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LATAM

Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Good Friday. April 4. 1980.

Lesson. Luke 22. vv. 31-62.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Matthew 26. 42.

We have a divine exposition to deliver to us the perfect meaning of the symbol that is before us here, cup. There was a time when the mother of Zebedee's children came to Christ with a specific request concerning her sons. "Grant," said she, "that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto him, We are able." What a request, and what a response to the revelation given by the Lord concerning His cup! His baptism. For you will know in the symbol divinely chosen, a cup is a vessel containing a potion, and it is not just to be viewed. We drink the cup: whatever is in the cup we drink. Let us bless God for the amazing truth,- unfathomed as it must remain to us,- for how true are the words in the Hymn concerning the Passion of Christ; "Tis to God, and God alone, That their weight,- depth and dimensions.- is fully known." The Lord's people have an inkling of it for a specific reason. The divine reason is assigned: it is because they are one with Him. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." You cannot be a member of His precious, mystical body and have no saving knowledge of His Person, His humility and His exaltation. You have it demonstrated in your person; "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." This oneness! So while it is true to declare it is impossible for us to fathom the dimensions, the depths and the volume of the Passion of Christ, and all of them vicarious; it is true to say we shall have some inkling of and be led into them. Let us bless God therefore for the precious word read in the Lesson and thanked God for in our petitions, that Christ said, "The things concerning me have an end." In His moment of triumph when He said gloriously, "It is finished" and bowed His adorable head and gave up the ghost,- yielded His spirit to the hand

of His Father, He was pierced by the spear, the fountain was opened of purgation. His precious body was taken down by devout, loving hands and bound in grave clothes and buried. Can you anticipate your hands of love touching His precious body in death? and with the spices, banding the grave clothes about Him and conveying Him to the tomb? Would your touch be gentle, loving? We have said that no enemy touched Him after His triumphant death; after His resurrection no enemy saw Him. Only His people saw Him as He showed Himself to them. He was buried. There was no pomp, no great ceremony, no tremendous congregation,- yet what a congregation! all the host of Heaven and the whole Church of God. They were all there because they are one with Him. On the third day gloriously, triumphantly He rose, as we blessed God, by an act of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. For the blessed Father raised Him by His glory: by His own volition He rose. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." And the Holy Ghost quickened His dead body. "The things concerning me have an end." All His humiliation, suffering, ignominy, reproach, all distress and agony: no more the crown of thorns, no more mockery, or spear, or rugged nails of the cross. "The things concerning me have an end." It spells out your salvation, deliverance, your prospect and foretaste here of joy, peace, happiness divine. The things, He said, concerning Me have an end.

We are here this morning obviously to celebrate His victory, because it is conveyed by the Spirit to our souls. We realise nothing can bury us, no cords can hold us, only the cords of love. Nothing can bring us into condemnation, or be laid to our charge in a right sense. "Who shall ^{lay} any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Who shall eternally condemn? It has all been laid on the Lord Jesus. So we get a sense of victory and glory this morning. The curse has been removed, sin expiated, righteousness wrought: all Heaven is filled with harmony in our salvation. We are here also to try to contemplate and meditate on the so great cost of our salvation, because it is the overwhelming desire that is created by the Holy Ghost in the souls of all who are born again, especially when they have an inkling of the resurrection of Christ and know Him, and know what it is to receive complete assurance of forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation, and according to wisdom and the teaching of the Spirit they are

directed to seek of the Lord that they may be favoured to tread the precincts of Gethsemane, come near to the Hall of Judgment and Mount Calvary, and see Him by faith bleeding for them. It is there in the garden and at the cross the Lord's people will realise the wonder of their salvation and receive complete assurance of it. It is there you get forgiveness, and receive all the promises and blessings of the New Covenant: they all flow in His precious blood.

So I wish to name to you two things. I wonder whether I shall find some of you, that the Lord is creating in your soul a living exercise of priority that He will lead you to Gethsemane and Calvary. You will pray for it: to have a sacred, solemn, blessed, saving, sanctifying view by faith as you are enabled to bear it, of the dear, dying Lamb of God.

"Softly to Thy garden lead us,
To behold Thy bloody sweat."

You will pray the Holy Ghost to conduct His sinner-train to Calvary, where the Lamb was slain. Does this find you? Is the Lord leading you to the sufferings of His dear Son incarnate? or is the present truth proclaimed a confirmation to you of outstanding seasons in your life when you were led to the vicarious Passion of the Lord Jesus? It flows out in the ministry of the Spirit, in the prayers of godly men who have been thus led. If you have been led to Gethsemane and Calvary I believe there will be a measure of it in every sermon under the influence of the Spirit, and it will be in every prayer of those who have been led thus by the Spirit. There is something so solid, stable, sanctifying, blessed, confirming in such a ministry and prayers. You can ^{feel} under the influence of the Spirit the minister is in union with the precious Saviour, knows Calvary, and the divine efficacy of it and strength flows in the ministry. You feel there is blessed stability and sanctification in the souls of godly men thus led in prayer. What do you seek? great things for yourself here below? to find satisfaction in material things, perishing things? Or has this priority in your soul, to be led to the gloomy garden, to the hill Calvary, to be close to your Saviour in His sufferings, to have the assurance it was for you, and all the streams of divine blessing flowing therefrom. I believe I felt this as a lad and in my teens: I know I did. I felt there is nothing in the world I desire like that. It is to know a dear, bleeding Saviour, to see Him by faith because there is Heaven in it: there is bliss,

