

SB 803
Bblg
Lalor

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

SB/JH27

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Evening
12th February 1922

Text Luke 24 verse 26

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory.

The religion which the Holy Ghost gives, to the church of the living God, finds its strength, derives its beauty, and its blessed end, namely, glory, in the person and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. This religion is a crucifixion of the flesh, it is the death of carnal expectations, and of all creature goodness. It brings all its subjects to destitution, and death itself, and when Christ is received by the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation, from time to time, there is then, a finding of the life of the soul. An entrance into the sacred presence of God, and a real hope, a living expectation of good things to come.

The disciples, (and this should be an encouragement to us,) displayed much ignorance of Christ, and of His mission, His end in coming, and the end of His kingdom. It shows, this does, that very much ignorance may, even live where grace is, and should preserve us from despairing thoughts, when we discover, (or there is discovered to us,) our ignorance.

It is very striking in the Revelation, how constantly John tells us, that things were showed to him. "And He shewed me." (Revelation 22 verse 1). "And heard behind me a great voice." (Revelation 1 verse 10). By which, we may gather this, that he saw nothing, and heard nothing, but as God shewed, revealed and spoke. And you and myself must, as we are under divine teaching, come just to that place, and feeling, to know that we can see nothing in God, and hear nothing about Him savingly, but as He is pleased to shine upon us, and speak to us. And instead of this being discouraging, as we may sometimes think, instead of our sense of ignorance sinking us, as sometimes it does, it should have the opposite effect, and move us to cry to Him, who has never disdained the cry of a sensibly ignorant creature, for wisdom. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." (Psalm 119 verse 18). And beside, God has a rule according to it, this growth is gradual, it is so in nature. We should think it unseemly, if we heard a child speaking, as an old man, and in grace it seems as if the Lord, holds the same thing, and way.

That as children we grow more or less gradually. Well my dear young friends who fear God, do not expect to know every thing at once, in the things of God, you must grow, by little and little. Remember that in the Epistle of John, the first epistle he writes to little children, young men, and fathers. There is a growth, and bless God, growth comes from Himself. To speak in another way, as the Apostle Paul does, in the Corinthians, there is a building, one may say, ' I'd like this building to grow up more rapidly, and come toward completion, much more quickly than it appears to be doing'. And so foolishly, he gets wood, hay and stubble, and mixes them all together, and jumbles them with silver, gold, and precious stones. Did you perceive the folly of his work for a time, but later, God lights a fire, some trouble comes, some solemn affliction searches, some trying awful dispensation takes place, perhaps in a church, perhaps in a family, and the builder becomes astonished, to find that the greater part of the building, is consumed, burnt, black and ruined. He finds later on, the gold, silver and precious stones uninjured, but his own materials are gone. God won't have your religion mixed with His own, your wisdom must die, your strength must decay, your goodness must perish, that His work, His grace, His love, and His mercy may shine in your salvation.

Now these disciples, to go back to them, for I have just turned aside, these disciples manifested, a great deal of ignorance, and a good deal of pride too. "Who shall be the greatest" was the spirit that, had them, within its grasp, but Jesus, kindly bore with them, as He has borne with some of us, corrected their mistake, gently reprov'd them for their unbelief, most mercifully opened their eyes again and again, and caused them to perceive more and more the nature of His Kingdom. But hitherto they had no real, full entrance into the truth, that He must needs die, and rise again. So His death killed their hopes, his death was the death of their expectations, and they could well afford to lose these hopes, and these expectations, that He might become all in all to them later.

Two of them, after His burial, went one day on a journey to Emmaus, and they were having sad communications one with another. They were not dead, though their hopes were spilled, they were living, their love was living, and their grief evinced it, they could not let the matter alone. He who had helped them, who had taught them, who had blessed them, who had discovered His goodness, His glory and Divinity to them, was still in their thoughts. Do you know what that means? that He is not with you, perhaps, as you wished to have Him, though He seems as if He would hear your cry, is He not in your thoughts? and if you met one who fears God, do not you speak of Him, to that one?

