

### **The Gospel of Luke (#105); The Crucifixion of Christ (1)**

We who are Christians believe and confess that biblical Christianity is the only true religion that exists in the world. We readily admit we are exclusivists in this regard. We believe the Lord Jesus when He declared that He was the only One through whom sinful man can obtain forgiveness of sins, come into relationship with God, and inherit everlasting life that will commence with the future resurrection of the dead. Jesus declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

But what is it that our Lord did in order to obtain and secure our salvation? What was it He chiefly came into the world to be or to do? For this, whatever it is, would rightly be regarded as the most important event of history, the very apex, or climax of history. Some would argue that the apex of history is *the incarnation*, when God became a man, and Jesus Christ dwelt among us. And so, to them the first Christmas is viewed as the high point of history. Others look to our *Lord’s earthly ministry* of three and a half years, in which He went about doing good, healing and teaching the people. Still others would say that *the resurrection and ascension* of the Lord Jesus, when He rose from the grave to be enthroned by His Father as King over His everlasting kingdom, is the singular event of history from which all of history is to be evaluated and measured. But we would say that the apex of history is *the cross of Christ*, this event when Jesus Christ took upon Himself the task of dying on behalf of sinners, by which He obtained for them the forgiveness of sins by God and their right to become children of God, inheritors of everlasting life. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the event on which all of Old Testament history culminated, and to which all subsequent history looks back. It is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ which now lies before us in Luke 23:26ff.

Now in our study of this third Gospel of the New Testament we have witnessed through Luke’s pen a trial of injustice perpetrated upon Jesus. Luke has emphasized the travesty which was initiated and executed by the religious leadership of Judaism and aided by the Roman authorities. This was carried out in spite of the official findings of the Roman political leadership of both the governor, Pontious Pilate of Judea, and Rome’s King Herod over Galilee. Pontius Pilate had found Jesus of Nazareth innocent of charges of sedition (23:13, 14). Even Herod, a corrupt and cruel leader, concluded that the charges were unfounded (23:15). But the Jewish religious leaders would not be satisfied with anything less than His death, and that by crucifixion (23:21). They were relentless, even after three efforts of Pilate to have Jesus released (23:22). “The innocency of Jesus could not be more firmly underlined” (I. H. Marshall). So Pilate finally gave into the demands of the chief priests. He “surrendered Jesus to their will” (23:25). As one once wrote,

The act of delivering over the accused has taken place; Jesus is now in the hands of His enemies, like a lamb among wolves, or a dove in the claws of a vulture. How was David in the right when he said, “I will rather fall into the hand of the Lord, than into the hands of man.”<sup>1</sup> Look how they treat the Holy One, now they have Him among them. They again assail Him with the bitterest mockery, cruelly and rudely tear the purple robe from His bleeding body and put on Him His own clothes again, not from compassion, but because it seems to them the awful death to which they are now preparing to conduct Him, is no longer to be treated as a jest or a scoff, but requires a certain solemn seriousness.<sup>2</sup>

In Luke’s Passion narrative, we arrive to the crucifixion of Christ itself. An outline of the larger passage may be seen as follows:

#### 1. The way to the cross (23:26-31)

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Chronicles 21:13.

<sup>2</sup> F. W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior; Meditations of the Last Days of Christ* (Moody Press, 1947), 301.

2. Details of the crucifixion (23:32-38)
3. Conversation with the two criminals (23:39-43)
4. The death of the righteous Man (23:44-49)

Today we will address the first section of this narrative, that we call, “The way to the cross.”

## I. The way to the cross (23:26-31)

Here is Luke 23:26-31:

Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. <sup>28</sup>But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”’ <sup>31</sup>For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”

We first read of a man who was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus to the place of His execution.

### A. Simon and the cross (23:26)

We read about Simon, a Cyrenian. **Verse 26** records, “*Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.*” Cyrenia was a Greek colony on the shores of northern coast of Africa, just west of the border of Libya and Egypt.<sup>3</sup> Simon may have been in Jerusalem for the Passover feast.