there is salvation, forgiveness, there is an eternity of happiness and joy. There^{is} everything there. You will see how vain and empty are things below, comparatively. It is vanity and vexation of spirit. It is the whole desire of your soul to be drawn to a dear Christ. I quote the apostle, and this is an overriding spiritual ~~experience~~ exercise: "That I may know Him." He did; he had been transported to the third heavens; still he said, "That I may know Him." There is Eternity in this. It will take Eternity to know Him, ever opening, ever being led to living fountains of waters. So "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." There is no life without. Derived from the power of His resurrection is regeneration, quickening: and the power of His resurrection spells out forgiveness, deliverance from bondage and the curse of the law. "and the fellowship of his sufferings." These are divinely^{inspired} words. "the fellowship of his sufferings." If the Lord said to you, "What is thy request, and what is thy petition?" what would you say? Would you be able to say, "that I may know the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"?

Let us examine this as enabled. Why do you seek under the influence and power of the Spirit by grace to know the fellowship of His sufferings? The root of it has been referred to: it is oneness, living union. If you know what it is for your soul to be filled with the love of God and you know what it is to love Him, you will want to know the fellowship of His sufferings. Two things emerge from this: one is, why wish to know? because it is supernatural: it is not flesh and blood. Flesh and blood recoils from suffering. Why wish to know the fellowship of His sufferings? Because all blessings are there, - joy, peace, happiness, salvation, deliverance, the pardon of sin, foretastes of Heaven: all blessings are there. I am bold to say the more we know the fellowship of His sufferings, the more divinely blessed our souls are, and fitted for Heaven. There is no destitution there, no barrenness, no darkness there; no dismay, no confusion: all blessings are there. The more you know the more blessed your soul is. That is the first thing, and you will feel it. You look on the gay crowds and there is no attraction.

"Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me."

It is to know the fellowship of His sufferings, - O the bliss of it!

"Let worldly minds the world pursue." I should be justified in saying you pity them and pray if it please the Lord that they may be stopped in their mad career of sin and folly and brought to know the things you know, but it is to know a suffering Redeemer. This is the priority in your spirit. Look what is there! All blessings and riches, and you are enriched.

The second thing is, and I hope to speak to the glory of God and for our profit. It is oneness, union. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." With His unfathomed love which is immeasurable flowing to your soul, and from your soul to the dear Lord, and with an inkling of His Passion, and the nature and purpose and triumph of it for you, you will wish to show to Him your love, your sympathy, your tender feeling for Him in His agony. If you have any you love,- it may be with double love,- when you see them in pain and agony and distress you want to show your love and sympathy. You wish to show it to your Saviour,- it is possible.

This will lead me to a further step. A great word and truth is sympathy. To those in trouble, pain, distress, bereavement, in a deep path of trial, sympathy is precious and potent: it means a lot, and especially because of the dear Lord's sufferings and path, road, way, which was much rougher and darker than ours. O the sympathy of Christ with His dear people! What is it like? It is as healing balm. You are soothed, relieved, cheered, comforted. Look at it the other way: How is it possible for us to sympathise with Him? There is a basic element in sympathy. You cannot sympathise unless you have tasted of the same. The Lord brings His dear people to the path of their cup: there is a cup for them to drink.

"Thrice comfortable hope
That calms my stormy breast;
My Father's hand prepares the cup,"

There is a cup for all of the children of God. "For the things concerning me have an end." There will be an end to suffering. What does the drinking of the cup mean? to experience affliction, sorrow, distress? Yes, but there is more in it. It is to be made willing to drink it, and in drinking you will be capacitated to sympathise with Him. For Moses by faith "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." That is a wonderful thing. Moses, all those years

before, saw a dear, suffering Redeemer, and he could not stay in Egypt. What he was living in, the pomp and ceremony was not compatible with a suffering Redeemer. He wanted to be near Him. So there is willingness, and in willingness you will drink the cup, and this qualifies, capacitates you to sympathise a little, in a blessed, loving way with a dear Redeemer.

So now you see the words; "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Christ knew His cup and He knew what was in it. It was not mitigated; there was no mixture in it. It was the curse of a holy, righteous God due to our sins. As He was our Surety they were imputed to Him. It was the making bare of the arm of divine Justice in vengeance against sin. Curse filled the cup. He had instituted the holy Supper, and they went out when ^{they} had sung an Hymn. O that singing of the great Hymn! My friends, He saw joy set before Him. There was a sea of suffering before Him but He saw joy, holy joy, and you will get a glimpse of it. He will have us know a little of His sufferings. Why? It will sanctify us wholly; kill us to sin, the world, the flesh; wean us from the things of life, draw us to His breast and to Heaven. It will make Christ exceedingly precious. So the Father was there with a cup, and St Matthew tells us, and it is a sacred, remarkable word, "And he went a little further, and fell on his face." It shows the load, the weight, the bitterness of His cup, and there is a measure of it with the Lord's dear people. St Mark tells us He 'fell on the ground' under the insupportable load. Do you know what it is to feel a measure of it? St Luke says He 'kneeled down and prayed'. and there was His cup. I felt led to this it may be for a specific reason, to show how the Lord's dear people have their cup. There is this difference: it is a mixture. There is love in it: you will not die. Manoah thought they were going to die: she said, "No, we shall not die." You will drink it, and you will be willing to. "Thy will be done." It will pass, and you will find there is great blessing in it. So He said, "If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Blessed be God.