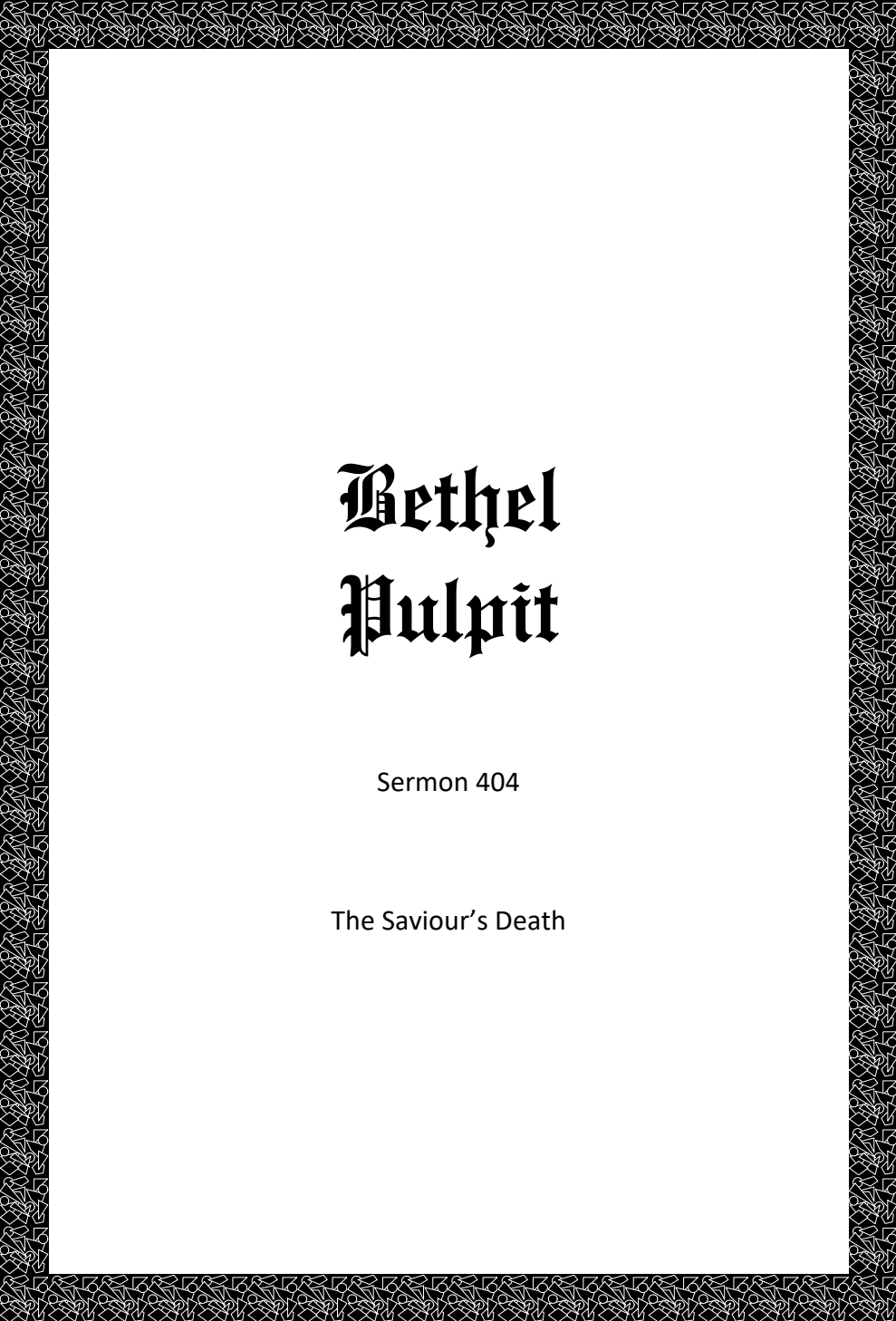




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 404

The Saviour's Death

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day evening, 13th January, 2019**

Text: *"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2. 24).*

Here we are treading on sacred ground, because we have the cross of Christ before us. What an emphasis there is in this verse on the awfulness of that cross, and of the deep sorrows that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ endured. Generally there seems to be almost a sentimental view of the cross. Peter here calls it "the tree," and that is what it was. "An old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame."