It was while “they led Him (Jesus) away” that they laid hold of Simon. There was no delay between the sentencing and the execution of a man found guilty of a capital offence. Delayed execution of punishment removes the deterrent to others who commit crimes.

Now we should not assume that when the Roman soldiers “laid hold” of Simon to carry the cross of Jesus that it was due to a merciful attitude or a measure sympathy these Roman soldiers had for Jesus. Rather, we can assume that the motivation of these men was entirely cruel and unrelenting. Their attitude and motivation were rightly assessed:

On a cursory view of the subject, it might be thought, that the enemies of Jesus, after having secured their chief object, began to relent; since, instead of obliging Him in His debilitated state to bear His cross to the place of execution (as was customary on such occasions), they compelled another person to carry it for Him. This however was only an additional instance of their malignity. They saw that, in consequence of His watching, and fasting, and diversified sufferings, He was ready to faint; and they began to fear, that He would die before He should reach the place; and consequently that they would be deprived of the satisfaction of making Him a public spectacle on the cross. Hence they spared Him this fatigue, that He might be the more capable of suffering all the other miseries which they were about to inflict upon Him.<sup>4</sup>

The fact is that they were attempting to prolong and accentuate His suffering, not ease Him in any way from His ordeal.

---

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the nearest modern city to that ancient site is Benghazi, Libya, which is about 75 miles west of the ancient Greek city of Cyrene.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Simeon, **Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible**, vol. 13 (Zondervan Publishing House, 1955), 137.

Simon is portrayed as somewhat of an ideal disciple. Earlier in the Gospel, it is recorded that Jesus said to His followers, “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be My disciple” (14:27). The meaning is this: you cannot be a follower of Jesus and hope to have the salvation, which is in Him, if you order your life according to your own will. You must die to self, and follow Jesus Christ in faith and obedience, and to be willing to suffer the difficulty and reproach for doing so. For one to persist in refusal to live as His disciple betrays a non-Christian, though he may continue claim to be a believer in the Lord. Here Simon is doing literally what all true Christians do spiritually--we take up our/His cross and follow Him; that is, we order our lives in the same manner as our Lord and Savior who went before us. Through His cross, Jesus exited this world passing into the presence and the glory of His Father. It is in this way of bearing their cross, that His people—true Christians—pass through this world unto our eternal glory in Christ.

Some have said that this forcing of Simon to bear the cross of Jesus to His crucifixion would have incurred great shame for Simon. The one crucified was regarded as cursed of God, and even to come into contact with the cross, the implement of execution, was regarded as defiling a person. The Scriptures speak of the “the offense of the cross” (cf. Gal. 5:11). But what may have initially seemed to Simon to have been a shameful imposition by the Romans, probably in time became Simon’s greatest honor in life.

One can understand that this incident must have had a great impact on Simon and those who knew him. Whether or not he was a disciple of Jesus at this time is not stated. But it is quite likely that this Simon did become a disciple of Jesus Christ. In fact, others of his family probably became Christians, as we read in Mark’s account of Simon bearing our Lord’s cross. There we read,

Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. (Mark 15:21)

**William Hendriksen** (1900-1982) made several assertions about this “Simon”, assertions that may be true, but the evidence is not certain.

The behavior of Jesus and His words from the cross have such an impression on Simon that he becomes Christian. Subsequently he and his family are living in Rome. He may have been living there before, but in any event he was a Cyrenian by birth. (Among the early Christians there were many Cyrenians, Acts 11:20; 13:1).

Mark, writing to the Romans, mentions “Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus,” as if to say, “people with whom you, in Rome, are well acquainted.” Paul, in his letter to the Romans (16:13), writes, “Greet Rufus, outstanding in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” Evidently the mother of Rufus—hence, the wife of Simon—had rendered some motherly service to Paul.

