

The King Passing Over Kidron

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon illustrates through the example of King David and ultimately Christ that the path of true kingship and Christian discipleship inevitably involves passing through sorrow, rejection, and suffering, but leads to ultimate triumph and restoration.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 15:23, John 18:1-6, Psalm 23, Psalm 51, Luke 22:39-46, Matthew 27:27-31, Hebrews 4:15, Psalm 68:24

Topics: "Suffering and Perseverance", "Christ's Passion", "Faithfulness in Trials"

Description

In 'The King Passing Over Kidron,' C.H. Spurgeon powerfully explores the biblical account of King David's sorrowful passage over the Brook Kidron as a metaphor for the trials faced by God's people. He draws a profound parallel to Christ's own suffering and ultimate victory, encouraging believers to remain steadfast through suffering and rejection. This sermon offers rich biblical insight and heartfelt encouragement for those enduring hardship in their spiritual journey.

Transcript

"The king, himself, also passed over the Brook Kidron." 2 Samuel 15:23.

THE Brook Kidron was an insignificant, but usually a most foul and filthy ditch outside the walls of Jerusalem. If it were not, as some have called it, the open town sewer, yet there are reasons for believing that at least the filth of the Temple ran into it. The scourings of the sacrificial places went by an under-channel into this brook and we have one or two instances in Holy Writ where, when houses were purged and cleansed, the filth was thrown into the Brook Kidron. The passing, therefore, over that foul and black brook becomes the symbol of a time of deep sorrow and acute distress. The king, himself, then, passed over the Brook Kidron. The royal road lies over the place of sorrow. The way, even for kings, is by the brook of grief and shame. Let us think over that thought for a while.

I. THIS WAS TRUE OF KING DAVID.

David was one of the best of kings—certainly in the long list of his successors we meet with none who did such service to his country as did David, the once shepherd boy. It was through him, in his youth, that the country was saved from being enslaved by Philistia, and oftentimes in later years that stout heart and brave arm led in the van against the enemies of the Israel of God. He was the patriot king. If his country became a happy one, it was through his valor that it became so. And yet, good as he was, his subjects

disowned and turned against him! And, in fear of them, "the king, himself, also passed over the Brook Kidron." It is an ungrateful world we live in. Those who serve it best will find that at times it gives no rewards, or only gives them grudgingly—and afterwards forgets the good the man has done, because for some moment the tide of popular feeling may set against him. "Cursed is he that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm." If you live to your fellow men, even with the largest desires within you, yet if you forget to live also to your God, your cup will be full of wormwood, and your teeth will be broken with the gravel of disappointment.

David was also one of the most tender of fathers. He was never exacting with his children. I do not say he was one of the best of fathers, for correction was much neglected in his house. But he was a tender father and he had denied to Absalom nothing. And yet this renegade, this ungrateful, this unnatural son, was the very one from whom the sting must come. Marvel not if they who owe their lives to you should seek your life! Marvel not if those who once nestled in your bosoms should wound you to the quick with their unkindness. You must not build upon the love of even the dearest you know. Your God is faithful and the Well-Beloved never changes, but all others can, and may, and sometimes do! 'Twas a dark Brook Kidron which David passed over when his favorite son, Absalom, was in hot pursuit of him—the great king, the good monarch, the tender father—was not exempt from this!

Despite the one great stain upon his character in the matter of Bathsheba, David was one of the best and most devout of men. I am sure the older one grows, the more one loves his Psalms, and what a history of the man you have there! It is a mercy for us that he was not a better man than he was, or else he could not have written Psalms suitable to such poor creatures as we are. I think I saw the other day in a window, concerning a certain statesman whom I love to honor, that he would be a better statesman if he were a worse man. I think not so, but still David, if he had been a better man, would have been a worse Psalmist, for even the faults of his character, inasmuch as they bring him down to our poor level, qualify him to write according to the feelings of our hearts and the emotions of our spirits. But he was a grand man, that David. He had the soldier's fault and he fell into the soldier's sin, but he also had the soldier's generous spirit and the soldier's self-sacrificing nobility of heart. He was through and through, a man. In him there was no guile. He hated deception, and he loved his God with all his heart! And yet, for all that, he must pass over the Brook Kidron. Hated by his subjects, despised by his darling child, with all the robes of royalty put aside, barefooted and with sackcloth on his head, Jerusalem's best and greatest king makes his way into the wilderness!

