

THE GARDEN OF THE SOUL

NO. 693

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“A place called Gethsemane.”
Matthew 26:36

THOUGH I have taken only these few words for my text, I shall endeavor to bring the whole narrative before your mind's eye. It is a part of the teaching of Holy Writ that man is a composite being. His nature being divisible into three parts—“spirit,” “soul,” and “body.” I am not going to draw any nice distinctions tonight between the spirit and the soul, or to analyze the connecting link between our immaterial life and consciousness and the physical condition of our nature and the materialism of the world around us.

Suffice it to say that whenever our vital organization is mentioned, this triple constitution is pretty sure to be referred to. If you notice it carefully, you will see in our Savior's sufferings on our behalf that the passion extended to His spirit, soul, and body. For although at the last extremity upon the cross it were hard to tell in which respect He suffered most, all three being strained to the utmost, yet it is certain there were three distinct conflicts in accordance with this threefold endowment of humanity.

The first part of our Lord's dolorous pain fell upon His spirit. This took place at the table in that upper chamber where He ate the passover with His disciples. Those of you who have read the narrative attentively will have noticed these remarkable words in the thirteenth chapter of John and the twenty-first verse, “When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.”

Of that silent conflict in the Savior's heart while He was sitting at the table no one was a spectator. Into any man's spiritual apprehensions it were beyond the power of any other creature to penetrate, how much less into the spiritual conflicts of the man Christ Jesus! No one could by any possibility have gazed upon these veiled mysteries. He seems to have sat there for a time like one in the deepest abstraction. He fought a mighty battle within Himself.

When Judas rose and went out it may have been a relief. The Savior gave out a hymn as if to celebrate His conflict, then rising up, He went forth to the Mount of Olives. His discourse with His disciples there is recorded in that wonderful chapter, the fifteenth of John, so full of holy triumph, beginning thus, “I am the true vine.”

He went to the agony in the same joyous spirit like a conqueror, and oh! how He prayed! That famous prayer, what a profound study it is for us! It ought, properly, to be called “The Lord's Prayer.” The manner and the matter are alike impressive. “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.”

He seems to have been chanting a melodious paean just then at the thought that His first battle had been fought, that His spirit, which had been troubled, had risen superior to the conflict, and that He was already victorious in the first of the three terrible struggles.

As soon as this had occurred there came another hour, and with it the power of darkness, in which not so much the spirit as the soul of our blessed Lord was to sustain the shock of the encounter. This took place in the Garden. You know that after He had come forth triumphant in this death struggle He went to the conflict more expressly in His body, undergoing in His physical nature the scourging, and the spitting, and the crucifixion, although in that third case there was a grief of spirit and an anguish of soul likewise, which mingled their tributary streams.

We would counsel you to meditate upon each separately, according to the time and the circumstance in which the pre-eminence of any one of these is distinctly referred to.

This second conflict which we have now before us well deserves our most reverent attention. I think it has been much misunderstood. Possibly a few thoughts may be given us tonight which shall clear away the mist from our understanding, and open some of the mystery to our hearts.

It seems to me that the agony in the garden was a repetition of the temptation in the wilderness. These two contests with the prince of darkness have many points of exact correspondence. If carefully pondered, you may discover that there is a singular and striking connection between the triple temptation and the triple prayer.

Having fought Satan at the first in the wilderness, on the threshold of His public ministry, our Lord now finds him at the last in the garden as He nears the termination of His mediatorial work on earth. Keep in mind that it is the *soul* of Jesus of which we now speak, while I take up the several points consecutively, offering a few brief words on each.

THE PLACE OF CONFLICT has furnished the theme of so many discourses that you can hardly expect anything new to be said upon it. Let us, however, stir up your minds by way of remembrance. Jesus went to the GARDEN, there to endure the conflict because it was the place of meditation. It seemed fit that His mental conflict should be carried on in the place where man is most at home in the pensive musings of his mind—

“The garden contemplation suits.”

