

The Sufferings of Christ Mark 14

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the profound sufferings of Christ, emphasizing the gravity of sin and the depth of His love for humanity.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:38, Mark 14:33

Topics: "The Weight of Sin", "The Sufferings of Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the dual nature of Christ's sufferings in Mark 14, highlighting both the rejection He faced from humanity and the profound agony of bearing God's wrath for our sins. He urges listeners to recognize the gravity of sin, which caused Jesus to be 'sore amazed' and 'very heavy' in Gethsemane, and to understand that indifference to this suffering reflects a hardened conscience. Darby calls for a heartfelt acknowledgment of the love and sacrifice of Jesus, reminding us that our sins were the reason for His suffering and that we must confront our own state before God. He illustrates the depth of Christ's love and the necessity of His suffering for our salvation, encouraging believers to appreciate the cost of their redemption. Ultimately, he challenges the audience to either embrace the grace of Christ's sacrifice or face the consequences of their indifference.

Transcript

There are two sides in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus; the sufferings which, during His career, He endured from men, and the sufferings which He knew when, taking the cup He had to drink, He bore the weight of the wrath of God.

The extent of man's iniquity appears in two ways; directly in all that man did in opposing and rejecting Jesus, but, above all, in the weight of sin the Lord Jesus had to bear when He drank the cup which the Father had given Him. For Him this was no light thing. He "began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death" (v. 33).

Among those who may read this, are there not several who have never been saddened because of their sins? Is there anything which more lays bare the folly and levity of the heart of man? We who by sin have made so bitter and awful the cup which Jesus drank, we may consider sin as trifling in the eyes of God! But it is He - it is Jesus who found how horrible it was. If our hearts, miserable as they are, feel not sin, Christ felt it when He drank the cup for us and bore sin for us. If the heart does not understand the gravity of sin, not to the same point as Jesus knew it, but at least in some degree - if, feeble as it may be, the feeling of the gravity of sin is a stranger to us - we have not at all entered into the mind of Jesus.

It is very different to have the heart touched by these things, or merely to have the knowledge of them; for it is not of this knowledge that I would speak here. To have the knowledge of the gravity of sin, of what sin cost Jesus, and not to have the heart touched by it, is even worse than to know nothing about it whatever. The state of the heart is, in one of these cases, even worse than in the other.

We are going to see feebly, very feebly, what were the sufferings of Jesus.

No one alas! can fathom to the bottom what those sufferings were. Every day you have thoughts, you say and do things, you have the sins which caused Christ to drink the cup and undergo the wrath of God. And, in spite of that, you perhaps think that you have not been so wicked! If you have the thought that Christ suffered for your sins, you will find that Christ did not judge that these sins were not most grave. He was sore amazed and very heavy for them. In the garden of Gethsemane Christ prepared Himself for others to meet with His God, according to the holiness of His judgment. His soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Matt. 26:38.

85 You who think to prepare yourselves to meet your God, have you these sorrows and that sore amazement? However vague may be the thought you may have of them, if you would learn what they have been, consider how in Gethsemane Christ was heavy and sore amazed at sin! And if you have not done so, no more have you appreciated the love of Jesus, nor the work of Jesus in grace. What is important and needful is, that our consciences should be touched by the thought that Christ was there for us in suffering, that He might bear our sins. If my soul is not brought to own it, it is necessary that I should pass there myself, and suffer for myself the wrath and justice of God, such as Christ has undergone. If, when His Son, His beloved, who had no sin, was made sin for us, God had to smite sin in Him; if His justice and His holiness could not spare Jesus, think you to escape when you meet the face of God? And when I consider Christ suffering the wrath and curse, can I think that my sins are a trifle? The evil I had done was so serious in the eyes of God and in those of Jesus, that, when Jesus charged Himself with it, this evil made Him agonise, and caused to fall on Him the weight of God's wrath. Christ suffered on the cross the wrath of God, and why? Because you deserved this wrath and eternal condemnation?