If this construction is factual, then the service which Simon rendered, though initially “forced,” turned out to be a genuine blessing for himself, his family, and many others.<sup>5</sup>

There is a reference to an Alexander in Ephesus in Acts 19:33, but Alexander must have been a common name considering the legacy of Alexander the Great of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. There is mention of a man named Rufus in Romans 16:13, who was at Rome with his mother. This may have been the son of this Simon which Mark mentioned in his Gospel.

Luke records that this Simon was pressed into service to bear the cross of Jesus. This suggests to us the very weakened condition of our Lord. Condemned persons were forced to carry their own crosses to the place of execution. “It must therefore be assumed that Jesus was breaking down under the weight, so that the soldiers found it necessary to force Simon to aid Him.”<sup>6</sup> That Jesus had to have help, signifies that He must have been unable to proceed. His sleepless night and relentless beatings had left Him without strength. This should not be seen as an act of mercy or compassion on the part of His Roman escorts. They were probably

---

<sup>5</sup> William Hendriksen, **New Testament Commentary, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke** (Baker Academic, 1978), 975.

<sup>6</sup> I. Howard Marshall, **The Gospel of Luke**, New International Greek Commentary (Eerdmans, 1978), 863.

concerned that Jesus would die before they could get Him lifted Him upon His cross, upon which He would suffer greatly.

Christian, our Lord knows what it is for you to be so wearied by the abuse of others that you feel you cannot take another step under your load. Simon was forced to help Him, but He will volunteer to step forward and bear your cross, making it lighter and enabling you to stand, and even proceed under its load.

### **B. The crowd including the mourning women (23:27)**

Verse 27 reads, “*And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.*” These women were not among His disciples, for they were women of Jerusalem, in which Jesus had rarely ministered. The faithful women disciples were largely from Galilee, although Martha and Mary were in nearby Bethany. This great multitude of people would have included those who followed Him out of curiosity or perhaps with thoughts of witnessing justice executed, but many may have followed with a measure of pity or sympathy for Jesus and what He was about to suffer. We may assume that the wailing women were sincere in their concern and lamentation. They were genuinely moved with pity and distress for this one being led to His crucifixion. It was customary in that day to mourn openly and loudly at funerals and executions. It was regarded as an act of piety to do so.

The presence of crowds at an execution out of curiosity was natural, and the presence of mourning women was likewise commonplace. The latter action was one of religious merit, and is inherently probable historically.<sup>7</sup>

There were often hired mourners for such occasions. Public mourning was also seen as an act of kindness, even a meritorious thing, in a religious sense. It could and would be done perhaps without genuine sincerity on the part of the mourners. But with others it may have been simply a common, but formal activity, without great devotion or sincerity. There is evidence of this at the house of Jairus after his daughter had died (cf. Luke 8:52f). One moment there was wailing and the next they were laughing at Jesus in scorn when He said that the little girl was not dead, but sleeping.

### **C. Jesus warns Jerusalem (23:28-31)**

We read that Jesus turned to address these mourning and wailing women. **Verses 28 through 31** record,

*But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’” <sup>31</sup>For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”*

Jesus tells these women that their mourning was misplaced, for as difficult His way was to His death upon His cross, in some ways their condition was far more serious. The women were to weep for themselves and their children. Essentially Jesus tells them, “save your tears for yourselves.” Because of what was occurring to Him, they, too, will face terrible calamity. The reason for their weeping was due to the disaster that would come upon their city for the terrible injustice which had been rendered Him. And so, here is but another reference or prophecy of the impending judgment of God upon Jerusalem and the Jewish people, which was realized within a generation. In AD 70 the Romans breached the city after a terrible siege. The people had been starved and then suffered the common experiences of a blockaded city. The reason for the impending judgment of God upon them was due to their rejection of Jesus their Messiah, their promised king. They had refused to respond to His person and message. They had not recognized and taken action in

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 864.

the day of God's visitation to them, in which He brought them opportunity for salvation. They could now only expect the "certain fearful looking for, of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the (God's) adversaries" (Heb. 10:27). They had resisted God's gracious overtures and now they would suffer the consequences for their obstinacy.