As Jesus had been accustomed to indulge Himself with midnight reveries in the midst of those olive groves, He fitly chooses a place sacred to the studies of the mind to be the place memorable for the struggles of His soul—

*“In a garden man became
Heir of endless death and pain.”*

It was there the first Adam fell, and it was meet that there—

*“The second Adam should restore
The ruins of the first.”*

He went to that particular garden, it strikes me, because it was within the boundaries of Jerusalem. He might have gone to Bethany that night as He had on former nights, but why did He not? Do you not know that it was according to the Levitical law that the Israelites should sleep within the boundaries of Jerusalem on the Paschal night? When they came up to the temple to keep the passover they must not go away till that Paschal night was over. So our Lord selected a rendezvous within the liberties of the city that He might not transgress even the slightest jot or tittle of the law.

And again, He chose that garden, among others contiguous to Jerusalem, because Judas knew the place. He wanted retirement, but He did not want a place where He could skulk and hide Himself. It was not for Christ to give Himself up—that were like suicide. But it was not for Him to withdraw and secrete Himself—that were like cowardice.

So He goes to a place which He is quite sure that Judas, who was aware of His habitudes, knows He is accustomed to visit. And there, like one who, so far from being afraid to meet His death, pants for the baptism with which He is to be baptized, He awaits the crisis that He had so distinctly anticipated. “If they seek Me,” He seemed to say, “I will be where they can readily find Me, and lead Me away.”

Every time we walk in a garden I think we ought to recollect the garden where the Savior walked, and the sorrows that befell Him there. Did He select a garden, I wonder, because we are all so fond of such places, thus linking our seasons of recreation with the most solemn mementoes of Himself? Did He

recollect what forgetful creatures we are, and did He therefore let His blood fall upon the soil of a garden, that so often as we dig and delve therein we might lift up our thoughts to Him who fertilized earth's soil, and delivered it from the curse by virtue of His own agony and griefs?

Our next thought shall be about the WITNESSES.

Christ's spiritual suffering was altogether within the veil. As I have said, no one could descry or describe it. But His soul-sufferings had some witnesses. Not the rabble, not the multitude. When they saw His bodily suffering, that was all they could understand, therefore it was all they were permitted to see. Just so, Jesus had often shown them the flesh as it were, or the carnal things of His teaching, when He gave them a parable. But He had never shown them the soul, the hidden life of His teaching, this He reserved for His disciples.

And thus it was in His passion. He let the Greek and the Roman gather around in mockery, and see His flesh torn, and rent, and bleeding, but He did not let them go into the garden with Him to witness His anguish or His prayer. Within that enclosure none came but the disciples.

And mark, my brethren, not all the disciples were there. There were a hundred and twenty of His disciples, at least, if not more, but only eleven bore Him company then. Those eleven must cross that gloomy brook of Kidron with Him, and eight of them are set to keep the door, their faces towards the world, there to sit and watch, only three go into the garden, and those three see something of His sufferings. They behold Him when the agony begins, but still at a distance. He withdraws from them a stone's cast, for He must tread the winepress alone, and it is not possible that the priestly sufferer should have a single compeer in the offering which He is to present to His God.

At last it came to this, that there was only one observer. The chosen three had fallen asleep, God's unsleeping eye alone looked down upon Him. The Father's ear alone was attent to the piteous cries of the Redeemer.

*“He knelt, the Savior knelt and pray'd,
When but His Father's eye
Looked through the lonely garden's shade
On that dread agony:
The Lord of all above, beneath,
Was bow'd with sorrow unto death!”*

Then there came an unexpected visitor. Amazement wrapp'd the sky as Christ was seen of angels to be sweating blood for us. “Give strength to Christ,” the Father said as He addressed some strong-winged spirit.

