

'After I Am Raised Up, I Will Go Before You Into galilee.'- Mar 14:27-28

by G. Campbell Morgan

The sermon explores the profound connection between Jesus' suffering as the Shepherd and the scattering of His disciples, ultimately leading to hope through resurrection.

Scripture: Mark 14:27

Topics: "Compassion Of Christ", "Divine Will"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan explores the profound events leading to Jesus' arrest, emphasizing the prophecy of the Shepherd being smitten and the subsequent scattering of the disciples. He highlights the disciples' initial confidence, their eventual fear, and the inevitability of their flight, all while Jesus remains resolute in His mission and compassionate towards their weaknesses. Morgan illustrates how Jesus, despite knowing the pain ahead, reassures His followers of His resurrection and future guidance in Galilee. The sermon reflects on the themes of divine will, human frailty, and the unwavering love of the Shepherd for His scattered sheep.

Transcript

"And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad. Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee."- Mar 14:27-28.

Mar 14:27-52.

IN this paragraph we have the record of a series of incidents following each other in close succession. The story is characteristic of the method of Mark in that these incidents are given with great brevity, many details being omitted; and yet with great clarity, in that the central things are made perfectly plain. Jesus and His disciples had joined in singing together the hymn appointed for that Passover feast; the great Hallel, found in our Psalter in Psalms 113-118. We can easily imagine how the last cadences of this song were still in their memory as they left the upper room, and the city, and went to Olivet. Very significant are the final sentences:

"Jehovah is God, and He hath given us light;

Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns
of the altar.

Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto Thee;

Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee.

O give thanks unto Jehovah; for He is good;

For His lovingkindness endureth for ever."

They passed from the upper room, and from the city, to the quietude of Olivet. There Jesus told them of His smiting, and of their scattering. They immediately and vehemently protested, Peter being the principal spokesman of their common conviction and intention. Then they went to Gethsemane, and its overwhelmingly solemn events transpired.

The next incident was that of the arrival of Judas, and the arrest of Jesus. This was immediately followed by the action of Peter, in the use of the sword. Jesus protested against the method of the mob, and yet consented to His own arrest. Then the whole company of the disciples forsook Him and fled. Mark adds one incident. A certain young man, probably not of the company of the disciples, but aroused from sleep in some cottage by the way, as the mob moved along the road back to the city, rushed out after Jesus, covered only with the garment of the night, was seized by the mob, and fled naked.

Here then are seven incidents grouped, massed together; many details found in other Gospels are omitted, but seven incidents constituting a sequence and a unity are given. The key-note of the study is found in the word of Jesus: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The final note is found in the tragic declaration, "They all left Him, and fled."

The dominant note in this particular paragraph is volitional. In our last meditation we considered a section in which the emotional was clearly supreme. Here the Son of man is seen in perfect relation to the will of God, understanding it so clearly that He told His disciples exactly what was about to happen. The Shepherd was to be smitten. He was in such perfect harmony with the Divine Will, that we see Him in communion with God, daring to speak in the holy Presence of His own shrinking from the hour of darkness which He had already declared to be inevitable. We see Him finally in cooperation with that very Will, as He yielded Himself to the people against whose method of arrest He made His strong and urgent protest. The disciples are seen yielding, retreating, fleeing, because in their case, will was mastered by sight, rather than by faith. Yet once again, the enemies of Jesus are seen working out their choices, following the line of their own will. Finally the will of God is seen triumphing in spite of them, and through them, making their very wrath to praise Him, while the remainder He restrains.

Taking the words of Jesus at the beginning as the keynote, let us consider first, the smiting of the Shepherd; secondly, the scattering of the sheep; and finally, the way of the smitten Shepherd with the scattered sheep.

First then, let us consider the smiting of the Shepherd. Our Lord told these men distinctly what was about to happen: "All ye shall be off ended,

Having said so much, He gave the explanation: "For it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." Jesus was quoting from Zechariah: "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith Jehovah of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn My hand upon the little ones." After His perpetual habit, and that of all New Testament writers, He did not quote the actual words of the Old Testament Scriptures; but the spiritual truth was contained in the quotation. He said then, that they would be offended, because "It is written, I will smite the Shepherd"; the smiting of the Shepherd would be the cause of the scattering of the sheep.

He here referred to all that was coming in His own experience, and the experience of His disciples, by the citation of a prophecy, which distinctly declared that the Shepherd of the people should be smitten by the stroke of Jehovah Himself. By that solemn quotation we are admitted to the inner working of the mind of the Lord at that moment. He knew full well, as we have seen in previous studies, that Judas was absent on the nefarious business of bargaining away His life. He saw distinctly, what He had been telling His disciples now for some time, that the end of all must be the Roman gibbet, the Cross. Yet now, in this dark hour, after singing the great Hallel, when His voice had joined the voices of His disciples in the words, "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto. . . the altar.

"Many hands were raised to wound Him,

None would interpose to save;

But the awful stroke that found Him,

Was the stroke that Justice gave."

