

Front Page - July 2017

The Lord's Pathos and Prayers

The Pathos of Gethsemane

With deep solemnity the Lord told the disciples, "Now is my soul troubled" (Jn. 12:27). This was the beginning of the Lord's darkest hours, soon to know what it is to be hated (Jn. 15:25), utterly rejected (Matt. 20:19; Mk. 15:14) and mocked, even as He hung on the cross (Matt. 27:40).

Our Lord was a perfect human being having a perfect body and mind, and because of that, He would be more tender hearted and therefore, physically, mentally, and emotionally feel the anguish of rejection much deeper than we would.

- a) He had known emotional grief when looking over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41), at the grave of Lazarus (Jn. 11:35), but never like that which lay ahead of Him.
- b) He had known mental anguish when He was entering into, and when in the garden (Lk. 22:44), but never like that which lay ahead of Him.
- c) He had known soul distress when He was sorrowful, "even unto death" (Matt. 26:38), but never like that which lay ahead of Him.
 - i) As He came into the Garden, He knew He was facing experiences He had never known before. True, He had known rejection before, but never like that which was going to befall Him. He had known humiliation before, but never to that which lay ahead of Him. He had known what it was to pray before but never like this, He had never known physical pain like that which lay ahead of Him, He had never known being forsaken by God before, but that soon would happen. Those experiences so obnoxious to Him, His holy soul recoiled from.

The Holy Spirit's Comments

The word used:

- a) "He began to be sorrowful (lupeo), a word that is the opposite to "rejoice" and indicates an inward sorrow, not outward as in bewailing etc., and very heavy (ademoneo). This word comes from the word "ademon" which means uncomfortable, one not at home, in a situation that causes distress, to be in a state of restless distraction that causes one to shrink from trouble that cannot be escaped from, to be pressed down or overwhelmed with great anguish (Matt. 26:37).
- b) "He began to be sore amazed" (ekthambeo), which indicates to cause great alarm, to terrify, to be struck with terror, to be in the grip of a shuddering horror, in the face of a dreadful prospect, and very heavy (ademoneo)" (Mk. 14:33).
- c) "And being in an agony" (agonia), which indicates the pain and labor in the conflict. With that there is the thought of that trembling that comes when faced with a foreboding situation which there is no escape from (Lk. 22:42).
- d) "He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Lk. 22:44).
- e) "In the days of His flesh, when he had offered up prayers, and supplications with strong (ischuros), strong crying", which means to be mighty, indicating every emotion in lamentation, which can only be expressed by loud wailing. Rabbinic teaching indicated three types of tears related to prayers:
 - i) "entreaty" which was offered in a quiet voice
 - ii) "crying" which indicated a louder voice
 - iii) "tears" which was the highest of all. Crying (krauge) and tears,¹ (dakru)" (Heb. 5:7).
- f) "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (pascho, W.E. Vine has this under the heading, "to endure suffering") (Heb. 5:8)

The statements by the Lord

- a) "My soul is exceeding sorrowful" (perilupos). This word is made from the words "peri", which means around, and "lupos", which means grief. Thus, the word indicated being surrounded by grief, "even unto death" (Matt. 26:38; Mk. 14:34).

Front Page - July 2017

The Lord's Pathos and Prayers

The Wording of His Prayers

The scriptures record that the Lord prayed three times in Gethsemane, yet the word “prayed” indicates the singularity of His prayer (Matt. 26:42, 44; Mk. 14:35). However, in the following three references the tense indicates continuous praying (Matt. 26:39, Mk. 14:35, Lk. 22:41, 44). Thus it was a singular prayer, but with agonized repetition.

The wording of the Lord changes along several avenues:

2) Relative to God:

- a) “My Father”. Two truths are indicated here, the fact (Father) and the uniqueness (My) of relationship (Matt 26:39).
- b) “Abba, Father”. The word “Abba”, contrary to modern day thinking does not mean “daddy”. It is a term that is used three times in the scriptures (Mk. 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). It does indicate a term of closeness and endearment. Interestingly, the only time I am aware of when the Lord calls God, “God”, is in the context of His passion in the cry of His anguish (Mk. 15:34), but “Father” (Matt.26:39) and “Abba Father” (Mk. 14:36). When the Lord calls God, “Father,” the concept is relationship and mature appreciation. When Christ calls God, “God,” it is in official positioning. When the Lord calls God, “Abba”, it is in all the trust of a child.

3) Relative to the intensity of the prayer:

- a) Two clauses are recorded to assist us to appreciate the intensity of the prayers of the Lord. Twice over it is recorded that He says, “O my Father” (Matt. 26:39). To this Luke writes, “Being in an agony He prayed the more earnestly” (Lk. 22:44). One can sense the heart rendering pleadings as He cried with strong crying and tears, “Oh my Father”. There was nothing casual here thus we read, “He prayed the more earnestly”. Never did the Lord pray casually, nor did He ever approach God in a casual way, every prayer was genuine and sincere. Now He is praying a prayer that could only be balanced by the intensity of that which He was going through. As the time grew nearer, the prayer became deeper, and the indescribable anguish of His innermost being resulted in sweat, clotted like blood.
- b) It is in Luke that we learn about His sweat. Sweat was one of the results of sin, and now for the last time, we read of sweat in the Scriptures. It is mentioned three times in the scriptures:
 - i) “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19).
 - ii) “They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird [themselves] with any thing that causeth sweat” (Ezek. 44:18).
 - iii) “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Lk. 22:44).

3) Relative to the prayer:

- a) The prayer of the Lord is in three parts, first, a plea, then the crisis point, and finally a confirming, His confirming to fulfill the will of God. In the gospels, the wording is slightly different:
 - i) In Matthew the Lord is recorded as saying, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26:39). The Lord appeals on the grounds of God’s ability to find another way.
 - ii) Again in Matthew He prays, “If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it” (Matt. 26:42). It is the acceptance that there is no other way.
 - iii) In Luke the words are, “If thou be willing, remove this cup from me” (Lk. 22:42). It is an appeal to the will of God.
- b) The magnificence of the word “nevertheless” cannot be over emphasized. It is good to ask the question, “What if He had said, “I cannot go through with this”, “this is too much to ask?”. What would have been the repercussions? On this statement hangs the glory of God, the unity of the

Front Page - July 2017

The Lord's Pathos and Prayers

Godhead, the redemption of humanity, the defeat of Satan, the fulfilling of the purposes of God for time and all eternity. There is no combination of words in any language or combination of languages which could describe the resulting horrors if the Lord had declared even the slightest reluctance to drink that cup. One cannot help but see that sight as celestial and demonic beings of every rank watched the Lord of glory prostrate on the ground, pleading if there was any other way, and waited for the response, not just of His lips, but also of His heart. Here we have the crisis of full surrender but one that must be done in a pure way, no reluctance but with cheerfulness. Then the words which shout "salvation" to every individual of every clime in every age, "Not my will but thine be done" (Lk. 22:42).

. . . Rowan Jennings