

THE CORRUPTION OF THE SOUL

Matthew 27:11-23

If you try to imagine yourself as being among the multitude at this Passover time it would almost certainly be so easy to be carried along with the crowd. There is no doubt at all, - in the mind of the Gospel writer Luke, - that the proceedings had been carefully orchestrated and stage-managed so as to bring to a conclusion the voice and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last Sunday evening we looked at the very simple, yet so profound, message that *Jesus saves!* Regardless of the circumstances *Jesus saves*. Nothing holds the Shepherd back from going out onto the hills and finding His own lost sheep, [Lk. 15:5 when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.](#) (Remember what Jesus said on another occasion, [Jn. 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.](#)) [7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.](#)

We shall stay on the same theme because I believe the hymn writer got it right, 'Tis the grandest theme, let the tidings roll, To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul; Look to God in faith, He will make thee whole, "Our God is able to deliver thee."

And the Old Testament hymn writer saw it too, [Psalm 107:1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.](#)

What like was the grip of the hand of the enemy? What was it like to be held tightly in the clutches of the adversary? Remember, when the Philistines came and cut the hair of the mighty Samson and he awoke and the heard the call, [The Philistines be upon thee](#), he didn't know that the Lord was departed from him ([Jdgs.16:20](#)), ... and [v. 21 the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.](#) Samson was in the grip of the enemy, he was in the prison house, - powerless, helpless, totally incapable. You see, that is the true state of the soul under sin.

Let's look at this crowd that faced the Lord Jesus ... just to see the total corruption of the human soul, and we shall consider it from very simple perspectives.

THE COURT

- * This was the fourth and final court the Lord Jesus had to appear before:
 - * He had first been presented to the Jewish court of the Sanhedrin, over which Caiaphas had presided.
 - * Then He was taken to the court of Pilate who couldn't find anything wrong with Him that would be an offence to Roman law and he jumped at the opportunity when he heard Jesus came from Galilee, for Pilate then sent Jesus all the way up north to the third court ...
 - * The court of Herod, - Jesus wouldn't speak to him so Jesus was sent back down to Jerusalem ...
 - * To the final court ... over which Pilate presided and the Jewish leaders were present.
- * Once again Pilate could find nothing against Jesus that a good flogging wouldn't sort out, - definitely, it was his considered opinion that there was no justifiable reason that would call for the death penalty against Jesus ... absolutely no reason at all!
- * But the Jewish leaders manipulated him, "Do you want Caesar to hear about this man Jesus who claims to be king, and do you want Caesar to hear that you, Pilate, did nothing about Him?!"
- * You see, Jesus stood and was judged in man's court, and false accusations were thrown up at Him, and on the basis of those false allegations the Son of God was condemned to die by crucifixion at Calvary.
- * Those Jews in that court had heard Jesus speak to the crowds; they had seen the genuine and authentic evidence of the miracles He performed.
- * Surely, there had been other men who had set themselves up as prophets and messiahs, but Jesus was so different.
- * And these Jewish leaders hated Him and hated His very Name.
- * You know, there is absolutely nothing about that with which we should be surprised.
- * The Bible tells us that we are born at enmity with God; what does that mean?

- * It means that you don't have to tell a Primary One child to switch off when the School chaplain starts to talk about God.
- * It means you don't have to learn how to say "No!" to God ... simply due to the terrifying fact that the soul is so corrupt because of Adam's sin that it naturally inherited and it naturally rejects God and anything to with Him.
- * Earlier Jesus had told these same Jewish leaders, [Jn. 8: 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.](#)
- * He cried over Jerusalem, [Mt. 23: 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!](#)
- * The consequence of **the corruption of the soul** is this: that it is at enmity with God ... and to put to death the Son of God is the most natural thing in the world.
- * It is the most natural thing not to want to have anything to do with Him Who sent His Son to the Cross of Calvary.
- * That's the Jewish leaders; now what about the ordinary people?

THE CROWD

- * It was all concocted. Pilate didn't stand a chance! He had to do what he was being manoeuvred into doing. Ancient history tells us he was no wimp, but the Jews had him 'over a barrel'!
- * First of all he washed his hands and declared he was innocent of any guilt; then he stated clearly that Jesus was not deserving of death and ought not to die; and thirdly, he offered to reprimand Jesus by flailing Him.
- * But no, the leaders had whipped up the crowd to call for the death of Jesus.
- * "Here," said Pilate and he saw a possible way out, "I'll give you a choice. Who will I let go ... the murdering, thieving bandit, - of whom so many of you have been afraid to travel the roads around Jerusalem, - or Jesus, this apparently self-deceived Man of Galilee that healed the multitudes? Who will I let go ...?"