I gather from this that there is no extent of sorrow which is not possible to an heir of Heaven, and more yet, that there is no degree of shame, of calumny and of reproach, which may not gather around the best of men. The king, himself, also passed over Kidron and you know what happened when he passed over. The faithful soldiers wept as they saw that royal head dishonored, and those bright eyes that had flashed death upon his foes in the day of battle, now red with weeping. But what did Shimei do? He cursed him and threw dust upon him, and said, "Go up, you bloody man!" And what did Ahithophel do? He forsook him—seceded to the winning side and plotted the death of his former friend, even King David, himself, with whom he had so often eaten bread and walked to the House of God in company! And what said they all over the nation concerning David, but that God had forsaken him and, therefore, they might forsake and attack him, for the David of former days was not the same David now. His God had left him and the crown was given to his son. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, we know not what we may come to! We do not know what depths of grief we may yet have to fathom, nor into what deep mire we may yet sink. There is no saying. The best of men may have the worst of characters! The brightest stars may be swallowed up in a

night! The moon, in her brightness, may be hidden by the clouds. And the sun, itself, beneath the wings of tempest, may be concealed. Shall we, when we see our Christian Brothers and Sisters assailed, forsake them? Shall we join in the common clamor against them? We shall if we are not good men and true, but if we are such as God would have us be, we shall stand up for God's David as Ittai and his bodyguard did in the day of battle. We shall say, "These are the servants of the Most High God! Persecute them as you may. Cast the dust of slander upon them. Call them fanatics, enthusiasts, disturbers of the peace, and turners of the world upside down—we cast in our lot with them—for better or for worse, we take their Master and themselves, and across their Kidron will we go with them, believing that the day shall come when it shall be thought worth men's while to come back with them after another sort."

For, Brothers and Sisters, David came again up to Jerusalem. The Lord smote his enemies in their hinder parts, and put them to the rout. He came back, again, with sound of song and rejoicing. And so shall the righteous! So shall the best of men, in the day when God lights their candle and puts every tongue that rises against them in judgment to eternal condemnation! Stand you to the right, stand to the true! Stand faithful! Be willing to suffer. Be willing to be rebuked. Be willing to be slandered. King David went this way before you, and the day shall come when you, like he, shall come up from the slander and the scorn, the better for it all, rejoicing in God, who is the God of your salvation!

Thus much on David. I think there is much of interesting Truths of God to be gathered from David's history in passing over Kidron, if we had time to bring it out. But I rather suggest a vein of thought than attempt to enlarge upon it. But now, secondly—

II. A GREATER KING THAN DAVID PASSED OVER THE BROOK KIDRON and if, as David passed, all the people wept, let the people weep tonight as they remember how Zion's greater King passed over that black brook!

There never was such a King as He—so glorious and fair to look upon. His eyes were the suns of Heaven, and His Presence was the Glory thereof. But He came down among His creatures, who were fallen, seeking nothing but their good. He raised their dead. He healed their sick. When they were hungry, He fed them, and when they were fainting, He refreshed them. His words were those of love and His teachings full of wisdom and of Grace. But now they seek His blood! Yes, they seek His blood and in the night they are pursuing Him. They will come upon Him. They will haul Him off to the judgment seat—they will put Him to death. Oh, cruel world, not to know its best Benefactor! One of our poets has called Christ, "the Great Philanthropist," and so He was, only the word falls far short of what He really was, for He loved His people with all His heart! He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. Yes, His own, the Jews, were the most fierce in His destruction!