Often, without knowing it, souls go to meet God with their sin upon them. Souls are often there without having the consciousness of it. Is it not true, for many among you, that you walk in this life to meet God, and to face His judgment, and that you fear nothing? And if it is thus, if you thus walk at ease in the face of this judgment, what is it to say this, except that the conscience is not awakened (nay, is even hardened) in spite of the agony of Jesus, in spite of the sufferings of Jesus, and in spite of which Jesus had to drink because of sin?

How beautiful it is to contemplate Jesus in the midst of this agony and of these sufferings! We see Him perfectly calm, and weighing with calmness the weight of the cup that He would drink. And in what circumstances? In the midst of all that which was calculated to break and bruise the affections of His heart. The more the world rejects and despises us, the more also have we need of affection. Jesus was full of goodness and of tenderness for His disciples. He had loved and borne with them. What happiness to Him? What does He find in their midst, when the iniquity of man is about to be let loose against Him? What He finds is, that in the midst of those He loved, of those with whom He was at table, and lived as with His friends and companions (v. 18), Jesus can say, "Verily, I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me." Yes, one of you who have been with Me, one of you My familiar friends! His heart is wounded to the bottom. And as they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, Is it I? Jesus shews how His heart is broken. "It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish." One of

you who have known me, who have seen me, and who were received into my intimacy. And Jesus was perfectly calm.

Verses 22-26. They went to crucify Him. Of whom does He think? Of His disciples. His body was going to be broken, and His blood shed. He was about to undergo the wrath of God, and He explains to them in peace the cost of what He is going to do for them. He transports Himself beyond those ages in which we live to the time when, satisfied with the travail of His soul (Isa. 53:11), He will drink anew in the kingdom of God the fruit of the vine (v. 25). How beautiful it is thus to see the Lord Jesus cast His glances through the ages! In the midst of the frightful circumstances in which He is found, His soul is calm enough to think of the everlasting happiness achieved for His disciples by His sufferings, and of the joy that He will experience in again seeing them in this state of glory. Without letting Himself be turned away by the thought of His sufferings, without agitation, without amazement, He contemplates in peace the value of His sacrifice, and the happiness of again finding His disciples at the end. The treason of Judas, the denial of Peter, the forsaking of the disciples, the rejection of the world, the enmity of Satan, nothing troubles Him. "They sung a hymn" (v. 26).

Verses 27, 28. "Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended, because of me this night." To be ashamed of Him, miserable as we are! And yet how this puts in relief the unutterable love of Jesus! He tells His sheep, who are going to be scattered, that He will rejoin them shortly, and that, as soon as He shall have completed all this work which is to save His own - to manifest alas! all the feebleness of the flesh in them, and all the perfection of obedience in Jesus, He will go before them into Galilee.

87 Verses 29, 30. Peter has the false confidence of the flesh. Does Jesus reproach him with it? What does Peter's presumption produce in the heart of Jesus? He warns Peter, and prays for him. His love steadfast, unchangeable, never slackens. His heart is not discouraged. It is He, He who was to bear all the pain, who encourages and consoles His disciples.

Verse 31. It may happen to others beside Peter to say, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise," for "likewise also said they all." Where Christ is honoured and owned, in the midst of His own, in the midst of such as confess His name, people may easily own Him, they may well have a Christ, though rejected of men: but in other society, in the midst of those who reject Him, how ready is the heart to conceal that it knows Him! And if you find it evil in Peter to have thus denied Him, is that less awful in you? And if when we are exposed to disgrace for His name, we do not love to confess it, do we not deny Him as much as Peter? And it is done because the conscience is not awakened and touched because Jesus suffered for sin. What I desire is, that the conscience should feel the weight of the sin which made Jesus suffer, and this sin is yours: it is that your heart should be touched by the feeling of the love of Jesus, by this power of love, in virtue of which Jesus has charged Himself before God with the weight and the responsibility of sin, and in virtue of which He has borne all this weight, when He was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities" Isa. 53:5.