I remember some time ago reading that wonderful work, Krummacher's *The Suffering Saviour*, when he spoke of Gethsemane and the judgment hall, and then when he says that suddenly the cross appears in view for the first time. You see the awfulness of it, the bitter shame and sorrow, and Peter calls it "the tree." He did not use that word carelessly. There was an ancient scripture: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The apostle most beautifully opens that up in the way of salvation. O what a word it is: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." O what a word that is!

"On the tree." By nature as sinners, you and I are under the curse of a broken law. Never forget that. By nature we are not under the blessing; we are under the curse of a broken law. "Whosoever shall ... offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

"Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove."

It could only remove as it was borne, and there was only one Person who could bear it, and that was the dear Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "Christ hath redeemed us" – redemption by blood. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” Then there is that double emphasis – the bitterness, the awfulness of what the dear Lord Jesus suffered: “*His own self*” – not another, not the blood of bulls and goats and calves of the ceremonial law. “His own self.” “Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” “His own self.” “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” And then the second thing: “*In His own body*.” It was so personal. It was so close. It was that body that He took up in His mysterious incarnation. He took up this body, that in love He might suffer and bleed and He might lay that body down in death. So we are on sacred ground.

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” We sing sometimes,

“’Twas Jesus, my Friend, when He hung on the tree,
Who opened the channel of mercy for me.”

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” So this was the reason for the Lord’s suffering, the crown of thorns, the nails, the cruel spear, the agony, the blood, the deeper sufferings of His holy soul, forsaken of His Father, bearing the awful weight of sin imputed to Him, though He had none of His own. Now this was the reason for it: He was bearing our sins.

I want to speak carefully here, but beloved friends, let us be very careful. Even in our chapels, people tend to talk so carelessly and glibly. They say, Jesus, when He died for us. Well, did He? It was a *definite* redemption for a *definite* people. So many believe that the Lord Jesus suffered this for all. Well if He did, then all of them will be in heaven, and there will not be one person lost – which is denied by the whole of Scripture, because the Lord never, never shed His precious blood in vain. All those for whom He died are sure of reaching heaven. “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.”

It is a wonderful truth, redemption by blood, why the Lord Jesus suffered for unworthy sinners, and it is this: He “bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” All the sins of all His people from Adam to the end of time, now He bore them, and He bore them in love. He bore them as His Father laid them upon Him. He bore them as His Father laid the

punishment for sin on His beloved Son which His people deserved to suffer.

He “bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” And the vital point was this: that in bearing them, He for ever bore them away. Those of you who are familiar with the great day of atonement, the scape goat, ceremonially the high priest laid all the sins on that goat, the scape goat, and then it was led right away into the wilderness, a land of forgetfulness, never to be seen again.

“The Lord, in the day of His anger, did lay
Our sins on the Lamb, and He bore them away.
He died to atone for our sins, not His own;
The Father has punished for us His dear Son.”

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Isn’t it a wonderful truth! Isn’t it the glory of the gospel! Does it mean anything to you? Has it ever melted your heart? Have you ever stood at the foot of the cross and looked up into the face of a dear, dying Saviour, and seen that all this was done for you? And has that brought you the tears of repentance?

“Why me, why me, O blessed God,
Why such a wretch as me?”

Now these are the vital things in real religion. “O the sweet wonders of the cross” – to us – O but what was the cross to the dear Redeemer?

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” Now I know what the great concern is with some of you: to have a personal interest in it. It will be this: the Holy Spirit will show you you need an interest in this great work of redemption accomplished at Calvary, because you have sinned, because you have to die, because you have to give an account, because you cannot save yourself, because there is a debt you cannot pay. You will be brought to feel the seriousness, the reality of it. You have heard it from the pulpit, you have sung it in the hymns, you have read it in the Word, but now you have felt it yourself – some suddenly, they could go to the spot and place; some gradually over the years; some fiercely, some more gently; but it will bring you to this. As the gospel speaks of Christ and Him crucified, you will say,

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
All in all in Thee I find.”