*“The astonish'd seraph bow'd his head,
And flew from worlds on high.”*

He stood to strengthen, not to fight, for Christ must fight alone. But applying some holy cordial, some sacred anointing to the oppressed Champion who was ready to faint, He, our great Deliverer, received strength from on high, and rose up to the last of His fights.

Oh, my dear friends, does not all this teach us that the outside world knows nothing about Christ's soul-sufferings? They draw a picture of Him, they carve a piece of wood or ivory, but they do not know His soul-sufferings, they cannot enter into them. Nay, the mass of His own people even do not know them, for they are not made conformable to those sufferings by a spiritual fellowship.

We have not that keen sense of mental things to sympathize with such grieving as He had, and even the favored ones, the three, the elect out of the elect, who have the most of spiritual graces and who have therefore the most of suffering to endure, and the most of depression of spirits, even they cannot pry into the fullness of the mystery.

God only knows the soul-anguish of the Savior when He sweat great drops of blood. Angels saw it, but yet they understood it not. They must have wondered more when they saw the Lord of life and glory

sorrowful with exceeding sorrowfulness, even unto death, than when they saw this round world spring into beautiful existence from nothingness, or when they saw JEHOVAH garnish the heavens with His Spirit, and with His hand form the crooked serpent.

Brethren, we cannot expect to know the length and breadth and height of these things, but as our own experience deepens and darkens we shall know more and more of what Christ suffered in the Garden.

Having thus spoken about the place and the witnesses, let us say a little concerning THE CUP ITSELF.

What was this “cup” about which our Savior prayed—“If it be possible let this cup pass from me”? Some of us may have entertained the notion that Christ desired, if possible, to escape from the pangs of death. You may conjecture that although He had undertaken to redeem His people, yet His human nature flinched and started back at the perilous hour. *I* have thought so myself in times past, but on more mature consideration, I am fully persuaded that such a supposition would reflect upon the Savior a dishonor.

I do not consider that the expression “this cup” refers to death at all. Nor do I imagine that the dear Savior meant for a single moment to express even a particle of desire to escape from the pangs which were necessary for our redemption. This “cup,” it appears to me, relates to something altogether different—not to the last conflict, but to the conflict in which He was then engaged. If you study the words—and especially the Greek words—which are used by the various evangelists, I think you will find that they all tend to suggest and confirm this view of the subject.

The Savior’s spirit having been vexed and having triumphed, was next attacked by the Evil Spirit upon His mental nature, and this mental nature became in consequence thereof most horribly despondent and cast down. As when on the pinnacle of the temple the Savior felt the fear of falling, so when in the garden He felt a sinking of soul, an awful despondency, and He began to be very heavy. The cup, then, which He desired to pass from Him was, I believe, that cup of despondency, and nothing more.

I am the more disposed so to interpret it, because not a single word recorded by any of the four evangelists seems to exhibit the slightest wavering on the part of our Savior as to offering Himself up as an atoning sacrifice. Their testimony is frequent and conclusive, “He set his face to go towards Jerusalem.” “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” “The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him.”

You never hear a sentence of reluctance or hesitancy. It does not seem to be consistent with the character of our blessed Lord, even as man, to suppose that He desired that final cup of His sufferings to pass away from Him at all.

Moreover, there is this, which I take to be a strong argument. The apostle tells us that He was “heard in that He feared.” Now, if He feared to die, He was not heard, for He did die. If He feared to bear the wrath of God, or the weight of human sin, and really desired to escape therefrom, then He was not heard, for He did feel the weight of sin, and He did suffer the weight of His Father’s vindictive wrath.

Thus it appears to me that what He feared was that dreadful depression of mind which had suddenly come upon Him, so that His soul was very heavy. He prayed His Father that that cup might pass away, and so it did, for I do not see in all the Savior’s griefs afterwards that singular overwhelming depression He endured when in the garden.

He suffered much in Pilate’s hall, He suffered much upon the tree, but there was, I was almost about to say, a bold cheerfulness about Him even to the last, when for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, yea, when He cried, “I thirst,” and “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” I think I notice a holy force and vigor about the words and thoughts of the Sufferer which not the weak and trembling state of His body could extinguish.