As the King passed over Kidron on that gloomy night, He had with Him a band of friends, but what was their friendship worth? They were true in heart, but they were weak and feeble. And when the conflict came, they all forsook Him and fled! Peter, where are you? I know you, I hear you say, "I know not the Man," as with oaths and cursing you do deny Him! And John, where are you? Was not that John, the young man upon whom they laid hands, and he fled and left his garments behind him? Where are any of them? "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled." In that bitter hour when

He passed over Kidron, to make His cup as bitter as it could be, the kiss that betrayed Him came from the lips of Judas, the treasurer of His little band. "Friend!" he said, and betrayed Him with a friendly word upon his traitorous tongue!

To enter into the griefs of our Lord in Gethsemane is not our business, tonight, though we feel as if we must linger among those beds of bitter herbs, and stand and look into Kidron's gloomy stream. But you remember how He suffered even unto death for us, and what were the agonies by which He purchased our redemption! There is this concerning our Lord, which is not matched by David—He did actually die. He was absolutely slain. The foes who pursued Him overtook Him—they pierced His hands and His feet, they lifted Him up a spectacle of scorn—and there He died. But His Cross was His triumph! Calvary was a battlefield on which He won the victory and, like David, He came back again into Jerusalem, rising from the grave, no more to suffer or to die! And He returned again to Heaven, from where He came, with sound of clarion and with noise of them that make music and melody for joy of heart—"Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!"

See then, dear Brothers and Sisters, in the Person of our Lord, that this is a prophecy and an assurance that the cause of right and of truth—that those who espouse that cause and are pure and perfect, themselves, may, nevertheless, be brought very low—even to the dust! They may be slandered, despised and rejected and yes, for all that, their triumph is not in jeopardy and neither their cause nor themselves imperiled! Oh, it makes one strong to feel this! There cannot be anything happen to us so severe as has already happened to our King! There cannot be any slander more fierce than the slander poured on Him. They have called the Master of the house, Beelzebub! What can they now call the men of His household? They must find some lighter name for us! Be encouraged, then, you feeble bands of trembling Christians, encouraged in all your sufferings and griefs for Christ's sake, for as He yet rose from the dead and led captivity captive, even so shall the feeblest of His followers! And so I shall close by just speaking—

III. A WORD OR TWO TO OURSELVES CONCERNING OUR PASSING THE BROOK KIDRON.

Ah, we do not like going over Kidron. When it comes to the pinch, how we struggle against suffering, and especially against dishonor and slander! How many there were who would have gone on pilgrimage, but that Mr. Shame proved too much for them—they could not bear to go over the black Brook Kidron, could not endure to be made nothing of for the sake of the Lord of Glory—they even turned back!

Now I have these two words to say. First, dear Brothers and Sisters, with regard to the great cause of God throughout the world, we must expect, in following the Truth of God, to meet with many attacks, many hardships and many defeats. I do not think that the Lord's cause was ever meant to be consecutively triumphant, without intervals of defeat. The sea advances to the flood tide, wave by wave—first one wave advances, and then it recedes. Then another comes up and recedes again, and sometimes when the tide is coming to the very highest, there will be one of those waves which seems to go back and leave a wider space bare of seawater than before. And so it is with the cause of Christianity. A great wave rolled up at Pentecost, but it seemed to pause while under Herod's persecution. Then came other waves, until the world beheld, in some degree, the Light of Christ in all its corners. But again, there was a pausing for a while in those ages, which we call the Dark Ages. Then came a mighty wave again, which we couple with the name of Luther and of Calvin. Again there seemed to be a drawback, and then again, in the days of Whitfield, Wesley, Jonathan Edwards and others, there was another revival! And so it will be, I suppose, right on to the end of the Chapter—progress, and then a staying of the work—great success, then temporary defeat. Now are any of you living in districts where, notwithstanding much earnest work, the name of Christ does not seem to win the day? Do not be downcast! Do not be dispirited! Rather go to the Throne of Grace more earnestly and ask for Grace to gird yourselves afresh for the battle. The King passed over Kidron, and so shall His cause in your village, in your street, and the whole cause of God to which you are attached! But the King came back again, and so will He come back to you if you keep up

heart and courage, and be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!

