

# THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

Meditations on the Last Days of Christ

By

F. W. Krummacher

Copyright © 1947

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE WALK TO GETHSEMANE

WE RETURN to our narrative at a solemn moment. The Lord Jesus has just instituted the sacred ordinance of His love - the Lord's Supper - and, according to custom at the Feast of the Passover, He commences with His disciples, in the silence of the night, the "Hallel," or great song of praise, which consisted of Psalms 115 to 118.

It is the first time that we find our Saviour singing; for the Greek word admits of no other interpretation. The Lord, thereby, forever consecrates vocal music in His Church. Singing - this language of the feelings, this exhalation of an exalted state of mind, this pinion of an enraptured soul - is heaven's valuable gift to earth. Adopted into the service of the sanctuary, how beneficial and blissful is its tendency!

Who has not experienced its power to raise us high above the foggy atmosphere of daily life; to transport us so wondrously, even into the precincts of heaven; to expand and melt the heart; to banish sorrow, and burst the bonds of care? And it can effect greater things than these, when the Spirit from above mingles His breath with it.

A thousand times has it restored peace in the midst of strife, banished Satan, and annihilated his projects. Like a genial breeze of spring, it has blown across the stiff and frozen plain, and has caused stony hearts to melt like wax, and rendered them arable, and capable of receiving the seed of eternity.

We find the Lord of glory singing with His followers. O, if David, who wrote those psalms, could have supposed that they would experience the high honor of being sung by the gracious lips of Him who was the supreme object of his songs and the sole hope of his life, he would have let the pen drop in joyful astonishment from his hand.

But what a seal does the Lord impress upon those psalms, as the real effusions of the Holy Spirit, by applying them to Himself, while thus singing them in the most solemn hour of His earthly course! Would He have sung them, especially at that moment, if they had not contained the pure words of God? The Lord's singing them, therefore, is a powerful proof of the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

In fact, we are only treading in His footsteps when we resign ourselves unhesitatingly to this sacred Word. And ought not this consciousness greatly to encourage us, and to overthrow every fresh doubt that may arise?

Millions in Israel had already sung the great “Hallel” after the Feast of the Passover, during the thousand years which had elapsed since David. But with feelings such as those with which the Lord Jesus sang it, no one had ever joined in it; for the four psalms treated of Himself, the true paschal Lamb, and of His priesthood and mediatorship. His sufferings, conflicts, and triumphs, first gave to those psalms their full reality.

Psalm 115 praises the blessings of divine grace, for which a channel to our sinful world was to be opened by the Messiah’s mediation.

In Psalm 116 the Saviour Himself lifts the veil from the horrible abyss of suffering to which He was to be delivered up for sinners: **“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me,”** is its language. But the psalm also praises the glorious deliverance which He should experience after enduring those agonies - **“Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”**

Psalm 117 calls upon the nations to glorify the riches of divine grace, which they were to derive from the atonement of the divine High Priest.

Psalm 118 concentrates what had been previously testified—first, as regards the cross: **“They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as a fire among thorns . . . Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall.”**

Then the Redeemer’s confidence:

**“The Lord is my strength and my song . . . The Lord is on my side, I will not fear . . . I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”**

Then the deliverance:

**“I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.”**

Then the redemption which resulted from the offering up of Himself:

**“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly . . . Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them and praise the Lord. This gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter.”**

And, finally, the victorious and all-subduing power of the kingdom of His grace upon earth:

**“The stone which the builders refused, is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”**

These are all features in the portrait of the future Messiah, and references to what would befall Him on earth, and to the work He would accomplish. And He, in whom all this was to be fulfilled, had now appeared, and His foot already trod the soil of this world. The Lord Jesus beheld His own image in the mirror of the words of prophecy generally, as well as in these Passover Psalms in particular; and He sang the sacred verses with the clear and full consciousness of His position as High Priest, Redeemer, and Mediator.

After the singing He went out to the Mount of Olives.