However great and profound the mystery, that is what our Lord said as He approached the darkness of Gethsemane. "All ye shall be offended." Why? "For it is written, I will smite the Shepherd." Where is that written? In the ancient prophecy. What is the context? "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts." We are thus admitted to the inner consciousness of the Lord, and see Him going, not as a Victim, mastered by human brutality and malice; but as One, walking along the pathway where the severest mystery of pain would be the smiting of the Shepherd, by Jehovah Himself.

Yet, as we thus return to ancient prophecy for the interpretation of our Lord's teaching, we must include another thing. Hear again this word of Zechariah. "The Man that is My Fellow." Our Lord then was taking His way toward a smiting which was to be endured in fellowship with Jehovah. Here we are at once reminded of the fact that according to His own thinking, He was not proceeding to an hour in which He would come into conflict with God. He was not proceeding to some mystery of pain whereby He would persuade God to some new attitude of mind and heart and will toward humanity. He was proceeding to an hour in which there would be a strange smiting and mystery of pain, all of which would be in fellowship with God, and would be the outcome of the effect of God's unchanged and unaltering attitude of love and compassion toward men. "It is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. Howbeit," Here immediately our Lord did that which He never failed to do; He linked the mystery of His passion with the mystery of the power which should immediately result therefrom; He illuminated all the darkness of the coming Cross, by the radiant light of the assured resurrection. There is not one single occasion when our Lord made a reference to His coming Cross, but that He linked with it a reference to His coming resurrection. Although He faced this strange and dark mystery of pain, outside which we must ever stand in worship and wonder, even though He had to say that He was going to a smiting which

should issue for the moment in the scattering of the sheep; yet He immediately said: "Howbeit, after I am raised up I will 'go before you into Galilee." The smiting was to be the way toward an appointment and a crowning and a victory. The smiting and the dark hour would be the prelude to, and the preparation for, a new gathering, in which He would go before them, and lead.

If indeed therefore it be true that at this moment we are admitted to the inner secret of the mind of Christ, we see Him resolutely facing the smiting, understanding that it was a smiting of Jehovah; and yet seeing clearly that by that way He would pass out to a larger ministry, to the ultimate victory upon which His heart was ever set. The most reverent thing we may do is to think of Gethsemane almost in silence, for it was there in that 'garden that the stroke fell upon Him; it was there that the Shepherd was smitten.

Observe Him reverently, leaving eight of the disciples at the entrance to the garden; taking three of them a little further with Him; and then leaving the three, and going into absolute loneliness. Let us observe two things; His communion with His Father, and His cooperation with Him.

This story of Gethsemane is one of perfect communion. Much has been said of it in criticism by unbelievers, and sometimes by believers themselves. It has been averred by unbelievers, brilliant with the brilliance of mere human intellect, in speaking of this hour, that our Lord here shrank from suffering in a way in which many martyrs have not done.

Is it not rather a picture of perfect communion? Is there any evidence of perfect communion between a soul and God so great, as the fact that the soul says everything to God, of its own shrinking, of its own pain, of its own agony; providing always, that the speech is united with the saying of the one thing that is supreme: Father, Thy will, not mine be done? There is a simple hymn that we sometimes sing.

"I tell Him all my doubts and griefs and fears."

That is perfect communion. If there is one thing God hates, it is to hear a song about resignation, when the heart is hot and rebellious. In such hours, He would far rather hear about our doubts and our fears. Here the supreme picture is that of the Son of man telling God of the shrinking of His own soul, and of His acquiescence in the Divine Will. "Father . . . remove this cup from Me: howbeit not what I will, but what Thou wilt.

There was cooperation with God in that very surrender of the will. This is not the picture of a vacillating soul, but that of the soul of the Shepherd, yielded to God, knowing the pain that lay ahead, the mystery, and the darkness; feeling the weight of the stroke as it fell upon Him; resolutely declaring the sense of shrinking; and yet pressing closer, into fellowship with God, and cooperation with Him.

Personally I can go no nearer. The light is

". . . Too bright, For the feebleness of a sinner's sight."

It is dark with the darkness of essential light, upon which my eyes cannot gaze. But this I know, according to His own account thereof; in that moment the sword awoke against the Shepherd, and against the Man Who was the Fellow of God.

So we turn from a most incomplete, and yet I trust a reverent glance at the mystery of the smiting of the Shepherd, to look at this scattering of the sheep,

The first evidence of the scattering came when our Lord pointed out the false security which they felt. Peter said, If I must die with Thee, I will not deny Thee; and he meant it; he was perfectly sincere. He never said a finer thing in all his discipleship. When Jesus said to him: Before daybreak thou shalt deny Me thrice; he vehemently denied. When we are inclined to criticize him, and be angry with him, let us never forget that Jesus was not angry, and that no rebuke came from Him. Then bear in mind that these men all said the same thing. We have here, then, personal devotion to Jesus, and confidence in the power of their own will to carry out their devotion to the end. False security was the first evidence of their coming scattering.

