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Sermon preached by Mr. L.S.B. Hyde on Saturday afternoon 9.6.73 at "Bethel", Guildford.

Hymns: 425, 429, 437.

Reading: Matthew ch.28.

Text: Matthew ch.28, v.5-6.

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

One of the most solemn features of the scriptures is that they speak to us of certainties, they speak to us of a knowledge of that fruit which is within. As we may look at one and another, it would not always be possible (perhaps it would be very impossible) for us to say with certainty "For I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified"; yet, nevertheless, sometimes we do observe the outward demeanour which gives us to feel at times that there is a pressing after Jesus Christ in some hearts. But when "the angel answered and said unto the women", the angel here was given by the Spirit of God that evident insight so that he would speak with certainty and assure them not to fear, and also he could go on (which would surely be consoling and strengthening to them): "For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified".

The occasion when these words were spoken was that in which a great convulsion had taken place in the earth, a transaction had been completed - the greatest transaction that was ever engaged in or carried through, and carried through with complete and absolute success despite all the efforts of hell and this world to undo it. Nevertheless we cannot but feel that the profound happenings of the days when Jesus Christ was crucified and when He rose again were momentous in every way. There had never been such days before; there never will be such a day again, in exactly the same way.

"The angel answered and said unto the women". It is somewhat worthy of our attention to notice that there is no record of the women saying anything. And yet "the angel answered and said unto the women". Can you not link up this with your own experience when you have been filled with fear and you have not said anything, and yet God has spoken to you; He has spoken to you as He did to these women: "Fear not ye". And when He said "Fear not ye" to your soul, it was an answer although you yourself perhaps had not opened your lips to make a vocal request unto God or to anyone. And how apt was the answer! - "Fear not ye". How often we find it to be only too true:

"Creatures of fear, we drag along
And fear where no fear is;" (Gadsbys 291)

It is one of the devil's purposes to instil fear into us, and some of us perhaps know and can testify with what marked success he does this at times, and so our hearts become very troubled. Oh, there are those who have come to the waters of baptism with very fearful hearts; and it will not make any difference whatever words may be spoken to such by men and women, that fear will remain. But if the Lord speaks to your fears and says "Fear not ye", then such fears will be removed - because, "where the word of a King is there is power"(Eccles.8,4), and there is deliverance from our fears. It could

be that there are those with us this afternoon who have (and we trust there may be some who have) an exercise in relation to this ordinance, and yet they have many fears. Well now, they have not said a word to anybody, perhaps they feel they have not even opened their mind to God, but it has been within the soul, a sigh, a cry, as they have been going about. Now God answers sometimes the sighs and cries which escape us when we are going about our general duties perhaps, and which we disregard as prayer at all, but we shall know that it was prayer as and when and if God speaks to us like this: "and the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye". We cannot but feel that it was an apt word. "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified". As I have said, the days here were momentous; these women had followed the Lord Jesus Christ when He was alive, right up to His being crucified at Calvary. I say, they had followed Him then; but now to all intents and purposes He had been removed out of their sight, and there were many thoughts in many people's hearts, not least of them similar to those which proceeded from the mouth of Gamaliel when he referred to two remarkable men who became famous and carried a number with them, and then they died and everyone was dispersed and it all came to nothing; and the advice of Gamaliel on that occasion was: let these men alone - if it is not of God it will come to nothing, but if it is of God it will stand (Acts 5: 34-39). And it is a solemn thing to interfere or attempt to interfere with anything that belongs to God, and Gamaliel felt that himself. You see, if a leader is killed, is no longer present, how quickly are the followers scattered! We can read in the Old Testament, for example, when Absalom was killed, that finished the rebellion straight away, that did. There was no longer a leader amongst them.

"For I know that ye seek Jesus". Now would it not be wonderful to some of us this afternoon for this word to come pertinently into our own hearts: "For I know that ye seek Jesus". This is a personal matter. We can perhaps look at other people and feel persuaded that they seek Jesus. We may wonder whether we really do seek Jesus, and isn't it wonderful when the Spirit of God tells you what you are not sure of yourself: "for I know that ye seek Jesus". If this word comes to you this afternoon it will be an afternoon you will not forget, when the Holy Ghost told you that

"those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,

'Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek"(Hymn 804)

Therefore you are a seeker after Jesus Christ. Of course, some people may be ready to say "surely you know if you are a seeker after Jesus Christ": well, it is bound to be declared that some of the people of God have their fears and therefore they would cherish most highly this word from God Who cannot lie, saying unto them "I know that ye seek Jesus". And you have come now, seeking Him. They were seeking "Jesus, which was crucified". We shall weigh this point, because not every person that is in the realm of Christendom, when taxed on the point, can honestly say that they seek Jesus which was crucified. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ means a lot to us that are lost sinners: because everything depends upon Jesus Christ being crucified. This is the only Jesus Christ that was crucified. Many christs have been set forth over the ages, but there is only one Jesus Christ that was crucified.