I know how it is in some of your hearts. You seemed to be growing in Grace so fast. You thought, "I shall soon reach a high standard of Grace!" But now you are discovering your corruption. You are perplexed and cast down because you do not grow as you once did. You are not so happy as you once were. Well, it may be you are passing over your Kidron, but do not be afraid! The King who has come to dwell in your hearts, though He is driven for a little into the wilderness and is hidden in the dark corners of your spirit, will come up again and take the throne, and reign, and drive out His enemy! Hold on, hold on to Christ's Cross and crown, for the victory will attend them still! Only be patient, for God is in no hurry. Wait and let Him have His time, and the good work around you, and the work within you will prove to be successful after all! Just at this juncture we, who fight for Christ's crown and seek to set His Truth free from the unholy alliance which she has so basely formed, may find, perhaps, that for a while disappointment awaits our banners. But if it does, we shall not for a moment quail in our courage nor stay in pressing the good cause on to the ultimate and the universal victory! Perhaps 'tis well that we do wait a while, for we might achieve but one purpose now—but a little pausing will set us on greater designs and on nobler aims. One Church set free in Ireland, if it is not done quickly, another shall be set free and England's church be made to know that she has no right to ride rough-shod over this nation—and liberty and religious equality will be proclaimed here as well as there—and all the sooner because of the delay! Let the King's cause go over Kidron for a while, and the great ones of the earth set themselves in array against Christ and His crown—but the victory will come, and we can afford to wait and tarry till the predestined hour—for perhaps by waiting the vessel shall come back laden the more richly with treasure, to the water's edge pressed down with costly freight. But back she will come, come certainly and surely, to her Master's honor, and to the comfort of the Church of God in this our realm! Never let us despair for the Truth. Do the just thing and never be afraid! Let the earth be removed and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea—if you do the right and stand up for Christ, you need never fear! What if nations crack like potter's vessels and are driven like chaff before the wind by revolution after revolution? The saints of God rejoice that the battle is the Lord's and He will deliver every foe into our hands before long! And if He tarries for awhile, we will wait until He comes, for He will surely bring the victory with Him!

Lastly, just this gentle word to any of you who may at this time be greatly suffering. "The King, Himself, also passed over the Brook Kidron." Dear Brothers and Sisters, we, too, must all pass over Kidron, but the Prince's footsteps, the Prince's footsteps, are all along the road—

"He leads us through no darker rooms, Than He went through before." Let us have courage, then, and go through, too. You have had a sad bereavement. Yes, I wonder not that your tears fell on that coffin lid—'twas a precious life to lose, but, "Jesus wept," and that handkerchief of yours is perfumed with His sympathy. You had a heavy loss and you dread poverty. Well, it is an evil to be much dreaded, but the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had nowhere to lay His head. Your poverty is gilded with His companionship! He was poorer than you! Oh, but you have lately been slandered. 'Tis the lot of all the righteous—birds always peck the ripest and the richest fruit the most. But they slandered your Lord—they said He was a drunk and a wine-bibber. They are only crowning you with the crown of thorns which once was put on His head—and the thorns are not so sharp for you as for Him—they were blunted by being put on His head. Ah, but you tell me that with all this a dear friend that you loved has turned against you. Remember Judas and do not marvel any more. "Ah," you say, "but even the Church of God thinks evil of me, though I have stood steadfast in the Truth." Remember your Lord was an alien to His mother's children, and the Church of His day was His direct enemy. Courage, dear Brothers

and Sisters and fellow pilgrims to the skies! We must drink this cup—our heavenly Father has decreed it, but then He has mixed it, too, and He promises us, if we drink it, that we shall, by-and-by, drink of another cup of the new wine in the Kingdom of Glory! Submit—no, more—acquiesce! No, more, rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer with your Lord! Cleave to your King when the many turn aside! Witness that He has the Living Word, and no one upon the earth beside, and in the day when the trumpet rings out the victory and the King comes back to His own, you shall come back with Him to the ivory palaces and to the abodes of the blessed, where you shall be crowned and shall dwell forever!