You will be brought as a sinner to flee for refuge to a crucified Saviour. That speaks of urgency, reality. It is a *fleeing* for refuge to Him, and His precious blood will be your only plea, and you will sweetly prove: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” You will not come to Him the first time with that full assurance, Jesus died for me, but you will come because you know Jesus died for sinners, and I am a sinner, so perhaps for me, and you will venture on the word, on the gospel, on the promises, and,

“The Lord delights to hear them cry,
And knock at mercy’s door.”

If only you knew, some of you beloved friends, the loving welcome which is awaiting you by this dear Lord Jesus who once died but lives to die no more, risen, exalted, glorified – that delight as He sees you come. O the travail of His soul! “Him that cometh to Me I will *in no wise* cast out.”

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” Now there will be an effect of this, an effect of the Lord’s sufferings and death, an effect of what He has done. Here it is put like this: “That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” His death was the great atonement for sin. This is the sanctifying effect of it. If the Lord Jesus died for you, then you will not go along all your life in carelessness and unconcern and taking things for granted. There will be a dying to sin. Jesus died, and you will die with Jesus to sin. You will die to your past life. You do not want to live that past life of sin and worldliness any more. You will die to sin. You will die to those sins which once held you. They dishonour the Lord. If Jesus shed His blood, if they caused Him such sorrow, you are here at the place of repentance. There is a complete change. It is a death and a resurrection. “Being dead to sins.” It is a new life. “If any man be in Christ” – through an interest in His death – “he is a new creature: old things are passed away” – for ever – “all things are become new.”

“That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” If you are one of these redeemed for whom the Lord Jesus died, you will know the work of the Spirit in your heart. Following as the effect of His

death and resurrection, you will die to sin and you will rise again to newness of life through Christ.

“By whose stripes ye were healed.” Of course, by the Lord’s *stripes* is meant the wounds that He received on the cross. His stripes. And by them we are healed. So there is the whole of salvation here, and there is forgiveness here, and there is cleansing in the Saviour’s blood here.

“By whose stripes ye were healed.” Now I am sure most of you will realise that this last clause, “By whose stripes ye were healed,” is a direct quotation from that wonderful chapter on the sufferings of Christ, Isaiah chapter 53, and the whole verse reads like this: “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” What a depth there is there! It is amidst all those other verses: “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows”; “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid *on Him* the iniquity of us all”; “He was wounded” – I take it that is perhaps specially speaking of the dear Lord’s physical sufferings on the cross – “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised” – in His holy soul – “He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him” – which I take to mean this: we deserved the chastisement, that is the punishment, for our sins. Because of that, there could be no peace for us, but the Lord Jesus, bearing the punishment, the chastisement, we are set free and blessed with that peace made by the blood of His cross. “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” So we have the whole of the glorious gospel here. We can say,

“Let all fruitless searches go,
Which perplex and tease us;
We determine nought to know,
But a bleeding Jesus.”

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” Have you ever read the godly old Puritan divines, or the old godly Scottish divines? Often the main part of their sermons were what

they sometimes called the *uses*, and sometimes they called the *applications*. They spent a lot of time at the end: really, in simple language, what does all this mean to you? What does all this mean to me?

So this is a vital subject, and this is a solemn subject and a sacred subject. But a few things of vital importance, and first of all, this is *the foundation of our hope*. We have no hope of heaven, no hope of salvation, apart from what our Lord Jesus accomplished here. It is upon His death and His glorious resurrection and ascension, on the shedding of His precious blood, that our hope rests. This is the foundation, and we are either on it or off it. There is no other. “Neither is there salvation in any other.” It is salvation in Christ alone. O but what a sure foundation it is! What a solid foundation! It is the eternal rock. It is the Rock of Ages. It is everything accomplished. It is everything done. It is all in Christ. When you are brought there, after all your wanderings, you will find a resting place. It will be the place of humility. It will be the place of love. At times it will be the place of rejoicing for what the Saviour has done.

