

John 16:25-33

Three Contemplations of Christ Before His Death

Christ usually taught his disciples in parables and proverbs. In Christ's parables, the speaker compares an observable, natural, or human phenomenon to the Kingdom of God. Some of these challenge and mystify or even attack the hearer. There are 40 parables attributed to Christ in the Gospels.

In the end of John 16, Christ and his disciples have a conversation regarding proverbs. Christ says in verse 25, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father." Here in this verse Christ refers to his death on the Cross which was soon to take place.

The disciples expressed confidence in understanding the meaning of Christ's words in verses 29 and 30,

"His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure

that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”

The disciples thought they finally figured out the Lord, and the meaning of His words. But they did not understand. No one could fathom what Christ was about to do for His people. Christ was going to be made sin for them, suffer from the hands of cruel and wicked men, and die by way of Roman crucifixion.

Christ responds with a question, “Do ye now believe?”

What follows in verses 31 and 32 are Christ’s thoughts as He draws closer to His death on the Cross. The title of my message is Three Contemplations of Christ Before His Death.

1. The contemplation of loneliness

We read in verse 32, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone:”

A sailor out at sea once observed, “Alone, alone, all, all alone, alone on a wide, wide sea.” No one took

pity on my soul in agony.” There is no thought connected with the life of Christ more touching, none that seems to characterize His Spirit, as the loneliness in which He lived.

We read in Isaiah 53:3, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Those who understood Him best only understood Him half. Those who knew Him best scarcely could be said to know Him. On this occasion here in John 16, the disciples thought, “Now we understand and believe you.” But Christ’s reply was, “Do you?”

There are two kinds of solitude in this life. The first consists of insulation in space. It is simply separation by distance. You feel lonely when a loved one is away on a trip. Distance is what separates you. You comfort yourself knowing that soon you will see them again. But while they are away you miss them and feel lonely. Think about what Jesus Christ left to become man, and live in a sinful and cursed world. He left the beauty and comfort of Heaven. He left His loving Heavenly Father. Christ felt the loneliness of the long distance that separates loved ones.

The second kind of solitude is isolation of the spirit. There are times when hands touch ours, but only send an icy chill of indifference to the heart; when eyes gaze into our soul, but with a glazed look which cannot read into the bottom of our soul; when words pass from our lips but only come back as an echo reverberating without a reply through a dreary solitude.

The hymn writer describes loneliness this way:

“I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses
And He walks with me
And He talks with me
And He tells me I am His own.”

There are times in my life when I’ve found myself alone in the garden...but not alone... with Him.

Hebrews 13:5, ...“for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

There are 5 negatives used in the original Greek in this text. The text could read literally, “Never, No,

Never, No, Never, will I forsake you.

But for Christ this was not the case. He was forsaken by men. Left all alone.

One Bible commentator observe there were two notable occasions when Christ was left alone. The first was at the beginning of His life. The second was at the end of His life.

The first time we read of Christ being alone was when He was 12 years old, when His parents found Him in the temple, conversing with the Doctors of the Law. Then come the lonely words of Christ, “How is it that you sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business.”

The second time was when Christ was dying on the Cross and cried out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Can you feel the lonely words of the Man of Sorrows, reposing on His solitary strength, felt the last shadow of perfect isolation pass across His soul. The depths of these words are too deep to plumb. His communion with His Heavenly Father was obscured. He was forsaken by God.

Psalm 22 records Christ viewing His own death on the Cross and how does He describe it, “1My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

14I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

16For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”

Christ contemplated the loneliness he experienced in this world before His death

2. The contemplation of faith

We read in the latter part of verse 32, "... and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

Someone once observed,
"The strength that is in a man can be only learned when he is thrown upon his own resources and left alone. What a man can do in conjunction with others does not test the man. Tell us what he can do alone. It is one thing to speak in front of an audience who agrees with you; who are warm and welcoming. It is another thing to hold the truth when truth must be supported, and it is met by cold looks and wicked suspicion."