"For I know that ye seek Jesus". Why did they seek Jesus? - because He was that one Person upon whom their hopes of heaven depended, and if they found Him then all was well. If they found Him they would have a treasure

beyond compare. They would be able to cast away, as it were, the silver and the gold and the precious stones of this life.

"Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee " (Hymn 940)

And if we have this exercise upon our hearts and in our spirits, then we shall hear these words sounding forth from heaven by the power of the Holy Ghost some day: "For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." But are we really seeking Jesus that was crucified, Who was a Man despised and rejected of men, Who was a Man that was crucified, setting forth the most profound aspect of His humiliation. Is this the Person that you are seeking? We do hear of those that are seeking Jesus which was crucified - crucified by the Roman soldiers, helped to the crucifixion by the rabbis and the Jewish rabble - or can we go further, must we go further, and say, Alas! -

"The soldiers pierced His side, 'tis true,
But I have pierced Him through and through" (Hymn 153).

And so the hymnwriter picks up a very important vein here when he says:

"The Jews with thorns His temples crowned,
And lashed Him when His hands were bound;
But thorns, and knotted whips, and bands
By us were furnished to their hands". (Hymn 153)

So when this word is brought to your soul's attention: "For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified", is the meaning to you and to me "Yes, this is the Jesus that I am seeking, the One that I have crucified"? Indeed the Roman soldiers and the judges at that time were instrumental in the physical side, but I am seeking Jesus whom I have crucified by my sins, my sins that helped to nail Him there. "For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified": and what a sight, to come to the cross of Jesus Christ! Now, the Spirit of God will lead everyone that is led by Him to the cross of Jesus Christ: and you will never have any thought for the cross of Jesus Christ until you feel that you are a sinner and that you are lost because of your sins. If Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners you will understand the apostle's expression "of whom I am chief" (I Tim.1: 15). I know I cannot imagine anybody else feeling the workings of sin as I do in my heart, anybody else feeling or thinking like it, and therefore I am bound to say "of whom I am chief". But there may be those with us this afternoon who would also have to say the same: I cannot believe that you think like I do, have the lustful thoughts that I do. Well now, this will make us claim to being the chief of sinners, and if we are the chief of sinners we shall come to the point to say "Who can save me?" Now these blessed women had been favoured with a sight of Jesus Christ, they believed that this was the Messiah, they believed that this was the One that would save them and take them to heaven at last, and now He was crucified! Oh, what a solemn matter: He was crucified. And their hopes seemed to be lost at the same time. So this word becomes quite different to our thoughts and feelings now - "for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified by myself", and as I look at it my sins have been so great as they have been laid upon the Lord Jesus that I am greatly afraid that all is finished, I can only see Christ

overcome, I can only see in my view that Jesus has expired on the cross; and perhaps you were not near enough at the time to hear those words proceeding from the Lord Jesus: "it is finished"; and for this reason fears abode with these women.

"For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here..." He is not here. That was the last place they saw Him. You always go back to the last place where you saw a person you loved. They knew that Joseph of Arimathea had taken Him down from the cross and laid Him in the sepulchre, - that was the last they had seen of Him. And it may be in some of your hearts this afternoon you've seen Jesus crucified and laid in the sepulchre, and that is the last you've seen of Him. Here we find, then, distressed women not saying a word while being most eloquent before God: "He is not here". No, He is not here, not where you are looking for Him.. He is not here overcome by your sins. He is not here as one that is conquered. "He is not here, for He is risen". Oh, it is so important, dear friends, for us to believe in the resurrection. The apostle is very definite in relation to its importance: In one of his epistles he says: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain", and surely this is what these poor women were feeling - 'our faith is vain, it has all come to nothing, we are yet in our sins'. "For He is risen," risen. What did this mean? what does this mean? It means that He had overcome sin by His death. It means that He had overcome satan, it means that He had overcome the grave, it means that He had procured heaven for the church of God. He is risen! What a resurrection morning that was!

