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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday Evening, June 20. 1974.

Lesson. Zechariah 12. vv. 9-14. & 13.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. Matthew 26. vv. 36-38.

You may wonder what the introduction or title for the sermon is. I can immediately give it to you because it has been presented to my spirit in the last few minutes before announcing the sacred Text. It is a title that has tremendous, unfathomed results for those who fear God in several wondrous details. For instance, our very salvation is pendant on it. The title is supplied by one who was there on the fringe of Gethsemane. A most remarkable title it is, and a fitting word for the continuity of our meditation on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The title is; "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come."

You know something from the narratives by the evangelists of the thirty years and a little over, of our Saviour on earth in the Holy Land, but all the while, when He left the skies, when He assumed a holy humanity in the virgin's womb and when He was born, He knew there was before Him what is termed here His hour. Let us take the passage, "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father." He could not go from the mount of transfiguration to the Father: He could not go from His baptism in Jordan to the Father. No: He knew He must pass through this hour; and 'hour' to expound it, was the concentration of all His suffering and agony and Passion to redeem His dear people from sin, death and hell. There was only one way for the Son of God incarnate to return to the Father. If I put it to you, and I can use the term, there was only one way of honour to return to the Father, and there is only one

way for you. What was the way of honour to return to the Father? To fulfil all His New Covenant engagements. Spelt out this means to have imputed to Him, laid on Him; taken from the Church of God and laid on Him all their sins; the whole mass of their sins. Now you can understand something of the meaning of; "when Jesus knew that his hour was come." And having received by a divine act of God the imputation of all their sin, God did something He has only done once. It will never be done again.

Every lost sinner knows the fiery wrath of God. Only once in history did God awaken the sword of Justice against His fellow. It was His hour. That is why I read the Lesson in Zechariah. Having imputed the sins of His people to the sinless sin-Bearer, He awakened the sword against the Shepherd once and for all. That is why you read in the evangelists that He "began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy." He looked up with His eye of omniscience and saw His own dear Father awakening the sword against Him. This was the beginning of His hour, and the sword smote Him in Gethsemane. I could live in this, and never want to come out. He knew that His hour was come: and how should He depart out of the world to the Father? Via Gethsemane; the trial of mockery, the scourging at the pillar the cross, and the grave: then resurrection, ascension and exaltation. O how grand this is to my soul!

In a certain sense, (I must speak spontaneously) the Lord uses the very same word for His people. When He knew that His hour was come: and as you remember in the same gospel He uses the term for His people. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth ~~the~~ no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow." (John 16. 21-22) My friends, there is no other path to heaven. The path of the saints is a path of communion with Him. "Jesus knew that His hour was come." There are times in particular, and there is a time when the saints of God have a view of the hour, and it covers a life of tribulation; but there are concentrated hours, and your hour has come.

That then is the title for the sermon. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come." One said in the hymn;

"O thou bleeding love divine,
What are other loves to Thine?
Theirs a drop, and Thine a sea,
Ever full, and ever free! (170)

He knew that His hour had come. Listen to the fruit of that, and see the mighty motive that moved Him; "Twas all for love." See the fruit of it in the same word in John: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father." When you think of the honour that rested on Him and rests on Him now, here is merit, and this merit you may stand on by faith. I speak with extreme reverence, but could He have gone from His baptism to the Father you would have had little merit to stand on. It is by the merits of His vicarious Passion, agony, sweat of blood, voluntary death, victory, on the ground of His obedience to death, and on that ground the whole Church of God rests.

So "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father." I cannot overemphasise the point when His saints have communion with Him in this respect, there is ^{only} one honourable way for them to go to the Father. It is to obey Him; to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him. If so be it is His will, you lose your life for His sake and the gospel's so you might save it. There is only one honourable way. How easy it is and understandable that the saints of God, - and we have been there, - should be like the prophet Elijah under the juniper tree. "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life." (1Kings 19.4) You may come there in trouble; as if you will never rise, or go on, or continue. There is only one honourable way to go to the Father, to finish your course, to be helped over all obstacles, to have fellowship with Him, and to be made willing to take up your cross daily and to follow Him; and; "I am crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2.20)

What was the mighty motive of His soul? "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." There are two aspects of this: one is, He loved them to the end of all His agony and Passion; to the very end through everything to accomplish their redemption. When He knew the price of their ransom was His own blood, "He pity ne'er

withdrew." (438) He loved them unto the end. In all the mockery, pain, suffering, the isolation of Gethsemane when He trod the winepress alone, 'and of the people there was none with me', the scourging at the pillar, the cross, the grave; He loved them unto the end. This is wonderful.

The other aspect is; "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The love of Christ is immutable. He loved you in the Covenant before you were born, when He gave you a being, when He quickened you, and through all the changing scenes of life, with all your ill manners, provocations, rebellions,- He loved them unto the end. "Love cannot from its post withdraw." (633) This will break your heart when you get, as I do, a view of your life; you look on your life and say; "It is marvellous to me that God has not cut me down. Many times I have provoked Him. I have rebelled against Him, sinned against Him, dishonoured ~~against~~ Him,"- but 'He loved them unto the end.' It is wonderful, That is why He went to Gethsemane, and that is the mighty motive. "Twas all for love." It is a wonderful expression; "Love cannot from its post withdraw." He loved them unto the end. That is the title, and this in itself is enough for us to inwardly digest if I said Amen.