He is first, again though He seems He is first and last, head over all, chief of all. The one, the only one whom you really wish to know, and as they walked thus by the way "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them." (Luke 24 verse 15). What a lover, what a careful, tender hearted lover Jesus Christ proved Himself to be, and He drew them out, He knows how to draw men's hearts out. "And He said unto them, what manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" (verse 17). And if the Lord were to ask you, what is the matter with you? Would you say like Mary and like those two men? you would say, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." (John 20 verse 13). I did hope, I thought He came to me, I thought He spoke to me, I thought He smiled on me, I thought He loved me, but He is gone, and I do not know where He is. But you mark this, the things you received live. Your comfort is dead, but the things you received live. Your hope, though it appears to be lost in despairing thoughts, still lingers, and lingers about Him, about His Person, and you are not able to give it up.

What a great mercy it is, Jesus opened their mouths to Himself, Jesus affected their hearts to Himself, then He speaks a merciful reproof, and says to them "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24 verse 25). "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." (verse 27). And the effect of this instruction was this, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way." (verse 32). When the Lord explains things to His children, their hearts are moved, and they did find burning within themselves. Love burns, and they come to say "My heart is inditing a good matter:" (Psalm 45 verse 1). My heart boils over with thoughts about Him, with affection to Him, with desire for Him, and this was the first question He put to them, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (verses 25 & 26). If the Lord will help me, I will speak a little of the necessity of Christ's sufferings in the first place, and secondly a little about those sufferings, and thirdly a little about His entering. And then if I may be helped, I will speak a little about, how people are concerned and exercised in these things. First of all, the necessity of Christ's sufferings. The necessity does not lie in the nature of these things, it was not a necessity in God, a natural necessity that He should save any person. It was a natural necessity in Him to punish sin, but not to save a sinner. If it had been a necessity, in God to save a sinner, then the freedom of God in salvation, would be destroyed.

You could not admire free love, expressed sovereignly in grace, given to one and not another if salvation were a necessity in His nature. The necessity lies in His divine sovereignty, in determining to save sinners, it lies in divine love, coming forth in a sovereign act, God saying "I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," (Exodus 33 verse 19), and this when seen by faith leads to an admiration of God, in this great eternal freedom in salvation. And when you feel that He eternally determined to save you, you will praise Him and admire that sovereignty, that nothing could influence outside of Himself. There never could be an external influence, brought to bear on the heart of God. If that had been possible, then the freedom of God would be in jeopardy, but the freedom of God, never was in jeopardy, and never could be. Then the necessity of Christ's sufferings lies here, that He sovereignly and lovingly determined, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to be the Saviour of His lost people. Yes beloved friends, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, did freely, voluntarily, in the highest possible sense of the word freedom, determine to be the Saviour of His lost people.

On such love, my soul, still ponder, (Gadsby's 766 verse 4)

The beauties of such love, may we have discovered to us, the strength of such love, may we feel in our hearts, and the greatness of such love, can, if one may speak of it being measured, can only be measured by the height of our guilt, and the depth of our depravity, and the length and breadth of our dreadful wandering from the Lord. This is love, that no gold or silver can purchase, love that no sin can hinder from carrying out its purpose. Love that made Him delight to do the will of God, when He knew that, that will meant infinite suffering to Him. This was the necessity, first the free love of God, the free sovereign determination of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the Son voluntarily to come, and in the fulness of time, take into union with Himself, the Body, which the Holy Ghost, should beget for Him.

The necessity lies in the next place, in the covenant, "I have made a covenant with My chosen," (Psalm 89 verse 3), and in this covenant you will find, as you are led by the Holy Ghost to see them, all those things that are written in the Gospel of John. That the Son must speak words that His Father had spoken, and do the works that He had seen His Father do, This is the covenant made with the Son, the covenant of peace, and in that covenant the Son says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart". (Psalm 40 verses 7 & 8). So my brethren, the Lord Jesus fled so to speak, on wings of infinite willingness, from heaven to the cross.