"As He said". These are solemn words, aren't they?. If only the disciples had remembered what He had said. Can we apply this to our own hearts' experience sometimes? - if only we had remembered what the Lord had said! Have we forgotten? And this was such an important thing, it was something which needed the faith of God's elect to believe it. They couldn't believe it of themselves; and some of the truths of the Gospel, you hear them and do not always realise the depth of meaning in them until a certain time comes when the depth of meaning must be known. "For He is risen". He is risen above the earth. He is risen into heaven itself. Yes, He is risen to appear unto his disciples, "as He said". The Lord Himself had spoken to His disciples about His sufferings and about His resurrection, but those words (if we may use a common expression) had not sunk in. And what about the truth of God as far as your soul is concerned? Has it sunk in? or must it be left until you come into a certain experience which brings you almost to the brink of despair because you say "all hope that we shall be saved is lost". In those words it comes to a point that you need God to assure you that you are seeking Jesus, the real Jesus, the Jesus that was crucified, - since there are many christis arisen in the world: you know the Lord warned His disciples, "Many shall arise and shall say, Lo, here is Christ, and Lo, there is Christ: Go not after them" (see Mark 13,v.21), because it will not be Christ crucified.

"He is risen, as He said". Now, what does this mean? I believe it means this: in the first place that it demonstrates that He was God; only God can speak with certainty in relation to performance. The words to Mary were these: "There shall be a performance of those things that were spoken to her from the

Lord", the things that He said, for He is risen. And this demonstrates that He was God, because what He had spoken came to pass. "For He is risen", not only speaking by word of mouth, but also confirming by the fulfilment of that which was spoken. "For He is risen, as He said".

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay". "COME". Oh, do we then need a gracious invitation? This was a time of trembling; you know it must have been a time of trembling, otherwise there would be no necessity for these three words "Fear not ye". There is trembling in the experience of the people of God. "To this man will I look, unto him that trembleth at My word" (Isa.66,2) If He is risen, as He said, "Come"; a blessed invitation is this! The invitations in the scriptures are very important and are there for a reason, not just useless words, but they are there for certain people who feel the necessity that these invitations should be given to them. May we be enabled to receive them and to follow them! "COME". Now if these people, these blessed women need this encouragement to come, it is good, you know if we wait for an invitation. In social circles it would certainly be considered polite to do so, and in these circles "come" will also be a necessity, because otherwise it would be a presumptuous act. "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins", said the psalmist. (Psm.19: 13). There it would be a presumptuous act, and I do feel this, that the fear of God will make you very concerned about taking a presumptuous step. And so we shall value the blessed invitations of the scriptures: "Come". Do you need an encouragement this afternoon to come? Remember that this ground was holy ground. All the teaching of the Spirit brings us on to holy ground. The very fact that the angel had spoken to them made the ground on which they stood holy. "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified", and if this blessed truth is given to you this afternoon, you will feel it to be holy ground, you will feel that God has spoken, and that will be holy ground: "For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay".

"Where He lay". "How huge the heavy load of all,
When only mine's so great", said one (hymn 105),
in referring to the sins of the whole church of God that Jesus carried away and cast into the depths of the sea, when He rose again from the dead. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay", that is, where your sins are: they are buried with Him in baptism. And so we come to the significance of the pool before us. It is no ordinance of man, otherwise surely it would have perished years ago. But because it has been the ordinance of God it has been maintained through the centuries. Sometimes it has been almost eclipsed, but never absolutely, and however near it has come to being eclipsed there has been a reviving, and we live in an age when though there may be but comparatively few genuine followers of Jesus Christ who follow baptism wholly, yet nevertheless there are a few. In the ordinance before us all that is contained in our text is foreshadowed and is clearly set before us: "For I know that ye seek Jesus", when the Lord sent His angel to speak these words - "Come, see the place where the Lord lay". Now as you turn to the 3rd chapter of this gospel, you will read of the Lord's baptism, and He went down into the water and He came up out of the water, - and that was very significant. It was not just a mere sprinkling, some sign of a cross or a new form of religion; no, it was an ordinance with a significance, which was to set forth in watery type the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay"; come, see the place where He did battle in Gethsemane's garden; come, see the place where He

