peculiar treasure, His portion. That is the foundation for the subject and the glorious example. If you find yourself fatigued, overwhelmed, or not knowing how to hold on your way, ask the Holy Ghost to reveal to you the sweet Person of Christ as your Surety in all He endured

I trust to be enabled to dilate on the Text as it relates to us. First of all, take this view of enduring to the end. There is an end, and with the people of God it is blessed and wonderful. It infers there has been a beginning. It would be useless to speak of enduring to the end if you have never known a beginning. I am thinking of two things. First, there can only be one true beginning, by the quickening breath of the Spirit,- an heir of Glory born. O the wonder of regeneration so a poor sinner is alive; begins to feel and know he is in want; comes to himself. Wonderful a living beginning is. I will stay here briefly because we are exhorted,- and this is true for those who are older, and for all His people. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." The nearer the Lord's people get to the end the deeper is their concern in relation to their beginning. They want to be assured and confirmed that they have a living beginning; a true Holy Ghost beginning: to know they are born of the Spirit, quickened into divine life by the Holy Ghost. Do you remember your beginning? You may say, "It is impossible to locate the time when the Lord began with me." It is with me, really, because I believe the Lord began when I was an infant. When prayer rises to the Lord that He will make it plain to you, the Holy Ghost will bring to your spirit and understanding certain events and

circumstances in your life and He will bear witness with your spirit that it was the work of God, and it will live in your soul. When you are giving your testimony to the Church you will begin there if you feel sweet liberty. I ask the beloved friends, where do you begin? When did the Lord begin a work in your soul? It may be impossible to locate the moment. Saul of Tarsus could. He knew when the Lord cut him down, though there had been something going on in his spirit. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." This is something that often interests me, and I believe I can see it with those we pray for. There are times when you feel, "Dear Lord, I really wonder if there is a work begun and they are in this; they are kicking against the pricks." They are as rebellious as they can be. What a display of the corruption of fallen nature there sometimes is when the Lord begins His work! I am not saying this vaguely, but with understanding and experience. They may appear to resist and resent, but under it all there is a discerning in your spirit that the Lord has begun, and presently rebellion will be slain. The flesh would say, "I do not want my life upset. I do not want to have to give up the pleasures of this life. I do not want that old-fashioned religion." They are kicking against the pricks. O the rebellion of fallen nature against the work of God in the soul! We have an interesting word from the Lord to Saul; "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." He had known when the Lord stopped him, and the Lord will bring to your spirit the period of life and you will see how the Lord worked: you will look back and understand. Often the Lord begins a work of grace in the soul of a sinner by bringing him into trouble, heavy affliction, disappointment in love, frustration, or being made redundant,- severe trouble, and they are in it. The Lord begins to work in the soul and it may be gradual. It is powerful and effectual, and no power on earth can withstand it. A poor sinner cannot remove the arrow from his heart. Before God he is a guilty sinner, and the Lord will bring to you these things with divine affirmation and confirmation as to the beginning of His work in your soul. As unworthy as I am, my mind goes back to Coldharbour Road and the old mill. I do not know if it still exists. I know how the Lord began to deepen His work powerfully in my soul. I was slinging a stone,- not wilfully, and I heard glass fall and ran away. I went into the old mill and got in a cramped position, and I could see

a man looking round to see where was the culprit, and the Lord deepened His work in my soul. He said, "That man cannot see you: you are guilty. I can see you." and I was a guilty wretch before God.

It is wonderful to know a real beginning. When the soul knows a revealed Christ it is as though the Lord takes you to the starting line of the race, and you begin to run in holy desire after Him, especially when He has blessed you with pardon, and you find it is an obstacle race and a marathon. O the opposition that hinders, overwhelms and distresses you, and you wonder whether it will be possible to endure to the end. What is it? The Lord having begun a work of divine grace in your soul He brings it to a beautiful fruition: there is an end. Another thing is, enduring to the end means you seek by the sovereign grace of God to hold on your way, and to know what our apostle said; "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.- It is all in front of me. Shall I be deterred? go back? No: I have got a blessed mark, a glorious objective.- saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus." - to finish it, to endure unto the end. It is like a builder: what would you think of a builder who began to build and then ceased and the house was incomplete? A child of God seeks by the sovereign grace of God to finish his course, "and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus."

I will make application of the word. Poor soul, your path is not easy You are exposed to things that militate against the grace of God in your souls; a body of sin and death, your temperament, your character defects, weaknesses and frailties. You have a cursed foe, Satan, and you have the opposition of the world within and without, and

"Mighty enemies without,

Much mightier within." (795)

Your path is tribulation, and it means you have a load that is heavier than you know how to carry. You go into the waters and you fear you will sink as did Peter. And you have things that overwhelm you. Without the power of God it would be impossible to endure to the end. Are you

going mechanically from day to day, adapting your life to a rigid régime so you are a creature of habit? O no! it is a life of faith on the Son of God. It is to walk in love, by prayer, by faith believing in the Lord Jesus, seeking only that which is pleasing in His sight: to serve, love, obey Him. I will say this: the word is to encourage the Lord's people in a path of tribulation. You wonder what you will do; how you will get through; how hold on your way; how endure to the end. My friends, you have all the promises of the everlasting covenant for your help. "My grace is sufficient for thee." If you say, "How shall I endure to the end?" "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength ^{made} is perfect in weakness. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." And you have the quintessence of all the promises; "for he hath said, I will never leave thee, not forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The Lord bless you and cheer and strengthen you and bring you through. Amen.