Let us take the term 'hour'. His hour had come: and the sacred movements of our blessed Redeemer. I do not intend to go over the ground covered yesterday: some sentences may be repeated, but I shall endeavour to go on from where we left off. "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane." I suggest to you that these two place-names among others are engraved on the hearts of all the Lord's children, that is to say, Gethsemane and Calvary,- or Golgotha. They are most precious to you, and for what specific reason? Because in those places our Saviour wrought the work of your redemption, - largely so. One can never assess or compute the wonders wrought in the holy transaction in Gethsemane and at Calvary, resultant in the eternal salvation and redemption of all the Lord's chosen people. Every blessing, every sweet grace, every virtue, every New Covenant promise flows to you from Gethsemane and Calvary. That is, because of what Christ wrought in His Passion: it flows to you from an exalted Redeemer.

I will just go aside. I have thought of the resurrection Body of Christ in a particular thing I have never mentioned in the pulpit. The resurrection

Body of our blessed Lord was radiant with joy, but this is the point that has been many times in my spirit; He still retained the wounds He suffered. This is a subject so sublime and wonderful, I have only reverently attempted to approach the fringe of it. I will tell you how it was presented to my mind,- what of His wounds now He is in heaven? One of the greatest glories of a warrior who has known victory is to show his scars; and in heaven, as we believe according to the hymn, He "shows His glorious scars." (850) To me this has been very precious. This is the very evidence of all He suffered,- His glorious scars; the proof of it all. I have never mentioned this in the pulpit before. In every part of the work of Christ there was the valid, potent, blessed proof of what He had done. The resurrection was a valid and blessed proof of the virtue and validity of His sufferings. The fact that He was raised proved it. You will remember doubting Thomas said he would not believe, - he was not there the first time, and he wished to see the wounds, to know this was his once suffering Saviour; to know His victory was complete, and to use his finger and his hand. I never believe this means his hand literally, but there is the finger and hand of faith. You must have a measure of the same. It is too sacred to mention, but faith would reach hither,- you would reach ~~h~~hither your hand towards His wounds, His riven side. So I will just say again, He shows His glorious scars. The wonder of it all is we shall soon, as we believe, see Him and be with Him. This is to me the greatest joy of all, to be favoured in my soul to believe that it will not be long. If you could contemplate your prospects, you will soon see Him and be like Him.

I suggested that these two place-names are engraved in your hearts. I can remember in my teens after Christ had been revealed to my soul, I felt developing in my soul an intense longing to be led by the Spirit to Gethsemane and Calvary, and this desire eclipsed all on earth. I felt it especially under the ministry of one or two, created by the Spirit in my soul; - if only I could be led near Gethsemane and Calvary, and I believe in measure the Lord granted this. I believe these are my favourite and best subjects. I feel more at home in preaching in these subjects than any other; Gethsemane and Calvary, and the resurrection and ascension. Why? Because here is salvation: here is life, grace, peace, joy, bliss,

everything. Here is your foundation. (So I may not get further than to name Gethsemane.) "Then cometh Jesus." Keep in the background of your mind the title. "Then cometh Jesus." Why? Because it was laid down in the Covenant: all His covenant engagements were being fulfilled. This was a unique time of all times. "Then cometh Jesus with them, + a little band, His disciples, - unto a place called Gethsemane." I have never been to the Holy Land, but we know from the revelation of Scripture that the garden of Gethsemane was at the foot of the mouht of Olives. Take the very word 'Olives'. Even the name 'Gethsemane' has a root that means 'the olive press' in Aramaic. So in the garden there^{was} olive trees.

I want to speak to you first concerning the olive tree. It is a lowly tree, not growing on the mountain tops, but in lowly places. Think of the humility and the humiliation of our blessed Redeemer! The olive tree is an evergreen; - no fading according to the season. The olive tree in June has beautiful white flowers.

"White is His soul, from blemish free;
Red with the blood He shed for me." (21)

White: there is something marvellous concerning whiteness. It suggests to us holiness, purity, cleansing. Think of the white robes of a soul that is washed in the blood of Christ, and made whiter than snow! O this whiteness! And later the ~~fruit~~ fruit develops, - oil. And how is the oil extracted? The fruit is put into a press and a process of pressure is applied and the oil flows. Oil has wonderful properties, to heal bruises and wounds. It is acknowledged by those who know of the oil olive as to its amazing properties, internally and externally. Gethsemane, the olive press. An evergreen. Christ speaks of the things done in a green tree, - "what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23. 31) Think of the white flower, of the perfection of His nature! Think of the perfection of His obedience, of all His work that He wrought for His people! O this whiteness! - so they should shine in spotless splendour and purity. Think of whiteness!

Let us stop to contemplate. Have you a sweet hope that you will be found among the blood-washed multitude in heaven, pure, and holy, and spotless?

"With His spotless vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One." (145)

Think of the fruit, and think of your Saviour as He entered the garden, and what He said; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." That is to say He knew His sorrow would issue in death. Think of Him there, "like a rich olive, bruised and pressed With agonising smart."
(156)

"View Him in that olive press

Squeezed and wrung till 'whelmed in blood." (802)

and flowing out the oil of grace, which is for the healing of the Church of God, - of every sin-sick soul brought to repentance.

Gethsemane. When you think of a garden, think of what took place there. It was the scene of His many devotions in the night, at various times in solitude.

"Cheered with sacred solitude,
Wrapt in contemplation sweet."

He retired to the garden with His disciples: they often resorted thither, a sweet place of contemplation, devotion and prayer, and the hymn says;

"Here they oft conversing sat,
Or might join with Christ in prayer;
O what blest devotion's that,
When the Lord Himself is there!"

In the garden He was betrayed into the hands of His enemies by one of His own disciples. In this garden He drank the cup of the curse due to His people's sins. In the garden ^{his sweat} was as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. In the garden an angel ^{appeared} unto Him, strengthening Him. In the garden He prayed. There is but one theme in what He prayed. "Thy will be done." Amen.