The language of that twenty-second psalm, which seems to have struck the keynote, if I may so speak, of His devotion on the cross, is full of faith and confidence. If the first verse contains the bitterest

of woe, the twenty-first verse changes the plaintive strain. “Thou hast heard (or answered) me” marks a transition from suffering to satisfaction which it is delightful to dwell upon.

Now, perhaps some of you may think that if this cup only meant depression of the spirits and dismay of the soul it was nothing of much moment or significance, or at least it weakens the spell of those unwonted words and deeds which twine around Gethsemane. Permit me to beg your pardon. Personally I know that there is nothing on earth that the human frame can suffer to be compared with despondency and prostration of mind. Such is the dolefulness and gloom of a heavy soul, yea, a soul exceedingly heavy even unto death, that I could imagine the pangs of dissolution to be lighter.

In our latest hour joy may lighten up the heart, and the sunshine of heaven within may bear up the soul when all outside is dark. But when the iron enters into a man’s soul, he is unmanned indeed. In the cheerlessness of such exhausted spirits the mind is confounded. Well can I understand the saying that is written, “I am a worm and no man,” of one that is a prey to such melancholy.

Oh that cup! When there is not a promise that can give you comfort, when everything in the world looks dark, when your very mercies frighten you, and rise like hideous specters and portents of evil before your view, when you are like the brethren of Benjamin as they opened the sacks and found the money, but instead of being comforted thereby said, “What is this that God hath done unto us?” when everything looks black, and you seem, through some morbid sensitiveness into which you have fallen, to distort every object and every circumstance into a dismal caricature, let me say to you, that for us poor sinful men this is a cup more horrible than any which inquisitors could mix.

I can imagine Anne Askew on the rack, braving it out, like the bold woman she was, facing all her accusers and saying—

*“I am not she that lyst
My anchor to let fall;
For every drizzling myst
My ship’s substantiall,”*

but I cannot think of a man in the soul-sickness of such depression of spirits as I am referring to, finding in thought or song a palliative for his woe. When God touches the very secret of a man’s soul, and his spirit gives way, he cannot bear up very long. And this seems to me to have been the cup which the Savior had to drink just then, from which He prayed to be delivered, and concerning which He was heard.

Consider for a moment what He had to depress His soul. Everything, my brethren, everything was draped in gloom, and overcast with darkness that might be felt. There was *the past*. Putting it as I think He would look at it, His life had been unsuccessful. He could say with Isaiah, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” “He came unto his own, and His own received Him not.”

And how poor was that little success He did have! There were His twelve disciples, one of them He knew to be on the way to betray Him. Eight of them were asleep at the entrance to the garden, and three asleep within the garden! He knew that they would all forsake Him, and one of them would deny Him with oaths and curses! What was there to comfort Him?

When a man’s spirit sinks he wants a cheerful companion, he wants somebody to talk to him. Was not this felt by the Savior? Did He not go three times to His disciples? He knew they were but men, but then a man can comfort a man in such a time as that. The sight of a friendly face may cheer one’s own countenance, and enliven one’s heart. But He had to shake them from their slumbers, and then they stared at Him with unmeaning gazes. Did He not return back again to prayer because there was no eye to pity, and none that could help? He found no relief.

Half a word sometimes, or even a smile, even though it is only from a child, will help you when you are sad and prostrate. But Christ could not get even that. He had to rebuke them almost bitterly. Is not

there a tone of irony about His remonstrance? “Sleep on now and take your rest”? He was not angry, but He did feel it.

When a man is low-spirited he feels more keenly and acutely than at other times, and although the splendid charity of our Lord made that excuse—“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,” yet it did cut Him to the heart, and He had an anguish of soul like that which Joseph felt when he was sold into Egypt by his brothers. You will see, then, that both the past and the present were sufficient to depress Him to the greatest degree.