The second evidence is found in the Garden itself, when they fell asleep while Jesus prayed. The physical failure resulted from mental dullness, and spiritual weakness. Said the Lord to them, "The spirit is willing," but He did not say strong. Turn from all the more hallowed and sacred surroundings of this story, and think of it purely upon the human level; then it will immediately be seen that if these men could sleep upon such an occasion, it was due to the fact that they had no adequate conception of that through which their Lord was passing. Their mental dullness was due to spiritual weakness. A woman will watch, not one hour, or one night, but day after day, and night after night; never shutting her eyes, in the presence of some peril threatening her child, tossed with fever; or her loved one in the place of danger. Yet these men here slept! I do not blame them. I do not think that they could help their mental dullness; I do not think they were responsible for their spiritual weakness; but the fact is patent. That was the second evidence of a coming scattering.

There was a third evidence that flamed out after they had been awakened, having its first manifestation in Peter. His was zeal without knowledge. He made use of the sword in that hour, as our Lord distinctly said, because he did not know the Scripture, and therefore had no true understanding of what his Lord was actually doing. In the moment when Peter used that sword which was intended to be a sign of his own constancy, and an expression of courage; it was really the last proof of his fear. He had not entered into that spiritual realm that is unconquerable, in which his Lord was now abiding, in the full strength of His Messianic and saving work; and he was therefore filled with fear.

Then came at last the flight: "They all left Him, and fled." If in thinking of the story we are tempted to imagine that Peter led the flight; let us look again more carefully, and we shall find that he was one of the few who did not go altogether. He did follow afar off. That flight of the disciples was inevitable. It was not blameworthy. There was no sin in it, there was no wrong in it. They could not help it, and our Lord knew that, and had told them so; you will all be scandalized in Me. The only mistake they made, if they made a mistake at all, was that they did not trust His judgment and knowledge of them. It is always easier to bear the Cross when the resurrection light falls upon it. If there were nothing in this Christianity other than the Cross, then men would flee it to the end. There came a day a little later on, when Peter was writing a letter, and he said this: "God . . . begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." A living hope! There was no hope in their hearts on that night. It was the darkest hour that ever came to human souls, the hour in which Jesus was arrested to be crucified. It was inevitable that these men should go. The human heart, the human intellect, cannot understand the Cross until it is seen in the transfigured light of the resurrection.

Again let us look at the Shepherd Who was smitten, and the sheep who were scattered. There is nothing more beautiful in the study than to observe His method with them.

Notice first, how He prepared them. He did not expect their fellowship in that garden. He told them so. It was not a telling, born of a sense of superiority, but of an infinite compassion, and a perfect knowledge of their capacity. He prepared them. What a strange thing to prepare men for running away, to prepare men for denial! Not strange at all, if we know Him. He told them, so that presently, when the inevitable thing took place, they should remember that He had told them. In that hour, coupled with His foretelling of failure, He uttered the prophecy of coming victory. To know all the beauty of this story, read John's account. Begin in the thirteenth chapter. It is the same story of these events in the upper room. Peter said, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Jesus replied, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards." Peter said, "Why cannot I follow Thee even now? I will lay down my life for Thee." Said Jesus, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Verily, verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." You ask Me where I am going. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I come again, and will receive you unto Myself"; in spite of the feebleness that lurks within you, the weakness that will make you deny Me. So the story runs on; the Shepherd with the sheep, preparing them, and linking His declaration of their failure with indications of His power; so that presently, in the depth of the agony of failure, they should have something to which they could hold, and be brought back.

"Was there ever kindest Shepherd, Half so gentle, half so sweet?"

All this shines out yet again and again in ever increasing beauty as we observe His patience with them. Listen to the gentle reminder to Peter when He found him asleep. "Coudest thou not watch one hour?" That was no rebuke, but a reminder, a reminder of the fact that He had told him so, and that he had vehemently protested against the accuracy of his Lord. "Coudest thou not watch?"

Mark the generous recognition of our Lord in that hour. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Then consider one of the most beautiful things of all: "And He cometh the third time, and saith 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. Arise, let us be going: behold, he that betrayeth Me is at hand."

If it be read so, what an infinite muddle it is. What difficulties expositors have been put to with this passage. They have said that the Lord came to the disciples the last time, and said satirically, Sleep on! Nothing of the kind! He told them to "Sleep on now"; and they slept; and He watched them while they slept. Between the permission to sleep and the awaking, how long passed we do not know; but certainly some period. He said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough." He meant, The hour is not come. Judas is not here yet! Sleep on now and get a rest. Then there was a waiting time. Presently He said: "The hour is come; Behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going." Between the permission to rest, and the awaking, there was something which if I were an artist, I would try to paint. They could not watch with Him. They were too sleepy. Ah! well, He said in effect: Go and have your sleep out; I can watch; and He watched them while they slept. The smitten Shepherd, the Cross ahead; and yet so patient with the men who could not watch with Him that He let them take their sleep, and watched them! In the face of the Son of God, there was all anguish as He bent in prayer; and the infinite tenderness of motherhood at its best as He watched them. There is nothing more beautiful in all the dark hours than to see Him in Gethsemane watching, while those three were asleep. Then they left Him, but He did not leave them. So they were never parted from Him, "No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," said He.

The great value of this meditation to us is its revelation of the good Shepherd.

Oh! Shepherd true, I may be weak, I shall deny Thee! But let me follow. He will bring me through; for He is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd.

Source:

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