Verses 32-39. Jesus tells His disciples to pray (v. 38). It is no more for Him the time of consoling His own. He must meet for them the wrath of God. He now reviews in spirit before God that which He is to suffer in drinking the cup of the wrath of God. Jesus, who was holy, and who had abode in the love of the Father, alone understood what was the holiness of God, and of what cost His love was. He was thence so much the more capable of alone understanding how horrible sin was, and how awful was the wrath of God. Indifference to this wrath cannot be found save in those who, being in sin, know not the holiness of God and who, strangers to God, have not tasted His love. It is awful to see us calm, contented with ourselves,

and careless, when one knows the pangs which sin has cost the Lord Jesus, and why He was sore amazed and very heavy.

88 In His career of obedience Jesus suffered the contradiction of sinners. Never did He turn away from them, and never did He demand that such a cup should be taken away from Him. Why this then? Because this was not merely the cup of the iniquity of men or of Satan's malice, but that of the wrath of God. In what He had had to suffer before from men, He had the joy of accomplishing the will of His Father; but in this cup, which was that of wrath, there was not one drop of sweetness. Jesus prays that, if it be possible, this cup might be far removed from Him. And why impossible? Here is the reason. It is impossible that God should endure sin, and (since Jesus Himself was made sin for us) that the wrath of God should not be accomplished against sin.

Behold, dear readers, where you are! If Christ has not borne your sins, impossible that you should escape the judgment that God has pronounced against sin. It is a serious thought. Weigh this expression of Jesus: "If it be possible." Certainly, if that had been possible, God would have heard Jesus, and He would have spared His beloved Son this unparalleled sorrow. Why does Jesus say, "If it be possible?" Because He who knew what the love of God is was also in a condition to know how terrible is His wrath.

What was the state of the disciples? They slept (v. 37). They had not enough affection for Him to watch one hour. Peter, who was willing to face prison or death, could not watch one hour. He had slept on the mountain during the transfiguration (Luke 9:23), and he sleeps in Gethsemane. This discloses, at the bottom of our hearts, the selfishness which is a stranger to the affections which make our hearts enter into the glory, as well as into the sufferings, of Jesus.

Verses 40-43. Was the love of Jesus disheartened or fatigued by all that? No; He must, He would, glorify His Father, and save His own, and He is not arrested by any difficulty. Impossible that we should be saved if He drink not the cup, and He takes it. His love is mightier than death. He presents all to God. And from the moment He found it impossible for this cup to pass without His drinking it, calm again possesses His soul, and He takes it.

89 Verses 44-50. Of what is not the heart of man capable? God has allowed that all the perfidy of the heart should be laid bare, and that man should betray Jesus by a kiss. Not a pang, not a trial, that Jesus has not to endure in order to put His heart to the test. Without that, something would have been wanting to the cup which He had to drink. The trial of the Lord would not have been complete, and the question of man's iniquity would not have been cleared in the presence of the judgment of God; but Jesus has perfectly glorified God His Father in the midst of all the iniquity of man and all the malice of Satan. All that which could wound and crush, God's wrath, Satan's wickedness, man's iniquity, all bruised His heart to pieces, and all made the immeasurable excellence of Jesus to shine before God. The heart of Jesus was probed to the bottom. And what is, after all that, the position of sinners? There remains nothing but the cost and worth of Jesus for them; and in the eyes of God he that believes has all the worth of Jesus before God. He may present Himself before God, as loved of God, to the point that God has given His Son, and as having the cost of all the sufferings of Jesus.

Christ being presented to you, one of two things results; either you are guilty of the sufferings of Jesus, if you despise them; or, if by grace you lay hold of their infinite value by faith, you enjoy the effect of these sufferings. If you despise them, you will be treated as those who despise them. If by grace your eyes are open to understand what Jesus has done, all the efficacy of His work is applied to you, and you enjoy the

love of God. Either you are guilty of the sufferings of Jesus, or you enjoy the cost of His sufferings.

To confess what are your sins which have made Jesus suffer is really to believe that He has borne them. If you say, It is I who have made Christ thus to suffer, you also say, For me, I shall never suffer like that. If Jesus has borne my sins and undergone their consequences, I shall not undergo them, and I am delivered and set free from condemnation.

May God, by the feeling of the love of Jesus, touch your hearts, and make you conscious at what infinite price it is for you that Jesus presented Himself, in order to undergo the wrath of God! Oh, how precious is the love of Jesus!

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