Although justice bound Him, and took Him a willing sacrifice, to the cross, yet infinite willingness, made Him fly to it. "He said unto them, (to His disciples,) With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:" (Luke 22 verse 15). He loved the very prospect, so to speak, which was before Him. Whatever suffering it was, and must have been in His view, however keen, however terrible, there was that love in His heart, that made Him desire. "Ought not Christ (having undertaken to do it) to suffer. "Ought not Christ" having volunteered to die, ought He not, having in the covenant with His Father and His Spirit, undertaken the great work of salvation, to accomplish it, and to accomplish it in the only way that was possible, that God Himself had decreed. Hold this necessity fast, as God helps you dear friends, there is more in it than our natural understanding can grasp. There is more in it than human reason can perceive, this divine, this voluntary necessity, of the death of Christ. The sufferings of Christ has in it the whole of salvation.

Next the sufferings, these sufferings of the Lord Jesus, one may say, they were, first, the sufferings for sin, imputed sin, that the Father laid on Him, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."(Isaiah 53 verse 6). "He was bruised for our iniquity" "wounded for our transgressions," "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we were healed."(verse 5). This was suffering, Paul says to the Corinthians "For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."(2 Corinthians 5 verse 21). If we knew more of this, sin would be more bitter to us, than it is, if we felt more, that the Lord Jesus endured infinite pain and grief, under the burden, and shame of imputed sin, it would make sin, the very thought of it, exceedingly bitter to us. It was His suffering, in the next place, by an all consequent necessity, of the curse of the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Galations 3 verse 13). This was necessary, the law was not abrogated by Christ, but fulfilled. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matthew 5 verse 17). O saint of God, think of it, and if the Holy Spirit reveals it to you, it will make the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, very precious, and bring you to grieve, that He knowing the law, because He was the law giver, as He is God. Knowing also its penalty, knowing what its penalty meant, He notwithstanding, voluntarily undertook by imputation of sin, to be "made a curse". "He was made a curse for us," I wish for myself, that I knew more of this, that I might hate that sin which brought Him into such a condition. Brought Him such suffering, pain and shame, and brought Him to such brokenness of heart.

That curse was poured out upon Him like fire, it entered into His bones, and pressed heavily upon Him. "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" Yes, there was no other way of redeeming His chosen people, no other way of having His bride with Him, spotless, innocent and pure. No other way, of the wrath of God passing from these people, no other way of heaven being opened, for these chosen ones to enter, but by Christ being made a curse for them. The nature of God is goodness, the Lord is good, because He is good. He cannot pass by sin, and let it go unpunished. We are not good, and therefore we condone sin, we condone it in self, and we condone it in others, but God is good, and therefore cannot condone sin in any one. No, when it was laid upon His Son, He must punish it, that is to say, He must punish His Son. It is a solemn consideration, that Christ must be made a curse, for His people, or the curse cannot pass from them. It must reach one, it must reach either the sinner, or a Surety, and the Surety must be a man.

The sufferings of Christ in the next place, were the pains He endured, when His Father hid His face from Him. Withdrew from Him, forsook Him as the word is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27 verse 46). There is just one little line, in the experience of the Lord's people, that gives them an incling, as to what the withdrawal of the Father was to His dearly beloved Son. It is this, when you have had the presence of God with you, when His smile has been a little heaven to you, when it has subdued your sins, given you real rest, then you have lost it. None, but one who has had a similar experience, can enter into your pain, at the loss, the grievous loss, you have sustained, in the withdrawal of God. Now if our small experience, is so painful, what must have been the grief, the keen, the exquisite sorrow of the Lord Jesus, when His Father hid His face from Him. All grief met here, all sorrows were here, all darkness, sorrow, pain and shame, met here. None could experience this fully, but the God-man Jesus Christ. None could sustain the grief, but the God-man, and He had as Hart expresses it:

Bore all incarnate God could bare,
With strength enough, and none to spare.
(Gadsby's 153 part 1 verse 3)

Under the load of this grief and sorrow. Why do you get a smile from God? because Christ had a frown. Why do you hope for heaven? because Christ endured your hell. Why do you hope for healing? because Christ endured your stripes. All the chastisement and punishment, due to you, He endured. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" I am only able, just to hint at things, I know so little of.