Verse 29 reads, "***For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'***" This contains a rhetorical device, which contains an element of sarcasm as well as irony. One would expect to hear the direct pronouncement of a *woe* against the women. But here, the coming judgment is conveyed in the form of a "***blessing***." The irony is this, in the Old Testament children are set forth as an indication of the blessing of God. God gave children not only to enjoy, but also that they, the children, might enjoy His blessing on the parents. The blessing of the parents came upon their children. Bareness in times of blessing was regarded as a curse. But when under God's curse, bareness becomes a blessing. For when God's wrath was upon a people, this wrath would also come upon their children. Therefore, in times like these, it would actually be a "blessing" not to have children, else the parents would have the added torture of watching their little loved ones suffer terribly under the wrath of God.

This occasion in which Jesus announced was what has been commonly asserted through Luke's pen, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple by the Roman armies in AD 70. Here are the other references in Luke's Gospel that we have addressed in the past. Luke 11:49 through 51 record these words of Jesus:

Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' <sup>50</sup>that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, <sup>51</sup>from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

In Luke 13:1 through 9 Jesus spoke of a period of trial of three years, which was the length of Jesus' public ministry, in which God was assessing the nation of Israel and its response to Jesus.

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? <sup>3</sup>I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

<sup>6</sup>He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup>But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup>And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"

And then in Luke 11:34 and 35 Jesus spoke directly to Jerusalem, announcing its impending destruction.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup>See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

And when Jesus approached Jerusalem after traveling there from Galilee, He made this pronouncement of judgment upon the city:

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>44</sup>and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Lastly, we may cite Luke’s Olivet Discourse of Jesus in which He forewarned His disciples of the event of Jerusalem’s destruction.

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. <sup>21</sup>Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. <sup>22</sup>For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. <sup>23</sup>But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. <sup>24</sup>And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:20-24)

Returning to our passage in chapter 23, we read in **verse 30** that Jesus declared that these women would desire death for themselves rather than to endure the suffering which would come upon them. “***Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’***” These words of Jesus are very similar to the words of God through the prophet Hosea. Hosea proclaimed God’s word in the days of God’s judgment of Israel by the Assyrians. Hosea 10:7 and 8 these words,

As for Samaria, her king is cut off  
Like a twig on the water.  
Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel,  
Shall be destroyed.  
The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars;  
They shall say to the mountains, “Cover us!”  
And to the hills, “Fall on us!”

This section of Luke’s Gospel concludes with our Lord’s words in **verse 31**, in which Jesus said, “***For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?***” This is a parabolic saying that was common among the Jews. “If this is how the innocent suffer, what will be the fate of guilty Jerusalem?”<sup>8</sup> “If God has not spared the innocent Jesus, how much more severe will be the fate of guilty Jerusalem.”<sup>9</sup> The metaphor of a green wood speaks of wood that is not easily burned because of the sap which is in it. The dry tree is that which burns easily when set afire. When their destruction comes, it will be a fire of intense heat.

### **Some implications and applications for us from this passage**

#### **1. The counsel of Jesus to the women not to weep for Him.**

We read of Jesus instructing the daughters of Jerusalem, “do not weep for Me” (23:28). Now we understand that our Lord was not directly forbidding the expression of pity and compassion for Him in His misery. It is a good and fitting quality to have concern and compassion for those who are suffering and in some ways these women could be commended for their expressions of grief as they witnessed the treatment of Jesus. The Scriptures command us to have sympathy and concern for those who suffer. We are to bear one another’s burdens (cf. Gal. 6:2). But our Lord’s prohibition, “do not weep for Me”, was intended to

---

<sup>8</sup> I. Howard Marshall, **The Gospel of Luke**, New International Greek Commentary (Eerdmans, 1978), 862.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 865.

draw their attention and concern of matters that impinge on them and their children, rather than upon Him in His plight. And so,

The prohibition was rather of a comparative kind; similar to that expression of the Prophet, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;” where sacrifice is not intended to be prohibited, but only to give way, when it should stand in competition with the exercise of mercy.