But there was *the future*, and as He looked forward to that, devoted as His heart was, and unfaltering as was the courage of His soul (for it were sacrilege and slander I think to impute even a thought of flinching to Him), yet His human heart quailed. He seemed to think—“Oh! how shall I bear it?” The mind started back from the shame, and the body started back from the pain, and the soul and body both started back from the thought of death, and of death in such an ignominious way—

*“He proved them all—the doubt, the strife,
The faint, perplexing dread;
The mists that hang over parting life
All gathered round His head:
That He who gave man’s breath might know
The very depths of human woe.”*

Brethren, none of us have such cause for depression as the Savior had. We have not His load to carry, and we have a Helper to help us whom He had not, for God who forsook Him will never forsake us. Our soul may be cast down within us, but we can never have such great reason for it, nor can we ever know it to so great an extent as our dear Redeemer did.

I wish I could picture to you that lovely man, friendless like a stag at bay, with the dogs compassing Him round about, and the assembly of the wicked enclosing Him, foreseeing every incident of His passion, even to the piercing of His hands and His feet, the parting of His garments, and the lots cast upon His vesture, and anticipating that last death-sweat without a drop of water to cool His lips! I can but conceive that His soul must have felt within itself a solemn trembling such as might well make Him say, “I am exceeding sorrowful even unto death.”

This then, seems to me to be the cup which our Lord Jesus Christ desired to have passed from Him, and which did pass from Him in due time.

Advancing a little further, I want you to think of the AGONY.

We have been accustomed so to call this scene in the garden. You all know that it is a word which signifies “wrestling.” Now, there is no wrestling where there is only one individual. To this agony, therefore, there must have been two parties. Were there not, however, mystically speaking, two parties in Christ? What do I see in this King of Sharon but as it were, two armies?

There was the stern resolve to do all, and to accomplish the work which He had undertaken. And there was the mental weakness and depression which seemed to say to Him, “You cannot. You will never accomplish it.” “Our fathers trusted in thee, and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee and were not confounded.” “But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

So that the two thoughts come into conflict—the shrinking of the soul, and yet the determination of His invincible will to go on with it, and to work it out. He was in an agony in that struggle between the overwhelming fear of His mind, and the noble eagerness of His spirit.

I think, too, that Satan afflicted Him, that the powers of darkness were permitted to use their utmost craft in order to drive the Savior to absolute despair. One expression used to depict it I will handle very delicately, a word that, in its rougher sense, means and has been applied to persons out of their mind and bereft for a while of reason. The term used concerning the Savior in Gethsemane can only be interpreted by a word equivalent to our “distracted.” He was like one bewildered with an overwhelming weight of

anxiety and terror. But His divine nature awakened up His spiritual faculties and His mental energy to display their full power. His faith resisted the temptation to unbelief.

The heavenly goodness that was within Him so mightily contended with the Satanic suggestions and insinuations which were thrown in His way that it came to a wrestling. I should like you to catch the idea of wrestling, as though you saw two men trying to throw one another, struggling together till the muscles stand out and the veins start like whip-cord on their brows. That were a fearful spectacle when two men in desperate wrath thus close in with each other.

The Savior was thus wrestling with the powers of darkness, and He grappled with such terrible earnestness in the fray that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood—

*“The powers of hell united pressed,
And squeezed His heart, and bruised His breast,
What dreadful conflicts raged within,
When sweat and blood forced through His skin!”*

Observe the way in which Christ conducted the agony. It was by prayer. He turned to His Father three times with the same words. It is an index of distraction when you repeat yourself. Three times with the selfsame words He approached His God—“My Father, let this cup pass from me.” Prayer is the great cure-all for depression of spirit. “When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, I will look to the rock that is higher than I.” There will be a breaking up altogether, and a bursting of spirit, unless you pull up the sluices of supplication, and let the soul flow out in secret communion with God.