And I am certain of this, that he who knows most, of this great point in true divinity, knows very little, as compared with infinite fulness. And so Christ endured death, the death of Christ was the life of the church, because the death of Christ, was the removal of wrath from her. The death of Christ was, first of all, the pouring out of His soul unto death. As the blood of the sacrifices, under the old dispensation, was the offering of the life of the creature unto God, so the pouring out of the soul of Christ, was the offering of His blessed life unto God. He offered Himself without spot to God, and that was not without suffering. It was pouring out His life before God, a great mystery and an infinite mercy.

It meant in the next place, the death of His sacred Manhood, His very body, the entire Manhood of the Surety. His Person must suffer, because the whole person of a sinner, must be saved. Dear friends, it is an amazing thing, to have revealed to your hearts, the sufferings of Christ and what they mean. May the Holy Ghost open this mystery to us, that we may savingly, sorrowfully, humbly, joyfully, meditate upon what our dear Redeemer, offered for us. His sufferings were complete then. I do not believe that Christ died in the darkness, He said "It is finished," (John 19 verse 30, then it is inconceivable, but it is to be believed, and I believe it, then the glorious light of God again filled His soul, and from the cross, the conqueror went, not defeated, He conquered though He fell. Not the defeated Jesus Christ, not the man crucified through weakness, not a sinner by imputation, not one who in that condition died in darkness, but the dear glorious Lord of Life, experienced the glorious, blessed, full light of His Father's face again. He said "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit:" (Luke 23 verse 46), and He went to paradise, He did not die in darkness, when He said "It is finished." The whole work was done, no wrath remaining, no stroke yet to be given, no darkness yet to be experienced, no further pain to be felt. The whole was finished and He went to heaven. His body was taken from the cross, that sacred body laid in the tomb, there lay the Lord of Glory. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (Matthew 28 verse 6). He never suffered any interruption, to the union there was between the Eternal Son of God, and the sacred Man Christ Jesus, but He went to paradise, and they laid the Lord in the grave. He suffered burial, He suffered the ignominy of burial, as He suffered the pains of death, and then ought He not "to enter into His glory?" What shall hinder? there is no law standing in the way, to say to that Surety "Pay me that thou owest" (Matthew 18 verse 28), for He had paid it, therefore said the Holy Ghost, by Peter "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." (Acts 2 verse 24). Why should he not be? death had siezed Him, how could not therefore death hold Him?

Ah, He had paid the mighty debt, and it was such an act of justice, to bring Christ out of the grave, as it was the act of omnipotence, and He entered into His glory, and He entered heaven, where He now is. The glory that Christ entered upon, is the glory of a conqueror. "He led captivity captive." (Ephesians 4 verse 8). He entered heaven, as one who had killed death, "that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2 verse 14). And left no devil unconquered, to conquer poor sinners. "And the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16 verse 20), but He Himself slew and destroyed him. It is the glory then of a conqueror, it is the glory of the High Priest, whose priestly offering had been accepted, and was effectual to the end, for which it was designed. And as the High Priest only, went into the Holy of Holies, so Jesus, having suffered, entered heaven, and there He is "to appear in the presence of God for us:" (Hebrews 9 verse 24). An unaccepted sacrifice would never have admitted, Jesus Christ into glory, but an accepted, a perfect sacrifice, made a way to glory.

