

LOVE UNQUENCHABLE

A SERMON

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“The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:11

ADAM and Eve soon found that sin brought suffering; and that instead of being what the serpent had told them they should be, namely, gods; they were just the reverse. But the Lord did not leave them there, but he pointed out to them a remedy; and that remedy was Christ Jesus; so that at the very beginning the sufferings of Christ were revealed unto those whom the Lord intended to save; and in process of time these sufferings were represented in a variety of forms; first simply that of death; “The wages of sin is death.” The Lord Jesus Christ therefore, died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God; so that we are brought to God where his love and his mercy are, by the death of Christ. And then when the paschal lamb was to be roasted with fire, they, no doubt, who were spiritually taught, saw that while in the case of the literal paschal lamb, the fire followed upon the death of the lamb, the lamb was slain first, and roast by the fire afterwards; yet when the antitypical Lamb came, that order should be inverted; and the Lord Jesus Christ should endure the fiery wrath of God first, and die afterwards; And we never shall know, until we reach the future glory in anything like perfection what the Savior endured in that which must have been to us the fire of hell, unquenchable fire. And then also when the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice upon the altar, here was another representation to them of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here again, they would see that while the fire came upon the sacrifice after it was slain, the fire would fall upon Christ before he was slain; so that his last act would be to lay down his life. And then again, who would have thought it if the Holy Ghost had not authorized us so to speak? When we come to Deuteronomy 21, and read there of a man who had committed a crime worthy of death, that he was to be hanged on a tree; and that that malefactor is constituted by the Lord's own testimony a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a divine Person will take our nature, soul of our soul, and body of our body, and come into such humiliation as this, to be made a curse for us; “Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” The Old Testament saints then were well acquainted with this wondrous substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ; to him give all the prophets witness; “The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

Our text divides itself simply, as you will see, into two parts, as here stated; and therefore, requires no arrangement on my part. Here are first *the substitutional sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and then, secondly, here is *the glory that should follow*; and I can give of course but a mere sample

of each; for in these great matters we fall infinitely short of what they are in their real height, and depth, and magnitude, and intensity.

First. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ are not only substitutional; we must look also at his sufferings in another way; and that is, as intended not only to put away sin, and to bring in the pardon of sin, and to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light, and bring us to God, and unite us to God, and enable us to walk with God, and trust in God, and love God, and rejoice in God, and know that our hope is in God, and that he is our portion, and will be our God forever; but his sufferings are intended also as an example, to encourage us to suffer those things by the way which the Lord sees good for his people to undergo. Therefore, it is that he had a dark path to walk, in order to reach us; and we must have in many respects, dark paths, and rough, and crooked, and thorny, and trying paths, to walk in, in order to reach him. But if he could condescend in the greatness of his love to endure our condemnation, this is one of the arguments or truths set forth in Scripture to encourage us to endure tribulation. He was a man of grief and sorrow all his days; and if it should be our lot to be the subjects of grief and sorrow all our days, and nothing else; if our cup were daily filled with bitterness, and we spent our very life in sighs, and agonies, and tears, and trembling, and fear, and in being cast down, and in foreboding, what would it all be in comparison of that endless misery which sin had entailed; what would it all be? It would be all as nothing in comparison of sin's demerit, or in comparison of what the dear Savior has endured for us. So then, his sufferings, I say, are set forth as an example, to encourage us, amid all we have to discourage us, to stand fast in the truth as it is in Jesus. I will, therefore, try to say this morning a few things concerning the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are set forth in the Scriptures very carefully; and the first part I notice is *the absence of the Lord from him, and the hiding of the Lord's face from him*; and then in the next place there will come before us *the contempt where, with men treated him*; and then, will come before us *the ferocity with which men treated him*; and then will come before us *the pressure of sin and wrath under which he lived and died*; and then will come before us *the mighty power of Satan, and the Saviors deliverance from it*: and then will come before us *the spirit in which he endured these things*.

First, we have *the absence of the Lord from him*: and we cannot describe what that part of his suffering was. "My God, my God, why have then forsaken me? why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but you hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent." What can we understand by the Lord forsaking him? can we form any idea of the position in which the Savior then stood? What was there between him and God when he said, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The answer is that there was between him and God at that time all the sin of the millions, the number that no man can number, all the sins of all the people for whom he died; their original sins, their heart sins, their lip sins, their life sins; sins while in a state of nature, sins after called by grace, all these laid between him and God. Second, there was between him and God all the hell due to those sins, all the indignation of eternal law against those sins. What a position! But we can understand this only in a very small measure. Let the Lord bring your soul under a sense of sin, lay all your sins upon your conscience between you and God: and by your sins look at God in his holiness and in his justice, and in the eternal certainty of all the threatening of his word; and then look at the certainty of death, the certainty of judgment, the certainty of eternity; and then be made to feel as though the blessed God had certainly forsaken you, and that you will assuredly be lost; I am sure if you know anything

only for a few moments of this state of mind of which I am now speaking, you will understand what Mr. Hart means when he says,

“We do at most but taste the cup;
You alone have drank it up.”