dropped as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; come, see the place where He endured agonies of soul, "Thou hast made His soul an offering for sin"(Isa.53: 10): His soul. Oh that we could look to this important point in our faith - His soul. Oh, the soul of Jesus Christ, what sufferings He endured in order that the church of God might go free! "He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay". And in these waters of baptism we see as He went down into the water so He was overwhelmed. You know, there is something for our instruction in relation to this ordinance to be found, I believe, in the book of Jonah. Many people consider that the book itself may or may not have been in the scriptures, at most they consider it is an interesting story; but if the Holy Ghost teaches you, you will see that what the Lord Jesus Christ said was true in depth: "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth". (Matt.12: 40). Now look and see: "then Jonah prayed unto the Lord His God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God".(Jon. ch.2) In some aspects we may find something similar in the solemn experience of the Lord Jesus in His sorrows, in this battlefield: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay", "buried with Him in baptism".

But then, this is where the Lord had laid. - Where is He now? He is no longer overcome. He was never overcome, because He dismissed His spirit; He gave up the ghost. It was needful that He should lay down His life for His church. "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay".

"He is not here", but you will remember where He lay, you will remember how He lay under your sins, you will remember how you felt about it: "He is not here". Come, see the place where the Lord lay dead: "He is not here: He is risen; and go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you." And that which was foreshadowed here is mentioned in the concluding verses of this gospel: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." And what a precious word is to be found in verse 18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth". Power! Well, if we feel fearful we shall need God's power, power to strengthen our faith, power to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, power to face our enemies and our adversary - you know there is a great adversary of the church of God, and that adversary is satan: he has been very successful in the present day in persuading a multitude that he does not exist - but you will know that he exists; if you are born again by the Spirit he will

give you a lot of attention and sometimes he will give you so much attention that you will be at your wit's end, but nevertheless remember that Jesus died - did He ever say "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" to you when you were in the midst of temptation, and that revived something? as the hymnwriter says: "I may my fierce accuser face, and tell him Thou hast died"(hymn 388) - and this is a complete answer.

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay". It is not, then, just an isolated experience; it is a place of power, it is a place which will speak powerfully not only to your heart, but powerfully to the devil as well, so that he will not have to depart - he cannot stand when you mention Jesus Christ. "In the name of Jesus Christ" - oh, what a power is in that name! "Come, see the place where the Lord lay". Where did He lay? He lay in the bosom of earth; it was love, was it not, that constrained Him to die? Cannot some of you say so? - Nothing else could have constrained Him to die for some of us but Love, Love which reaches to an inconceivable depth. "Come, see the place" - the place of Love, the place of grace, though it was a place of sweetness and a sweet perfume. Oh Come! Come fearful, come trembling, come almost helpless, but come, see the place where the Lord lay! If the Lord directs you to this place it must have an effect upon your spirit.

But then, He rose from the dead; and the waters of baptism show to us the necessity of immersion. Infant sprinkling must be wrong, because the figure is lost; it must be wrong. The Lord Jesus was immersed, overwhelmed, with the sins of His church, but rose again. He rose a Conqueror, and not only did He rise again but He ascended up on high, in due time, having "led captivity captive" and "received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Psm.68:18) - "The rebellious". It is a solemn word, is rebellion. God can look on our hearts this afternoon, and if there are those that have not been baptized, then God knows whether rebellion is the root of it; 'why should I bow down to what God says?' - sometimes we need to search out our heart on this point, and then it means confession, doesn't it? and then it means repentance. Perhaps we are like the one to whom it was said 'Go, work today in My vineyard' and he said, 'I will not go' - that was rebellion; but afterwards, afterwards he repented and went. Isn't that what we have said? - and sometimes you know people in their testimonies have spoken about that: afterwards they have said "I will go". Oh then, what has God done? "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb.12:11). Now may God help us to be honest before Him this afternoon: are we rebellious? The word of God says "the rebellious dwell in a dry land"(Psm.68:6), but oh that He may deal with you as with sons and daughters by granting you the loving chastisements of a Father's heart, until at last the spirit of repentance is brought into your soul and you say: "I will go, I will go". Oh, what a different spirit then is now upon your soul: "I will go", my head will be hanging down, I shall be ashamed of myself, but I cannot be ashamed of Jesus Christ because He is not ashamed of me. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren"(Heb.2:11), these people that because of the rebellion of their heart have said "I will not go"! He is not ashamed to call them brethren, and perhaps

some of you have felt melted at times because of that very truth - not ashamed to call you a son or daughter.

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay". Oh, may the Spirit of God then lead us into the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and may we remember what the word of God says here: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