If we would state our griefs to God they would not fret and fume within, and wear out our patience as they are sometimes wont to do. In connection with the agony and the prayer there seems to have been a bloody sweat. It has been thought by some that the passage only means that the sweat was like drops of blood. But then the word “like,” is used in Scripture to signify not merely resemblance but the identical thing itself. We believe that the Savior did sweat from His entire person, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Such an occurrence is very rare indeed among men. It has happened some few times. Books of surgery record a few instances, but I believe that the persons who under some horrifying grief experience such a sudor never recover, they have always died.

Our Savior’s anguish had this peculiarity about it, that though He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, so copiously as if in a crimson shower, yet He survived. His blood must needs be shed by the hands of others, and His soul poured out unto death in another form. Remembering the doom of sinful man—that he should eat his bread in the sweat of his face, we see the penalty of sin exacted in awful measure on Him who stood surety for sinners.

As we eat bread this day at the table of the Lord, we commemorate the drops of blood that He sweat. With the perspirings on his face, and huge drops on his brow man toils for the bread that perishes. But bread is only the staff of life. When Christ toiled for life itself to give it to men He sweat, not the common perspiration of the outward form, but the blood which flows from the very heart itself.

Would that I had words to bring all this before you. I want to make you *see* it. I want to make you feel it. The heavenly Lover who had nought to gain except to redeem our souls from sin and Satan, and to win our hearts for Himself, leaves the shining courts of His eternal glory and comes down as a man, poor, feeble, and despised. He is so depressed at the thought of what is yet to be done and suffered, and under such pressure of Satanic influence, that He sweat drops of blood, falling upon the cold frosty soil in that moon-lit garden.

Oh the love of Jesus! Oh the weight of sin! Oh the debt of gratitude which you and I owe Him!

*“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,*

Demands my soul, my life, my all."

We must proceed with the rich narrative to meditate upon our SAVIOR CONQUERING.

Our imagination is slow to fix upon this precious feature of the dolorous history. Though He had said, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," yet presently we observe how tranquil and calm He is when He rises up from that scene of prostrate devotion! He remarks, as though it were in an ordinary tone of voice He announced some expected circumstance—"He is at hand who shall betray me; rise, let us be going."

There is no distraction now, no hurry, no turmoil, no exceeding sorrow even unto death. Judas comes, and Jesus says, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" You would hardly know Him to be the same man that was so sorrowful just now. One word with an emanation of His deity suffices to make all the soldiers fall backwards. Anon He turns round and touches the ear of the high priest's servant, and heals it as in happier days He was wont to heal the diseases and the wounds of the people that flocked around Him in His journeys.

Away He goes, so calm and collected that unjust accusations cannot extort a reply from Him. And though beset on every hand yet is He led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. That was a magnificent calmness of mind that sealed His lips, and kept Him passive before His foes.

You and I could not have done it. It must have been a deep profound peace within which enabled Him to be thus mute and still amidst the hoarse murmur of the council and the boisterous tumult of the multitude.

I believe that having fought the enemy within He had achieved a splendid victory. He was heard in that He feared, and was now able in the fullness of His strength to go out to the last tremendous conflict in which He met the embattled hosts of earth and hell. And yet unabashed after He had encountered them all, to wave the banner of triumph, and to say, "It is finished."

What, then, let us ask in drawing to a conclusion, what is the LESSON FROM ALL THIS?

I think I could draw out twenty lessons, but if I did they would not be as good and profitable as the one lesson which the Savior draws Himself. What was the lesson which He particularly taught to His disciples? Now, Peter, and James, and John, open your ears. And you, Magdalene, and you, Mary, and you, the wife of Herod's steward, and other gracious women, listen for the inference which I am going to draw. It is not mine. It is that of our Lord and Master Himself. With how much heed should we treasure it up! "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "Watch," and yet again, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

I have been turning this over in my mind to make out the connection. Why on this particular occasion should He exhort them to watch? It strikes me that there were two sorts of watching. Did you notice that there were eight disciples at the Garden gate? They were watching, or ought to have been. And three were inside the garden, they too were watching, or ought to have been. But they watched differently.