Now it is certainly the case that both the Jewish and Roman leaders committed a great travesty of justice in trying and condemning Jesus. But it is clear from the Scriptures that this was in the grand purpose and decree of God in bringing salvation to His people. Events were unfolding according to God’s eternal decree, in that He was using the wickedness of men to accomplish His redemptive purposes in history. Later the apostles will declare in their prayer unto God their awareness of His sovereignty over their wicked actions in trying and condemning Jesus.

“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.” (Acts 4:27f)

And Jesus, although suffering terribly through all the abuse and shame they heaped upon Him, He had willingly submitted to their maltreatment for the achievement of His greatest desire and delight, that is, the salvation of His people from God’s condemnation of them for their sin. And so,

In this view there was abundant reason for the counsel which Christ now gave them. With respect to Himself, they had no such occasion to weep, because His sufferings were altogether voluntary: they were also now very near their termination; and they would issue both in His exaltation to the right hand of God, and in the salvation of a ruined world. Hence, if rightly considered, His afflictions, though so exceedingly grievous, were grounds of gratitude and joy than of regret and sorrow.<sup>10</sup>

## **2. The counsel of Jesus to the women to weep for themselves and their children.**

Our Lord rebuked and corrected these women. Again, Jesus had turned and said to these women, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but *weep for yourselves and for your children.*” As one wrote,

He turns to them. For what purpose? To praise and console them, and to cheer and strengthen Himself at the sight of them? By no means. The Lord Jesus rejects the grief of the mourners as mistaken, and judges their tears to be useless and profitable. He who, every where, and even in the deepest sufferings, was able to preserve the most perfect serenity and presence of mind, and never for a moment lost sight of pastoral solicitude for the lost sheep of the house of Israel with which He was entrusted, says to the weeping women who followed Him, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and your children.

The concern of the women was for Jesus and the sufferings that were inflicted upon Him, but they were unaware of the certain, great calamity, which they would experience when God’s wrath would come upon them. Whereas our Lord’s sufferings would come to an end in a matter of hours, theirs will be severe and protracted. Many of these “daughters of Jerusalem” would be alive with their children within a generation, when the Roman armies would surround Jerusalem, lay siege to its inhabitants, starve and then slaughter the Jewish people—man, woman and child. If they understood and knew what was most certainly coming upon them, they would have wept for themselves and their own children for what they would suffer.

---

<sup>10</sup> Charles Simeon, **Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible**, vol. 13 (Zondervan Publishing House, 1955), 138.

### **3. The counsel of Jesus to the women negates natural and mere emotional reaction to Jesus' sufferings.**

We might suspect that there were some among these women who were just going through the formal motions of mourning with little heart-felt pity and compassion. But most of the women were probably genuinely moved and broken-hearted for what was unfolding before them. They were sincere and truly grieving due to what they were witnessing--the abuse and travesty of justice that was heaped upon Jesus. But our Lord rejected and rebuked their expressions of sentimentality.

If we were to stand back and assess spiritually and biblically much present-day expression of emotion regarding the suffering of Jesus in His death on the cross, we might discover much to be mere sentimentality. It commonly occurs that human emotion is drawn forth by visual or perhaps musical presentations of the suffering of Jesus on His cross that is void of true, informed faith. Emotions are affected, but without the necessary presence of repentance of sin and faith in what God has accomplished through the death of His Son on the cross. Of Jesus' words it was written,

These serious words deserve to be taken to heart also by many among us. They reprove all those whose devotion for the cross consists in a mere natural emotion, excited by the tragical end of the righteous Jesus, and who have nothing else but tears of pity and sentimentality for the Savior. How much pleasing emotion, occasioned by a lively representation of the Redeemer's passion in musical oratorios, ecclesiastical solemnities, or liturgical devotions is here rejected! It is scarcely to be conceived what a fulness of impenitence and self-righteousness may be concealed beneath outburst of feeling.