Dear Hearers, are you for Christ or for His enemies? Will you go with a despised Christ tonight? Will you take sides with Christ under the cloud? Will you go with Him barefoot through the mire, or do you like a silver-slipper religion? I pray you trust my Lord and Master! Take up His Cross. It will be the best thing you ever did, for it will bring you a glory in which the shame shall be forgotten!

The Lord bless each one of you, and may these few words comfort those who are tremblings for Christ's sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 2 SAMUEL 15:13-23; ISAIAH 61; MARK 14:22-41.

This was one of the greatest trials of David's life.

Verses 13, 14. And there came a messenger to David, saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart lest he overtake us suddenly, and brings evil upon us, and smites the city with the edge of the sword. There is much to admire in David's conduct when he fled from Absalom, but yet his courage would seem to have well near forsaken him. In his brighter days before his great sin had weakened him, he would have been master of the situation, but now he trembles in the presence of the great calamity.

15. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord, the king, shall appoint. They were attached to him—ready to take his counsel at once. Can we say the same to King Jesus? Will every Christian here now say to his Master, "Behold, Your servants are ready to do whatever my Lord, the King, shall appoint"? There are many that pick and choose of Christ's commands. They do not obey all His will. There are known duties which are neglected—plain precepts which are willfully forgotten. I would to God we could all say from our heart to King Jesus, "Behold, Your servants are ready to do whatever my Lord, the King, shall appoint."

16-18. And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after him and tarried in a place that was far off. And all his servants passed on beside him. And all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men, who came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. These were his old guard, soldiers who he kept always around his person, deeply attached to him, upon whose loyalty he could rely. But what a come-down from the King of Israel to have an army of only 600 men—to be fleeing before his own rebellious people, led on by his more rebellious son!

19-23. Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Why do you, also, go with us? Return to your place and abide with the king: for you are a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas you came but yesterday, should I this day make you go up and down with us? Seeing I go where I may, you return and take back your brethren: mercy and truth be with you. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD lives, and as my lord, the

king, lives, surely in what place my lord the king shall be whether in death, or life, even there also will your servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him and all the country wept with a loud voice. And all the people passed over The king, himself also passed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. A fit type of that future passage of the Kidron by the great Son of David when, on that dark and doleful night, when all the powers of darkness met the Prince—the King, Himself—passed over that black and bitter brook into the Garden of Gethsemane. There were faithful ones that went with David—there were some faithful ones with Christ. Happy are they who shall be found to be with their Lord and Master in the day of His sorrow, for they shall be with Him in the day of His joy!

ISAIAH 61.

Verses 1, 2. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn. How condescending and how kind are the objectives of our Savior's mission—to put an end to sorrow! He searches for the mourners—they are the special objects of His care—and all that He does has this for one of its grand objectives—to comfort all that mourn! Surely if there is any troubled heart here, it may claim an interest in such a Divine work as this! Jesus has come to comfort all that mourn. Shall He not comfort you?

3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion. To make an appointment—an ordinance—a decree concerning them. And it will be to this effect—

3. To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified. So it seems that God finds glory in the helping of His sad, sick, sorrowful creatures! He gets a glory out of making them. He gets higher glory out of making them new! Creation yields the moonlight glory—the new creation is a glory as of the sun shining in its strength! O you mourners, may God grant you Grace now to give glory to God by cheerfully accepting those wondrous blessings of Grace which Christ has come to bestow!

4. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. When mourning souls find comfort, and captive souls get liberty, they are full of life and full of energy—and they begin to restore what had become wasted and desolate. I guarantee you that there is nothing for a Church by way of medicine at all equal to pouring new blood into her by new-saved souls! They come among us with their new songs, like the sweet birds in summer, and seem to wake the morning with their gladsome music. They come among us like the dewdrops from the womb of the morning, sparkling in beauty, bearing the dew of their youth. May God send to many old churches that have got to be like old wastes, and some communities that have come to be like desolations—may He send to them these builders—these earnest, loving hearts to build them up!

5. 6. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine dressers. But you shall be named the priests of the LORD. God's true Israel, His chosen, His elect—they may look upon all other men as their plowmen and their vine dressers. Kings and queens rule the world for you. For you the merchant, with his weights, divides the sea. For you, the plowman plows the soil. As for you, though you have a hand in these things, they are not your main employment. Your occupation is a higher one than theirs—the service of your God! You shall be named the priests of the

Lord.

6. Men shall call you ministers of our God: you shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall you boast yourselves. For all things are of God, and all things are yours through Jesus Christ. In that same day in which the Lord comforts mourners and binds up their broken hearts, He gives them to enter into a sacred priesthood in which they walk among the sons of men as God's peculiar people—honored above all the rest of mankind. Oh, the distinctions which distinguishing Grace makes! How it lifts the poor from the dunghill and sits him among princes, even the princes of His people! Christ has done great things, indeed, for us, for though we were as beggars, behold He has made us kings and priests unto God—and we shall reign forever and ever!

7. For your shame you shall have double: and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. You may be persecuted. Your name may be cast out as evil, but when the Lord in mercy blesses and visits you, you shall have a wonderful recompense—more than you could have expected. "For your shame you shall have double."

7, 8. Therefore in their land they shall possess the double. Everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them. There are churches in the world that are not churches of God, and they supply their needs by forged demands from the people. But God hates robbery for a burnt offering. He accepts the willing gifts of His people and, with those who present them, He makes an Everlasting Covenant.

9. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD has blessed. Oh, to have such distinguishing marks of character about us that all who see us may see that the blessing of God is upon us! And this will be quite consistent with poverty, with sickness, for in the poverty there will be content, and in the sickness and depression of spirit there will yet be such Divine upholding that men shall be astonished that their fellow men shall be capable of such joy under such circumstances! They "shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord has blessed."

10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. Brothers and Sisters, I wish we could all catch hold of the spirit of this verse that each one of us would now say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord."

10. My soul shall be joyful in my God. What a precious sentence—"My soul shall be joyful in my God."

10. For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. On those festive occasions the Orientals are known to use all the wealth they have in decoration. The bridegroom decks himself with a crown—puts on a tiara. He is a king for once. And the bride herself brings out all the many jewels with which Eastern women deck themselves. Now all this, in a high spiritual sense, we find in Christ. He is not merely a covering to us, but ornament and beauty, adornment, exaltation, glory, honor! How beautiful a child of God looks in Christ, I cannot tell you, but I believe that next to His dear Son, the most engaging sight to the Divine Father is any one of His dear children whom He sees in Christ. You know we all think our children lovely—but God knows His children to be so when He has covered them with the robe of righteousness—and clothed them with the garments of salvation!

11. For as the earth brings forth her buds and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

MARK 14:22-41.

Verse 22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them and said, Take, eat. This is My body. It was part of a meal. It was no celebration. It was no sacrifice, bloody or unbloody! It was simply a commemorative ceremony of which He would now give them a specimen even before it became commemorative. "As they did eat, Jesus took bread." No seeking for consecrated wafers or some special food, but such bread as they had been eating. "Blessed"—thanking God for it. "And broke it and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat. This is My body."