Which way were the eight looking? It strikes me that they were set there to look outwards, to watch lest Christ should be surprised by those who would attack Him. That was the object of their being put there. The other three were set to watch His actions and His words, to look at the Savior and see if they could help, or cheer, or encourage Him.

Now, you and I have reason to look both ways, and the Savior seems to say as we look upon the agony—"You will have to feel something like this, therefore watch," watch outwards, be always on your watchtower lest sin surprise you.

It is through trespasses that you will be brought into this agony. It is by giving Satan an advantage over you that the sorrows of your soul will be multiplied. If your foot slip your heart will become the prey of gloom. If you neglect communion with Jesus, if you grow cold or lukewarm in your affections,

if you do not live up to your privileges, you will become the prey of darkness, dejection, discouragement, and despair, therefore watch, lest ye enter upon this great and terrible temptation.

Satan cannot bring strong faith, when it is in healthy exercise, into such a state of desolation. It is when your faith declines and your love grows negligent, and your hope is inanimate, that he can bring you into such disconsolate heaviness that you see not your signs, nor know whether you are a believer or not. You will not be able to say, "My Father," for your soul will doubt whether you are a child of God at all. When the ways of Zion mourn, the harps of the sons and daughters of Zion are unstrung. Therefore, keep good watch, you who like the eight disciples are charged as sentinels at the threshold of the garden.

But you three, watch inward. Look at Christ. "Consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself." Watch the Savior, and watch with the Savior. Brethren and sisters, I should like to speak this to you so emphatically that you would never forget it. Be familiar with the passion of your Lord. Get right up to the cross. Do not be satisfied with that, but get the cross on your shoulders. Get yourself bound to the cross in the spirit of the apostle when he said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live."

I do not think that I have had sweeter work to do for a long time than when a few weeks ago I was looking over all the hymn writers and all the poets I knew of for hymns upon the passion of the Lord. I tried to enjoy them as I selected them, and to get into the vein in which the poets were when they sung them. Believe me, there is no fount that yields such sweet water as the fount that springs from Calvary just at the foot of the cross. Here it is that there is a sight to be seen more astounding and more ravishing than even from the top of Pisgah.

Get into the side of Christ. It is a cleft of the rock in which you may hide until the tempest is overpassed. Live in Christ. Live near to Christ, and then, let the conflict come and you will overcome even as He overcame, and rising up from your sweat and from your agony you will go forth to meet even death itself with a calm expression on your brow, saying, "My Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

*"My God, I love Thee; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor because they who love Thee not
Must burn eternally.*

*"Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me
Upon the cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails and spear,
And manifold disgrace;*

*"And griefs and torments numberless,
And sweat of agony;
Yea, death itself—and all for me
Who was Thine enemy.*

*"Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love Thee well?
Not for the hope of winning heaven,
Nor of escaping hell;*

*"Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Nor seeking a reward;
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord.*

"E'en so I love Thee, and will love,

*And in Thy praise will sing;
Because Thou art my loving God,
And my Eternal King.”*

I hope that this meditation may be profitable to some tried Christians, and even to impenitent sinners likewise. Oh that the pictures I have been trying to draw might be seen by some who will come and trust in this wondrous man, this wondrous God, who saves all who trust in Him.

Oh, rest on Him! “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Do but trust Him, and you are saved. I do not say you shall be saved another day, but you are saved tonight. The sin which was on your shoulder heavy as a burden when you came into this house shall all be gone.

Look now to Him in the garden, on the cross, and on the throne. Trust Him; trust Him; trust Him now; trust Him only; trust Him wholly—

*“Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

May the Lord bless you, everyone in this assembly, and at the table may you have His presence. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MATTHEW 26:36-56

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.