There is therefore, something no doubt indescribable in the words, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And, that while all these sins lay between Christ and God, they must remain there to all eternity, unless he himself agonize every one of them away, unless he himself can bear the vengeance of God, unless he himself can bear the curse of a violated law; unless he himself can stand fast, and bear, as Mr. Hart expresses it, and

“Bear all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare.”

That is not strictly true, literally, because he was omnipotent! but at the same time, it is a truth, that nothing short of omnipotence could have stood as the Savior stood. He travelled in the greatness of his strength! Now, when he said, “Why are you so far from helping me?” I do not understand there, that the Savior did not know, but it was merely an interrogatory form of prayer, as though the Savior should say, I do know, and yet I will speak as though I did not know; “I cry in the day time, but you hear not” You know the sense, the New Testament explains the sense in which he was not heard. “Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.” When he prayed for the preservation of his life, that that life might not be taken away, but reserved for justice, in that he was heard. But, when he prayed that prayer, which was intended to express the infinite depth of his sufferings, rather than any wish on his part to avoid those sufferings; that is the sense in which the Lord did not hear him. And therefore, the Savior explains it in the same connection; “You are holy, O you that inhabit the praises of Israel.” Just look at that, there are two things connected with the death of Christ; the holiness of God, and the praises of Israel. “But you are holy,” therefore, sin must be infinitely abhorrent to you, and I must endure all this, I must atone for all this; I must bear this eternally away from your presence, magnify your law, swallow up death in victory, bring life and immortality to light. And in this, (as Watts nicely expresses it,)

“Behold the sure foundation stone,
Which God in Zion lays;
To build our heavenly hopes upon,
And his eternal praise.”

Here the curse is stayed, here wrath is stayed, here the winter is past, here the rain is over and gone, here all is settled,

“And our souls approve it well.”

I am sure, if the Lord be our teacher, such will be our daily experience, that it will make us cling to this. There is no right coming to God, but by Jesus Christ, and it is well for us to remember that

we cannot make too much of his atoning death; we cannot make too much of what he has done, when his own omnipotent arm brought eternal salvation.

The second part of his sufferings, as stated in Psalm 22, lay in the contempt of men, "I am a worm, and no man." I think two things are intended by that expression. First, being a worm is expressive, I think, of his taking upon him the likeness of sinful flesh. Man is spoken of in his fallen state as a worm. "Fear not you worm Jacob;" so that he took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh. "I am a worm and no man;" I stand in that humiliating position, I am come into that position, that man, but for me, must have been in forever. But there is another idea here too, that he was something worthless in the eyes of men. "I am a worm, and no man." Why, there was not anything of which men had worse thoughts, than they had of Jesus of Nazareth. Just the same as now, there is not anything of which men have worse thoughts, than they have of God's truth, of the testimony of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." Did this contempt, wherewith men treated him, move him? He smiled at it all, despised it all; it did not move him. Had it done so, had the world been able to say, O, we laughed the Savior out of his religion; we have made him ashamed of his own mission, ashamed of his own doctrines, ashamed of the object for which he came into the world; then where should we have been? The Savior says, "In the world you shall have tribulation;" there will be plenty to sneer at you, plenty to pour contempt upon you, plenty to speak contemptuously of you, plenty to shoot out the lip, plenty to shake the head, plenty to make sport of you; "In the world you shall have tribulation; but I have overcome the world." Ah, you will be moved when men treat you with contempt and despise you; you will turn and twist, and see if you cannot get into a position a little more pleasing in the sight of men; and therefore, poor thing, if I had left you to overcome the world in that perfection required by justice, where would you have been? So that our victory over the world is but partial at the best; and what little victory we have is simply by precious faith in him. "This is the victory over the world, even our faith;" faith in the victory the Savior has wrought. Contempt never moved him; the scorn of men never moved him; and as it never moved him, then if I am moved, I will plead that he never was moved; I will come before God with the blessed truth that Jesus could not be moved; that in this, as well as other respects, which I shall notice presently, he overcame the world; Peter was moved; he was so moved and overcome by the fear of man that with oaths he denied that he knew the Lord. Ah, the Lord never was moved, no, no; he did no sin; stood fast through it all. Oh then, precious faith; that dear little word faith, let me say it again; what a sweet word it is. How often have we all been overcome; have we always in perfection manifested that decision for truth and godliness that our consciences would dictate, and that we in our right minds would wish to have grace to show? Have there been no concealments, no turnings, no twisting, no careflessness to obtain the praise of men? I do not wish to speak harshly, but if you will plead creature perfection it is because you are most sadly blind as to what you really are. The law made men priests that had infirmities; and the gospel makes men Christians that have infirmities. As the priests were priests notwithstanding their infirmities, and they had infirmities notwithstanding their being priests; so, Christians are Christians notwithstanding their infirmities, and they have infirmities notwithstanding their being Christians. And the great remedy is that Christ was never moved, never blushed at God's truth, never turned and twisted about, as you and I have done sometimes to make ourselves appear a little more pleasing in the eyes of man. Every step he took was in strict accordance with God's truth. "Be not far from me for trouble is near; for there is none