- * He thought he knew the answer they would give! Surely for everything else Jesus was, surely **the crowd** will let Him go!
- * ... But he got it wrong; they chose to release Barabbas.
- * Pilate knew there was a riot in the making and he couldn't afford bad news to get back to Rome ... so he gave in to their demands and Barabbas was released.
- * And then Pilate asked the most important question that perhaps can ever be asked, [v.22 What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?](#) What a question!
- * Eternity *hinges* upon the answer to that question! Eternity depends on your response to that one, single question.
- * The question is not, "Are you a church member?" or "Do you give in a good collection?" or "Are you a good person?" No, the question is simple and direct and so personal, [What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?](#)
- * But, you see, when you are standing there with the crowd and you are calling out for Jesus to be crucified, [Lk. 23:21 Crucify Him, crucify Him](#) you are demonstrating what comes naturally because of the total corruption of the soul.
- * I was speaking with a neighbour on Thursday, - a lady of almost ninety, - and she was asking me what I would be preaching about on Sunday evening so I told her we would be looking at the Gospel and our relationship with God and how we must believe on Him to be saved; to be saved from what, she asked? Hell, I replied.
- * She looked at me and I felt a little frostiness coming into the air, - but she had brought up the subject, not me, - I was only using the opportunity. ... I wondered what she was going to say as she looked me honestly straight in the eye.
- * "But I can't!" she says, "I've tried to believe, but I can't! I can't believe there's a God, I can't believe that what the Bible says about it all is true! I have tried ... but I can't believe it!"
- * My uncle was buried yesterday, - he died on Thursday afternoon at the age of 57. It would be like me going in to see him in the coffin and *pleading* as earnestly as I possibly could with him to be saved. There is no way he could hear me! There's no way he could respond *because he's dead!* And there are no degrees of deadness, - once you are dead you are dead!
- * The Bible puts it like this, [Eph. 2:1 ... dead in trespasses and sins.](#)
- * That is how the Bible describes the sinner, - **dead** and **corrupt!**

- * That's why these Pharisees and the crowd called out so readily and so eagerly for Jesus to be put to death, - because it shows the total **corruption of the soul**. It shows the complete enmity and hatred and opposition that is in the soul of every man, woman, boy and girl from birth. ... The **corruption of the soul**.
- * But not only had the Jewish leaders their plans, someOne much higher and greater had His plans also ... There was **the court, the crowd** ...

THE CROSS

- * At the cross of Calvary, as they saw the Man dying on the middle tree there was no repentance; there was no sorrow or shame for what they were doing.
- * They had no thought or sympathy for His mother as her heart was breaking at the foot of the cross.
- * On the tree ...
 - * They *denied* the Saviour.
 - * They *defied* His Kingshipness.
 - * They *declared* their open opposition and hostility.
 - * They *demande*d His death on the cross.
 - * They *delivered* Him into the pains of crucifixion.
 - * They *deprived* Him of any solace.
 - * They *despised* Him and everything about Him.
 - * And the disciples, - who ought to have known better, - they *deserted* Him.
- * Yes, He **endured the cross, despising the shame** (Heb. 12:2).
- * I remember one Easter hearing a Church of Scotland Deaconess 'preaching' and she was saying that Jesus took an awful chance dying on the cross ... because it could have worked out that nobody would have believed on Him. The term she actually used was that Jesus took an awful 'gamble'.
- * But such is the weakness of the falsehood of Arminianism that, - like those crowds at Calvary, - it sets out to undermine and to weaken the substitutionary and vicarious death of the Son of God at Calvary.
- * Jesus took absolutely no gamble! There was absolutely no doubt that His death on Calvary would make effective the salvation for the people of God that had been planned, - as the Bible says, - from even before the foundation of the world.
- * I'll prove that to you. Turn please to Acts 2.

- * It was another great Feast day, - just fifty days after Jesus had been crucified so the event would still have been fresh in the minds of the people in Jerusalem.
- * Peter stood up in front of them all and the Holy Spirit enabled him to speak in a manner that they would all understand.
- * He didn't mince his words, v. 22 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*
- * Just as he began to speak to them in v.13 (*Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine*), they weren't taking him seriously ... but they are listening now.
- * He preached to them a sermon and concluded, v.36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*
- * Then what did that great crowd do? They came under such a deep conviction of sin and they cried out to be saved and God saved them, v. 47 *the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* Three thousand one day (2:41) and five thousand another day (4:4).
- * What happened? Those people who had been gathered in the court of Pilate shouting *Crucify Him, Crucify Him* and who mocked Him as they stood round the cross ... Jesus had prayed for them, *Father, forgive them*, - that prayer of Jesus, having been brought before the Throne of God, was now being answered in the salvation of those precious souls.
- * And you see, Jesus saves despite the corruption of the soul.
- * Jesus saves despite the hardness of the heart.
- * Jesus saves despite all the enmity and all the hatred of His Name.

CONCLUSION.

- * The preaching of the cross calls upon the sinner to repent and to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away their sin, to remove the corruption of the soul and to set them free from the bondage of Satan.
- * My neighbour said, "I can't believe, I can't believe". No, neither you can, but that is where the beautiful mercy and grace and love of God works a miracle in your heart.
- * **Salvation is of the Lord**, the Bible says. If the Holy Spirit is working in your heart I promise you when you call out to Christ to be saved He will save you.
- * I promise you He will ... because that was why the Bible says Jesus died on the cross.
- * Believer, this is our salvation. Paul wrote, **Rom. 5:10 when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**
- * Are you proud of what Jesus did for you? Again the Bible says, **Ps. 34:2 My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.**
- * Yes, I am boasting to you this evening in the Lord, and Paul wrote it twice to the Corinthians, **I Cor. 1:31, II Cor. 10:17 He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.**
- * Yes, it is my privilege to boast and to glory in the Lord for what He has done for me through grace because I praise Him and thank Him, - and I will be doing it all throughout eternity ... that *Jesus saves!*