He proceeds upon His path, and O how much is laid upon Him! The guilt of thousands of years, the world's future - the salvation of millions! He goes in order, in His own Person, to plant the seed-corn of a new heaven and a new earth. Alas! whither should we have been going had He not traversed this path for us? Our future state would have ended in unquenchable fire. He knew this. That which He undertook stood every moment, in all its magnitude, present to His soul. But the glorious result of His undertaking was equally obvious to Him. At every step He apprehended Himself as being sent by the Father to close up the chasm which sin had caused between God and the creature, between heaven and earth.

The Saviour walks onward in the silence and obscurity of the night, accompanied by His disciples, all of them deeply affected by the solemn transactions which had just taken place in the chamber at Jerusalem, and yet greatly cheered by the gracious words which had proceeded from the lips of their divine Master.

The Lord then breaks the thoughtful silence, and says, to the astonishment of His disciples, **“All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered”** (Matthew 26:31).

In these words our Lord indicates the point of view from which He contemplated His approaching sufferings. He is minutely acquainted with the anguish to be endured.

The Lord regards His passion as an unconditional necessity.

Had He not viewed it as such, how easy would it have been for Him to have withdrawn Himself from it in the darkness of the night! But He voluntarily yields Himself up to it; for, while saying, **“this night,”** He is on His way, with a firm step, to the garden of Gethsemane, the first stage of His sufferings.

He perceives, most clearly, the end and object of His passion; **“for,”** says He, **“it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.”**

These words are taken from Zechariah 13:7:

**“Awake, O sword! against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”**

The Lord explains this passage by His own words. Its chief import is, "I, the Lord of Hosts, will smite, with the sword of justice, My Shepherd - the Man that is My fellow, the Messiah; and the sheep of the flock - His disciples, friends, and followers - shall be scattered."

**"Thus it is written,"** says the Saviour; and that which is written in the Book of God will come to pass.

The Lord Jesus says expressly that this prophecy was about to receive its fulfillment in Him. He therefore represents Himself as smitten of God, and for what cause, is sufficiently evident from other passages. He appeared in our stead as suffering and atoning for sin. In Him, as Mediator, was realized the execution of the irrevocable sentence - **"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,"** for the honor of God, the restoration of the majesty of the law, and our own redemption.

It is thus, and no other way, that the subject must be apprehended, or the entire history of the passion becomes an obscure labyrinth. It must be thus, or hundreds of passages stand before us as inexplicable enigmas. It must, or the horrible fate of the Holy One of Israel sounds like a shrill discord through the history of mankind, and renders questionable the very existence of a divine providence and government of the world.

The Lord well knew that reason would object to this; he therefore said, **"All ye shall be offended because of me this night."**

Reason mistakes, and knows nothing of divine things, until the heart obtains an insight, a living insight, into its own necessities. Only become as anxious for salvation as Zacchaeus or the thief on the cross-how different will the words then sound in thy ears, **"I will smite the Shepherd."**

Thou wilt then know that the Almighty must smite.

The words, thus quoted by our Lord, clearly manifest His consciousness of the true meaning of His sufferings.

We therefore easily understand His exclamation, **"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished;"** as well as His subsequent agonizing prayer, **"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"** Doubtless, the love of the Father to His only-begotten Son never forsook Him for a moment. Jesus continued the object of His supreme good pleasure and tenderest affection. But the experience and feeling of His Father's love was to be for a time withdrawn from Him, and the consciousness of being forsaken of God was to take its place.

Admire here, first, the faithfulness of the Good Shepherd. He had just told them expressly, that they should all be offended because of Him that night. What tender forethought is here manifested! The offense was unable to extend too far. When the sufferings of their Master commenced, they were able to say to themselves, "He knew what would befall Him, and yet He voluntarily met His sufferings. It was, therefore, requisite for the accomplishment of His work, that He submitted to them."