to help” Not a very pleasant thing to be universally despised. The Savior suffered in this more than some of us are apt to think. All the respectable of that day did all they could to make his name despised, and they succeeded so far as to get the populace, the public, to exclaim with one voice, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him;”, the world in full tide set in against the solitary man, the man Christ Jesus, while his disciples even had forsaken him and fled. But he never forsook us, Oh, then, if he kept by us then, will he forsake us now? if he owned us then, will he disown us now? if he loved us then, will he hate us now? if he received us then in all our sinfulness, and the curse due thereto, will he reject us now, that he has simply to receive us to himself in all that perfection which he himself has established? “Many bulls have surrounded me, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round;” that is, tyrannical rulers, all the terrors of the Roman tribunal, all that they could muster against him. “They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion,” Satan well knew if the Savior gained the victory it was all over with him; his head was then bruised forever, the victory once gained, iniquity is pardoned, and eternal triumphs must prevail. Well, did these tyrannical powers move him? No. “I set the Lord always before me,” said the Savior; when he left me I set my great mission before me; when men despised me I set the Lord before me; when men with all their powers oppressed me, “I set the Lord before me, therefore I shall not be moved;” and he never was moved. We are poor creatures: many of the martyrs recanted for a time, but grace reigned, and recovered them, and so strengthened were they that they faced with lion-like courage that from which they shrank in fear before. But had the Savior done this; had he quailed or faltered in the smallest degree before the tyranny of his oppressors, the least stagger on his part would have ruined our souls forever. But bless his precious, precious name, here also he was not moved, he was not overcome. And therefore, if there be tyrannical powers of any kind that have in some measure overcome us we will rejoice that nothing can rob us of the victory, because the victory is complete; and if there are many things to hinder us from enjoying the victory, they cannot hinder us from believing.

Fourth, the pressure of sin and wrath upon the Savior was another part of his sufferings. Hence, he speaks of his whole life as a kind of drink offering, “I am poured out like water.” Compare that with Isaiah 53, “He poured out his soul unto death.” In old times, when they wished to confirm a covenant that was not to be reversed; when they would indicate the irrevocable character of the covenant, their mode of confirming it was pouring water upon the ground, because that water could not be gathered up again. So, in the 1st Book of Samuel, Samuel gathered the people together, made a covenant there to serve the Lord and the Lord only; and to denote the irrevocable character of that covenant, so far as a covenant of that kind could be irrevocable, they took water and poured it upon the ground; and it could not be gathered up again. Therefore, in allusion to this Christ is said to have poured out his soul, to confirm a covenant that never can be revoked nor reversed. As Christopher Ness has well observed of the sufferings of Christ, they cannot be recalled; they are done, and cannot be undone. “Poured out like water.” We cannot understand all the suffering included in this idea. It seems to carry with it the idea of exhaustion. He gave his life to be poured out; and until the last drop constituting that life was poured out, the work was not complete. “All my bones are out of joint.” I do not take that literally, but figuratively. **We must not look too much at the bodily sufferings of Christ, lest we substitute the bodily for the spiritual.** I understand that to be a figure to denote exquisite pain throughout his whole person. What does the word of God say of us? Why, it says that there is no part sound, all is corrupt; the sinner is corrupt throughout. Christ therefore, suffered throughout his whole person. “My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” Oh, what intensity of pain! “My strength is dried up like a

potsherd.” His was a complex person; he had a strength that could not be dried up, and a strength that could be dried up. I cannot explain to you what that strength was that was dried up. O, say you, it was merely the strength of the body. I will not say that; I must leave it. I will confess my ignorance at once; and confess that there is something in that expression, “My strength is dried up,” that I cannot fully comprehend. The only way in which I can illustrate that point is this, that when a man is in hell, that man’s hope is entirely dried up, that man’s strength to help himself out is entirely dried up: he cannot help himself. Now the Lord Jesus Christ came as the Surety: “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” Therefore, he must remain in that suffering until he had suffered all there was to suffer. There was a strength that could be dried up, and a strength that could not be dried up, because he was God as well as man. “My tongue cleaves to my jaws; and you have brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands,” that I should do no more work; “and my feet,” that I should not walk any further. Ah! now we shall stop both his working and his walking. Nail his hands to the cross, he can touch the leper no more, he can touch the blind man no more, he can touch the stammering tongue no more, he can touch the palsied no more; he can work no more miracles. Nail his feet to the cross: he can walk no more, he can travel no more; we will not let men come to him, and we have stopped him from going to them; Ah, men triumphed; but the triumph of the wicked is but for a moment. It was a part of his lot to be nailed to the cross; it was a part of his walk, a part of his path, to be nailed to the cross.