He went through suffering into glory, through trouble into eternal rest and peace, therefore it is the glory of a king, King of kings and Lord of lords, so, as he said to His disciples as Matthew records ie. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Chapter 28 verse 18). And you also have it in the Revelation where the Lion of the tribe of Judah, prevailed (and overcame,) to take the book out of the hand of the Father, and loose the seals, and open the book. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Chapter 5 verse 12.) And now Christ in His glory reigns, reigns in men and over men, who know Him not. Reigns by directing their thoughts, and ordering their steps, moving and permitting them to do this and that, in order to bring to pass His blessed counsels, concerning His church. What is this to do with me? what is it to do with you? Did you ever put the question to yourselves? What has this to do with me? Well, it has this, if we belong to Christ it will, in the first place bring us, to death. It will bring us to deny self, hate and lose our life, otherwise we are not, and never shall be His disciples. "If any man will (be My disciple) come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16 verse 24). What is the heaviest cross you can ever have to take up and carry? some might mentally, say to me, 'well now I think I have a heavy cross upon me, I have such and such trouble in the providence of God, that I can scarcely sustain it' Well we would sympathise with you, but if that is all, it is a poor cross. What is the heaviest cross that you can ever take up? It is the cross of self denial.

Self denial, not of some temporal thing for the good of another, but denying self wisdom, self strength, self goodness, self consciousness of trying to do good. Self respect, self honesty and integrity, and coming to be nothing, but a poor miserable, hypocritical, lost creature. When I say hypocritical, I do not mean a conscious hypocrite, when one says one thing, and he means quite another, but I mean having a sense of hypocrisy, as much as any other sin, and being in this condition. Willing not to try to make yourself better, but to cast such a soul, without reservation or expectation of improvement, on the very Person and merits of Jesus Christ. Looking for His coming, for His love, for His grace, for His redemption. Looking for His kindness to help you, His pity to comfort you, His love to cheer you, His grace to sustain you. You must come to the end, when He sees your strength gone, and sees that there is nothing shut up or left, nor any helper for you. Sees that you are brought to this, that you can say, now Lord, as far as I know, I have come to the end of things. I am lost, and I have no hope of helping myself, then, the sufferings of Christ have had, and hallways will be having an effect upon your soul.

You will enter somewhat into this, that you must needs take up your cross, of all the ways of dying, and being lost. This is the way that a child of God is led to make his choice. Of, let me die, in the view of eternal love, let me take up my cross in the hope of being saved by the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. Let me deny myself, and take up my cross and follow Him. If you can follow this, yet I can but poorly express it, if you can follow this in the spirit of it, then you will find a living hope in your soul, that God is your God. And you will find love, expressing itself to you, breaking out in your heart's experience. Love comforting you, pardon cheering you, salvation comforting and enlarging you. You will find God in Christ, reconciling you, a lost person, to Himself. "Not imputing (your) their trespasses unto them;" (2 Corinthians 5 verse 19). But giving you to enter into, sweetly into, the truth, that Christ "bare (your) our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins," (1 Peter 2 verse 24, should not live any longer therein, but live unto God.

As Christ rose from the dead, so do His people rise from the dead, as He lives to die no more, so do they in that resurrection live in Him, for ever, to die no more. And in the Romans, the Holy Ghost expresses this when He says, "God forbid, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6 verse 2). And further this legal death, this death by Christ's death, is to be looked upon by all, who experience it. Likewise reconcile ye also yourself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ.

And further this is made known, as it is expressed, in the same chapter of Romans, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (verse 17). The marginal reading being "form of doctrine into which you were delivered). The doctrine of the cross is the mould, and the sinner is run into it, and takes the shape of it. The doctrine of the atonement, is that which will, put the shape of God in Christ, upon your spirit. And as you see it by faith, in the glass darkly, the very image will come upon your own soul. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3 verse 18). And that Spirit of Christ so coming, works a mighty change, in the feelings, and the experience of the sinner, so that he says with Isaiah, "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength:" (Isaiah 45 verse 24).

Now beloved friends, may the Holy Ghost, make this subject, even if you forget every word I have said, a living subject in your hearts. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things". Could He otherwise have opened heaven? Could He otherwise have made a way to the throne of God's heavenly grace? Could He otherwise have swallowed up death, and could He ever have brought peace to your conscience?

May the Lord command His blessing to rest upon us.

Amen.