But the Lord informs them further, that the Holy Scriptures and with them the will and counsel of God, were to be fulfilled in His sufferings.

What a powerful support did He thus afford them against the days of sorrow - a support which secured their faith from a total shipwreck. He told them, in conclusion, that though the sheep of the flock would be scattered, yet they would continue His sheep, and not be cast off because of their unfaithfulness. This He stated to them when informing them, that after He should come forth triumphantly from all His sufferings, and have overcome death itself, He would again gather them around Him in peace and joy. Thus did His parental care provide for them, not merely with reference to the present, but also to the future, and prepared the way to prevent evil ensuing, and to bring them every needful blessing.

O how secure we are, when once we entrust ourselves to His superintendence! It may happen occasionally, that we may feel offended, nay, even depart from Him for a time, and follow our own ways; but He does not leave us long to go astray. He again seeks us out; for with respect to all His sheep, His words remain true, **“They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”**

**“But after I am risen again,”** says the Lord (Matthew 26:32).

He here looks with joyful confidence across the anxious sea of His approaching sufferings, to the subsequent triumph. He doubtless called to mind the ancient prediction, **“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall prolong his days.”**

He who knows how to follow His steps, in thus laying hold of the divine promise, has discovered the secret of joy.

Let us place our feet upon the lofty and immutable rock of the Word and promises of God. How safely and pleasantly ~ may we then abide, even when the gloom of night spreads itself around us, and the storm and tempest assail us! We are then conscious that the clouds which cause us apprehension, cover only a part of our real heaven; for the distant horizon continues bright; and that which is still more remote, promises, after every night of sorrow, a day in which the sun will no more go down.

**“But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”** Galilee is therefore the rendezvous, the land of reunion and meeting. Once there, He has no further cup of agony to drink, and His followers will no more be offended in Him. He is then no longer the Man of Sorrows, but clothed in majesty and the victor’s glory, He meets His beloved friends, and greets them with the salutation of peace.

**“I will go before you into Galilee.”**

Even for us, there is something in these words, if we are able to read between the lines. **“After I am risen again.”**

Assuredly, that resurrection for which we wait, will not tarry - the final elevation of His kingdom from its deep reproach - the manifestation of Him, on whose head are many crowns, after His long envelopment in gloom. Perhaps the day will soon appear. When He shall have made His foes His footstool, have gathered His elect from the four winds, and bound and shut up Satan in the bottomless pit - then shall we also remove to the Galilee of peace and joy, where we shall behold Him, face to face, whom, having not seen, we love, and shall greet Him with songs of rejoicing and rapture.

But though we may see the dawn of this period upon earth, yet we know another Galilee, whither He has preceded us, and which probably lies nearer us than the former.

- I mean that Galilee, on the shores of which so many weary pilgrims daily cast anchor;
- That Galilee, where the hand of Jesus wipes away the last tears from the eyes of the favored new-comers;
- That Galilee, where the song is continually sung of “**the Lamb that was slain,**” and of the blood in which our robes are washed and made white.

O thou Galilee above, thou land of perfect union with Him, who is the object of our love, how does the thought of thee exalt and cheer our spirits, during our pilgrimage through this vale of tears! Thou Galilee beyond the clouds, how blest is he, whom Jesus has preceded, in order to prepare a place for him on thy ever verdant vales and sunny hills!

“Blest, indeed,” you respond, “if we were only sure of landing there at last.”

If you are not yet sure of it, delay not to let the Lord assure you of it. Everywhere, and at every hour, He inclines His ear to you, and especially where He spreads His sacred table for you.

There, also, is a kind of Galilee, whither He has preceded you, in order to meet with and bless you. His Word informs you that you shall also see Him face to face, eventually; and He is willing now to favor you with a foretaste of this vision. Draw near, therefore, and receive grace for grace out of His fullness; be blissfully assured of His Presence, and of His willingness to take you eventually to His heavenly home, where there is fullness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore.

~ end of chapter 10 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*