

**Prayer Meeting Address**  
**given at**  
**Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham**  
**by Mr. G. D. Buss**  
**on Wednesday evening, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2012**

**Text:** “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.” *John 19, verse 30.*

We have four things in our text this evening which our Lord did. One, the receiving of the vinegar, the second, that triumphant cry: “It is finished”, third, the bowing of His lovely head and fourthly, the giving up of the ghost: His holy, human soul. Four things in one short verse, each of which, if God gave us the grace and the ability to unfold, would be a sermon in themselves. But, just a few hints for your meditation this evening. The first thing is the way in which Scripture must be fulfilled. This is something which you and I should give much more attention to. God, being who He is, every word that He speaks never falls to the ground. It must be fulfilled. You sometimes sing:

“What Christ has said must be fulfilled;  
On this firm rock, believers build;  
His word shall stand, His truth prevail,  
And not one jot or tittle fail.”

*J. Hart*

We have it in this chapter again and again. In this verse we especially have the fulfilment of His word, because in Psalm 69 we are told expressly that our Lord would, in His sufferings, be given vinegar to drink by His enemies. So the first thing is: Scripture *must* be fulfilled. Its promises, its threatenings, its encouragements, its directions, its consolation; its precious “sovereign grace o’er sin abounding” proclaimed in the gospel must be fulfilled.

The second thing we notice is: the God of providence. It might have seemed, even to the disciples who were watching afar off (even to godly John), that things were completely out of control. There was their loving Lord and Master hanging in humiliation between two thieves; there were those railing at Him. At one time *both* thieves railed on Him. We know one of them was called by grace – amazing truth! Yet, wonder of wonders; the

providential hand of God was over it all. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

Friends, sometimes our lives seem completely upside down, inside out and out of order. We are apt to come to that conclusion: that there is no hand guiding the ship, there is no one on the throne, that we are left to the mercy of what the world would call fortune or luck, or, even worse, to the rule and reign of the evil one himself. But, friends, even in Job’s worst moments, there *was* One on the throne. And, at the cross, not a single shaft did hit, till the God of love saw fit.

As we look back upon this solemn scene, we see a God of providence overruling, undertaking and mysteriously performing His work and His Word, even though it seemed to the human understanding, chaos and confusion. May that be a word for one of you tonight who may feel to be in chaos and confusion. Your God is *not* in confusion. And the dear Saviour, in all His unspeakable sorrows, was never in confusion. He knew whose will He was doing; He knew the work He was doing; He knew the cup He was drinking. He knew why it was being drunk and what the outcome would be. “He Himself knew what He would do.”

The third thing we notice is this: that which the world gives to Christ, they will give to the Church as well. They gave Christ bitterness: vinegar. “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.” “The servant is not greater than his Lord.” Sometimes it is the Lord’s will that we should receive just a drop of ‘vinegar’ in our path; a little bitterness, a cup, rather like Marah; that we cannot drink until the Lord sanctifies it. But, oh! If you get a glimpse of the vessel full of vinegar that was put to the lips of the dear Saviour, then, dear friends, you will do what Paul bids you to do: “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” It was this that sustained Moses at the rock. You will remember that when the children of Israel wanted water, they were so angry with Moses because there was none. They were ready to stone him. But the Lord led him to the rock with that rod of God. And what Moses saw there, by faith, is what we have here; the Rock smitten. And Moses’ view of what happened to the rock that he smote was a wonderful type of what took place at Calvary. I

believe it sweetened Moses' cup. Though it was a bitter cup, he would have sung with one of our hymnwriters:

“For though our cup seems filled with gall,  
There's something secret sweetens all.”

*J. Hart*

Now, do remember also that Boaz dipped Ruth's morsel in the vinegar. Why did he do that? Spiritually speaking, dear friends, when the Lord does that in the path He has called us to; He is sanctifying it. He is bringing good to us out of it. Especially causing us to experience just a little, just a hint, of the fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.

Next we notice the glorious words of the Saviour: “It is finished.” They are such beautiful words of the hymnwriter, commenting on this, aren't they?

“Hark! the voice of love and mercy  
Sounds aloud from Calvary!”

*J. Evans*

Here was a voice of love and mercy, because, first of all, the bitter cup put into His hand on behalf of His dear people (I am not speaking now of the vinegar that was literally put to His mouth; I am speaking of the cup that was put into His hand by His dear Father) was drained of every drop of bitterness, wrath and condemnation. He emptied it of all curse, and then filled it with blessing. These words “It is finished” are words of blessing to God's people: the obedience of the law wrought out, the garment of righteousness finished. He was just about to lay down His lovely head (as we will notice in a moment) and shed His precious blood; the payment made, the debt cleared and the covenant sealed. “It is finished.” It meant the old dispensation had passed away. It also meant, dear friends, the covenant of grace was revealed as a finished, blessed work upon which a child of God may rest with all his sins, with all his sorrows, with all his guilt, with all his temptations and with all that oppresses his poor, weary heart. Here is a blessed pillow to lie down upon.