23, 24. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood, of the new testament, which is shed for many. There was no fear of their making the mistake, which has been made by Humanists, of taking these words literally, because Jesus Christ was sitting there! They could not imagine that as He took bread, He would say, literally, "This bread is My body." Why, there was His body sitting there before them! Had He two bodies? When He gave them the cup and said, "This is My blood of the new Covenant," they never dreamt of such a thing as the wine in the cup was really and literally His blood! His blood was in His veins. They saw Him living there, not bleeding! No, it is an extraordinary thing that men who have the life of God in them, and have some spiritual discernment, have, nevertheless, in some instances, been found driving their faith into the belief of the absurd fable of transubstantiation! Jesus Christ means, "This represents My body. This represents My blood"—the usual way of uttering such a sense both in the Old and New Testament, even as Christ said, "I am the door." Yet nobody thought that he was a door! "I am the way." Nobody thought He was a roadway! "I am the shepherd," and yet nobody supposed that he carried a crook and that He literally kept sheep! So He says, "This is My body, this is My blood" and they who sat there were in their senses—they were not superstitious. They knew what He meant.

25, 26. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives. I cannot resist repeating the remark I have often made about that singing of a hymn. It seems to me such a grand, brave thing for the Savior to sing a hymn after the last meal that he would eat with His disciples before His death—when He knew that He was going forth to all the torture of Pilate's Hall and to death at Calvary! Yet He says, "Let us sing a hymn." He chose a Psalm of David and, I dare say, He, Himself pitched a tune. "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives."

27. And Jesus said unto them—As they walked along.

27, 28. All you shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. What sweet comfort was there—as much as to say, "Though you are scattered, I will gather you. Though you forsake Me, I will not forsake you. I will go before you into our old haunts, into that Galilee of the Gentiles where I was known to preach aforetime. I will go before you into Galilee."

29-30. But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, that this day, even in this night—The day begins at sunset.

30, 31. Before the cock crows twice, you shall deny Me thrice. But he spoke the more vehemently, If I should die with You, I will not deny You in any wise. Likewise also said they all. So Peter was not alone in his intense, though rash expression of attachment. They did mean, all of them, to stand to their Master and to die with Him, as you and I mean to. But do you think that we shall carry it out better than they? Not if our resolve, like theirs, is made in our own strength!

32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane—The garden on the side of the hill of Olivet.

32. And He said to His disciples, Sit here while I pray. Eight of you keep watching at the garden gate to let me know when My betrayer comes.

33. And He took with Him, Peter and James and John, and began to be sorely amazed, and to be very heavy. They had not seen Him in that state before. He seemed like one distracted, amazed—like one astonished out of all composure—unable to collect Himself or to contain Himself. And to be very heavy, as if an awful weight pressed on His soul.

34. And said unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death: tarry you here and watch. These three were to make His closest bodyguard, to intimate to Him if any came.

35. And He went forward a little. A stone's cast, so as to be retired from them.

35, 36. And fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto You: take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what You will That was the point of the prayer—the very pith and marrow of it—not what I will, but what You will.

37. And He came and found them sleeping. Three choice guards—His bosom companions.

37. And said unto Peter, Simon, do you sleep? Could you not watch one hour? Matthew and Luke tell us that He said, "Could you not watch with Me one hour?" And Mark tells us here that He especially said that to Peter. Now remember that Mark is the Gospel of Peter. No doubt Mark was the great friend of Peter, and writes his Gospel from Peter's point of view, so Peter, in the Gospel of Mark records the worst things about himself. And only he puts it here that the Master said, "Simon, do you sleep?" Bad enough for the others to be asleep, but, "Simon, do you sleep? Could not you watch one hour?"

38. Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. Oh, that was a kind excuse to make for them—to say something good about them, even though they slept when they ought to have comforted Him! He did see that their spirit was ready, but the flesh was weak.

39. 40. And again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy), neither knew they what to answer Him. How could they excuse their conduct? A second time asleep! They were in a muddled state.

41. And He came the third time, and said unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

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