But then passing on, we have been thinking quite a bit at present of old friends passing from time into eternity in our old people’s home, Bethesda – the certainty of death, the solemnity of it, the finality of death. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” We need to be made ready; we cannot make ourselves ready. We need to be prepared; we cannot prepare ourselves. *This is the preparation for eternity, the only preparation for eternity*. It is the Lord Jesus Himself. But it is not just the Lord Jesus in His beautiful example and His gracious teaching. It is the Lord Jesus in His sin-atoning sufferings and death. Before you and I come to die, we need to have a personal interest, as made known to us by the Holy Spirit, in the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus. If your religion is real, you will not be allowed to take it for granted. You will want to be sure that you are right. You do not want to be deceived. Especially as you grow older and you see what a child of God ought to be, you feel you come so far short. Then you have to come right back to where the Lord first began with you:

“The ground wherein
My anchor, hope, shall firm remain,
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin.”

Then, beloved friends, this is *something that we remember at the Lord's table*. Really, everything that takes place at the Lord's table – the broken bread, the pouring out of the cup – it is that God's people should never forget the glorious truths of this verse, and to be reminded of their interest in it. Sometimes there is a sermon, and perhaps there is not much of Christ in it, but when you come to the Lord's table, you cannot have an administration of the Lord's supper with no Christ in it. There have been people at Bethel who have been deaf, and they could not hear one word that was being said. I believe one was the old pastor's mother, and all she could see was the bread being broken and the wine being poured out, and the Lord sealed it to her soul – the glories of atoning love and blood and her own personal interest in it, and the love of Christ shed abroad in her heart. That is why the Lord Jesus, in love to all His people who have been brought to this resting place in His death, says, "This do in remembrance of Me."

And then we find in this *an example*. It was not the vital point in the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. It was not the vital point, but it is set before us here as an example. How does the word come in here? "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." People often say, "Follow *in* His steps." I do not think we can really attain to that, but through grace we seek to *follow His steps*. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

And then finally, this is *the source of every blessing* that the people of God will ever know. It all flows from a crucified Saviour. If you want a little illustration, God's ancient people in the wilderness, O didn't they need water! There was not a drop of water there, and this great multitude. How could that need be supplied? Moses was to strike that rock and the streams of water flowed out, and they supplied all their needs. All the water that they ever needed came from one place: *the smitten rock*. Now we are not left in any doubt. The Apostle Paul said, "They drank of that

spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” So you see here, what flows from the cross of Christ?

“Pardon and grace, and boundless love,
Streaming along a Saviour’s blood;
And life, and joy, and crowns above,
Obtained by a dear bleeding God.”

O but there would not be that promise apart from this. What promise? “My God shall supply all your need” – all of it – “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The help you need, the upholding you need, the prayers you need answering, the support that you seek, the guidance, the deliverance from your sin – so you might go on. Well, the apostle said, He has “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” O but you see, this is the source. John saw it in vision. He said, “He shewed me a pure river of water of life ... proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” It flowed – the Lord’s purposes of love and mercy and salvation and every blessing. John saw it flowing from beneath the sacred throne of God from everlasting, but it flowed in just this one channel. It flowed by the way of Calvary. It flowed from the cross of Christ. It flowed from the wounds of Jesus.

“I stood amazed, and wondered when,
Or why, this ocean rose,
That wafts salvation down to men,
His traitors and His foes.

“That sacred flood, from Jesus’ veins,
Was free to take away
A Mary’s or Manasseh’s stains,
Or sins more vile than they.”

Beloved friends, this is the gospel, and when we come to the end of our little lives, this will be the one thing needful, the only thing that matters. “Jesus, engrave it on my heart.”

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”