“All is settled,  
And my soul approves it well.”

*W. Gadsby*

We are told that the power of the Saviour's voice literally rent the rocks asunder. It rent the veil of the temple in twain from top to bottom. It was not a thin veil; it was a very thick curtain. No human hand could have done that. It was a voice which shook hell to its very foundations. It was a voice that made heaven rejoice with anthems unspeakably glorious, and it filled the loving heart of the loving Father with such joy. His dear Son had done what He had been commissioned to do. We can almost hear the dear Father saying to that assembled throng in glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "It is finished."

The third thing we read is: "He bowed His head." It is so important you notice the order. He did not yield up His holy soul and His head then fall upon His chest – I say that most reverently. No. He bowed His head *first*, and then yielded up His holy soul, telling us:

"The life they could not take away,  
How ready was Jesus to give!"

*J. Swain*

"He bowed His head" in submission. I was going to say, it was the final act of submission to His dear Father's will that He should die. He was born to die. Here the Saviour submits to the claim of God's holy law as the Surety; the Father demanded His death, and He lovingly, willingly bowed His head. His agonies were behind Him and His sorrows had ended. Peace filled His lovely, loving heart because the work was done, and He knew the sweet satisfaction of His heavenly Father. This was the final working out of that word: "Not My will, but Thine, be done." "He bowed His head." And, dear friends, so should we, in submission to our Father's will.

"My Father's hand prepares the cup,  
And what He wills is best."

*C. Wesley*

"He bowed His head."

Also, it was as "the Man Christ Jesus" showing us the solemn, holy place He was in. Friends, in a sense, He was standing before the judgment seat as the Surety for His dear people. Here we see Him bow His head on their behalf

in humility; in recognition of the justice of that sentence: “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” It was as if the dear Saviour said, (as the hymnwriter said):

“In guilt’s dark dungeon when we lay,  
Mercy cried, “Spare;” and Justice, “Slay.”  
But Jesus answered, “Set them free,  
And pardon them and punish Me.”

*J. Hart*

“He bowed His head”: a head crowned with thorns, a head, bleeding. “He bowed His head.”

Finally we read; He “gave up the ghost.” Taking words from the Psalm we are told He said: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.” That Spirit that He commended into His Father’s hands was His holy soul, the One that was given to Him by His Father on the day of His incarnation. He assumed a perfect, holy body and He assumed a perfect, holy soul in union with His divine nature. And, because His dear people have to pass through that “valley of the shadow of death”, He passed through it. It was not a shadow to Him; it was more than that. To Him it was a reality: a most solemn reality. Yet, He gained the victory over it, and left only a shadow for you and I who are raised up, by grace, to believe in Him. “He gave up the ghost.” He yielded His holy soul into the hands of His heavenly Father to await His resurrection morn. His soul was safe in the hands of His Father; His body was safe too, though it lay in the tomb. Yes, it was unwittingly guarded by His enemies as the watch was set. But it was safe, dear friends, because:

“The holy, harmless Child of God  
Could no corruption see.”

*J. Hart*

“He gave up the ghost.” His body and soul were separated. His Godhead (which He could never yield up) held in one hand His holy body to preserve it, and in the other hand His holy soul. This is a deep, deep mystery. But there was no separation of His Person; He was still, blessed be God; this precious Jesus, One glorious “Emmanuel,...God with us.” The same God who was born in Bethlehem’s manger as a Man is the same One who yields up His holy soul in the hour of His death, here. “He gave up”, yielded up, “the ghost.” He

passed through death to conquer it and to sanctify it for his dear people, so it no longer need be a deadly foe to us. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.” He felt that sting on behalf of His people. He matched the strength of the law with all that was needed. “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“One in the tomb; one when He rose;  
One when He triumphed o’er His foes;  
One when in heaven He took His seat,  
While seraphs sang all hell’s defeat.”

*J. Kent*

This glorious Person with a divine nature and a human nature, in one complex yet blessed Person; “Emmanuel,...God with us.” This is the Man beheld now at the right hand of His Father: of whom we sometimes sing: “With wounds still gaping wide,” around which the assembled congregation of glorified spirits, even this very evening hour, bow in loving adoration and admiration. This is that One to whom we would look and to whom we would bring our desires. We would plead His name, plead His love, plead His blood and plead His righteousness; that we ourselves may be able to say with Paul: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, “It is finished” and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.” May God add His blessing.

*Amen*