There are some who ascribe the tears of sympathy, which the sufferings of Christ draw forth, as a species of righteousness, and exalt them as testimonials of goodness of heart, thus making them a ground of consolation and hope. O lamentable mistake! "weep not for Me," says our Lord. Do you hear it? He forbids the lamenting and condoling with Him...

He freely gave Himself up to His sufferings, in order to accomplish that which His Father had given Him to do; and the idea of a "a tragic end," in its usual acceptation, is by no means applicable to the passion of our Lord. Tears of sentimentality and pity are nowhere so much out of place as on Calvary.<sup>11</sup>

There is much in today's world of churches that is designed to produce in people what our Lord here rebukes that characterized these women. Displays or presentations that are designed to excite or elicit the human emotions of people toward Jesus or the things of God may produce a false hope and a false assurance on the part of people who are stirred and "moved." But they remain in reality clueless regarding the basic and essential truths of the gospel. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). True faith, saving faith, is grounded and built upon what God actually did through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son in atoning for the sin of His people. Faith must be grounded in the objective truth of the Word of God respecting Jesus Christ's atonement for sinners, when He suffered and died on His cross to satisfy the justice of God for guilty sinners. Do not mistake the experience of emotion for the true embracing of the truth of the gospel in Jesus Christ.

### **4. The counsel of Jesus to the women reveals to us that the sufferings of Christ should lead us to consider and contemplate our sin that necessitated the death of Jesus Christ to save us from the wrath of God.**

Again, our Lord Jesus turned to these weeping and wiling women, saying to them, "

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and

---

<sup>11</sup> F. W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior; Meditations of the Last Days of Christ* (Moody Press, 1947), 315f.



breasts which never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ <sup>31</sup>For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”

When we ponder our Savior, the Lord Jesus upon His cross, it should press upon us our own sinfulness and the wrath of God upon us for our sin, apart from Jesus Christ being crucified to atone for our sin. **Matthew Henry** (1662-1714) said it well:

Note, when with an eye of faith we behold Christ crucified we ought to weep, not for Him, but for ourselves. We must not be affected with the death of Christ as with the death of a common person whose calamity we pity, or of a common friend whom we are likely to part with. The death of Christ was a thing peculiar; it was His victory and triumph over His enemies; it was our deliverance, and the purchase of eternal life for us. And therefore let us weep, not for Him, but for our own sins, and the sins of our children, that were the cause of His death.

The cross of Christ should reveal to us the true grievous wickedness of our sin and the great cost to which our Savior gave Himself to save us from our sin.

##### **5. The counsel of Jesus to the women reveals to us what awaits us if we fail or refuse to close with Christ in repentance from sin and faith in Him alone for our salvation.**

Again, Jesus warned these women of what they would encounter if they refused to believe on Him as their Lord and Savior. When the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against any and all outside of Christ, they will desire to die rather than to stand and face God in judgment. Verse 30 reads, “Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’” Jesus Christ has accomplished all that was necessary to save the greatest sinner from his just condemnation and the sentence of eternal damnation on the Day of Judgment. But to refuse or fail to embrace what He did and rely upon Him alone for salvation, will result in encountering the wrath of God upon sin on the final day of judgment.

As we look to the cross, we may see our sin in its ugly and hideous nature. We sing a hymn that speaks of this look of faith upon Christ on His cross.

Ye who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great  
here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the awful load;  
‘tis the Word, the Lord’s Anointed, Son of Man, Son of God.<sup>12</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>12</sup> Hymn: “Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted”, by Thomas Keppy, 1804.