One more idea, and then I must say no more upon this matter. Satan seems very busy with the church, and the Savior looks at the church, and he sees Satan making sure of that church. He sees the ecclesiastical, or if you like the civil, sword raised to take away his life. Could they have done that, then justice would not have had his life. And in connection with the civil sword to take away his life before he had atoned for sin, he saw Satan looking at the church. Ah, says Satan, let that civil sword do its work; cut him off before he has atoned for sin; I will pounce upon the church; I will have her directly. The Savior saw this, and understood this, and prayed over this; “Deliver my soul from the sword.” Ah, he was delivered from the civil sword, not from the sword of justice; at least that is the way I understand it, “my darling from the power of the dog;” “my darling;” the word “darling” is made up of two Saxon words; *dar*, “dear,” and *ling*, “thing” dear one “Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog.” The devil is called a dog; and the name is quite good enough for him. And the Lord heard him; he was delivered from the sword. “My darling.” What! could not all her sins hinder her from being dear to him? No. Could not all the wrath that he endured due to those sins hinder her, the church, from being dear to him? No. Could not all the shame he underwent from men take away the endearment? No. Could not the ferocity of men, the strong bulls of Bashan, the wild beasts, take away the endearment? No, my darling still. And could not all that pressure in his bones, on his soul, that brought him into the dust of death, take away or cool his love? No, his love burned with the same intensity towards her in the deeps of his sorrows as it now burns on his lofty throne, the same yesterday, today, and forever, “Deliver my soul from the sword; my dear one from the power of the dog.” And so, it was, and so it is, and so it shall finally be; and this dog may go howling on in hell for ever, but not one child of God shall he have there, not one. Then Satan is called a lion “Save me from the lion’s mouth.” But I think the lion’s mouth there will mean several things. Sin began to turn itself into a lion; sin never roared so awfully against Christ as when Christ came to die; there came the great encounter; there came the day of the great slaughter when the towers of hell must fall. What an awful lion is sin! If you were dying, if you could see sin as a lion opening its mouth to swallow you up, oh, how

you would tremble and shriek, if your eyes were opened to see the position you were in! Death also may be spoken of as a roaring lion, ready to swallow up the Savior, but he swallowed up death, instead of death swallowing up him. Satan, I say, is here also called a lion. "Save me from the lion's mouth; for you have heard me from the horns of the unicorn." "You have heard me." "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." The Father did hear him, and answer him. His sacred body must be taken care of, according to the prediction, "Not a bone shall be broken." "He made his grave with the wicked;" but he was not buried with the wicked; He made his grave with the wicked, by suffering himself to be crucified between two malefactors; but Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable man, went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus, being moved to do so by the Holy Ghost; and he laid him in his own new tomb, where in never man was laid; a kind of suggestion of the new and living way that Jesus had now opened up. The Savior gives a beautiful explanation of the order of his death. "Therefore, does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." I have always thought that there is an adverb of comparison implied there; but I have read it this way; "Therefore does my Father love me, because I so lay down my life;" I lay it down in that atoning way, in that sacrificial way, in that effectual way, that holy, just, and loving way; I so lay it down as to perfect forever them that are sanctified "No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay down my life;" he was capable of it; "and power to take it again." Then comes the authority. "This commandment have I received of my Father." We here see then that the Father was pleased with the perfection of his death; we here see that his death was sovereign, in that he himself laid down his life, no man took it from him; that his death was omnipotent; he had power to lay down his life, and to take it up again; that his death was governed by divine appointment and authority; "This commandment have I received of my Father."

Now I might go back over all these items, and show that by the Lord forsaking Christ we are brought into nearness to God; I might show that while he endured the contempt of men, he has brought us into the approbation of the Most High; and that while he endured the cruelties of men he has brought us into the sympathies of the Most High; and that while he endured the pressure of sin and wrath, he will load us with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and that while he prayed to be delivered, and was delivered, by making a perfect atonement for sin, from the lion, from all adverse powers, hereby is our eternal security. This is the path which the vulture's eye has not seen, but our eyes have seen it; this is the path which the lion's whelps have not trodden. Man-made Christians are lion's whelps: they still roar against God's truth. To know this, to know what Christ has done, is the way of departure from evil, for there is no vital departure from evil but by that that puts evil away; there is no real wisdom but that that opens up to us the way of escape from the wrath to come, the way into that inheritance which is like the atonement of Christ, incorruptible, and undefiled, and fades not away.