When Christ was assaulted by the Devil in Gethsemane, beaten by the soldiers at Gabbatha, and forsaken by His Father at Golgotha, Christ did not turn away. He continued to look and trust in His Gracious Heavenly Father.

Alexander Maclaren was a Scottish preacher of the 19th century and he writes,

“A perfect manhood must needs be a dependent manhood. A reasonable creature who does not live by faith is either God or devil: Jesus Christ’s perfect manhood, sinless, stainless, did not absolve Him from, but obliged Him to, a life of continual dependence upon God; His divinity did not, in the smallest measure, interfere with the reality of the faith which, as man, He exercised, and which was the same in kind as ours.

His perfect manhood modifies and perfects His faith. In Him dependence had no relation to a consciousness of sinfulness, as it must have in us, but in Him it had relation to a consciousness of need of a continual derivation of life and power from the Father; His faith being the faith of a perfect manhood, was a perfect faith. Our hands tremble as they hold the telescope that looks into the far-off unseen. His hand was steady. Our faith wavers and is interrupted, an intermittent fountain. His was a perennial flow. His perfect faith issued in perfect results in His life; in a perfect obedience, ‘I do

always the things that please Him,' and in a perfect communion. Like two metal plates of which the surfaces are so true that when you bring them into contact they adhere, that perfect nature of Jesus Christ's, by the exercise of its perfect faith, clung in unbroken fellowship to the Father — 'He hath not left me alone, because I do always the things that please Him.'

And thus, dear brethren, our brother does not stand above us only to show us God, but comes down amongst us to show us men. Out of His example of faith we may take both shame and encouragement — shame when we Consider the awful disparity between our wavering and His fixed faith; encouragement when in Him we see what humanity has in it to become, and what by the path of faith it may become. The staff that He leaned on He has bequeathed to us. The shield that He carried in the conflict in the wilderness, when He said, 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' and which He bore undinted by all the fiery darts through His earthly course, He has bequeathed to us His followers. The Captain, the Emperor, was once in the arena, and there He struggled. He, the Captain of the faith, the Leader of the hosts of believers, conquered because He said 'I will put my trust in Him'; and

He has left us the same weapon for ours, that we, too, may conquer. ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’

Christ contemplated the faith He exercised in His Father

3. The contemplation of peace

We read in verse 33, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Christ reassures his disciples the things He will suffer will be for their everlasting benefit. The death of Christ will secure peace for His people.

You may be thinking to yourselves, why do we need peace with God? Why is this our fundamental need? The Bible teaches sin has spoiled that original friendship with God and man. Sin has created a great barrier between us and God. The Bible reveals the truth, “that all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God.” Sin separates us from God. It shuts us out from God’s blessing and presence.

But the N.T. reveals the wonderful truth that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished reconciliation between God and sinners. Reconciliation could not be brought about by anything we could do. We created the barrier of sin but we can do nothing to break it down. And this is where the meaning of reconciliation differs from the human realm today. Biblical reconciliation is not like all the disputing parties sit around the table and negotiate some kind of settlement. It's not God and the sinner sitting down to agree on terms. God can't compromise His character. He is the offended party. Sin must be dealt with on God's terms. God can't wink at sin and turn away and pretend it never happened. Sin did happen and continues to happen and the results are with us today. Sin must be dealt with.

Christ cancelled the power of sin at the cross and reconciled God and man.

2 Corinthians 5:19 "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

Reconciliation is the work of God and God alone. How does God accomplish this? The Bible reveals that He has done it through the death of His Son on the cross. Christ died on the cross to accomplish our peace with God and our reconciliation. The cross was God's way of putting away sin. Jesus wasn't dying on the cross for His sins. He died for our sins. Christ is the substitute for His people

Colossians 1:20 "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Romans 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Christ contemplated the peace He would achieve for His people. Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus for His people

Hebrews 12:2

"...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

John 16 records three contemplations of Christ before His death. The loneliness Christ experienced in His life was great. The faith Christ exercised in His Heavenly Father was perfect. The peace Christ procured for His people was necessary. May we look to Christ this day for our strength and wisdom.

Let us pray!