

SEVEN SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS

3 – WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON!

John 19:25-27

INTRODUCTION

- “Don’t be so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good.”
- Some people’s religion negatively affects their human relationships.
- But any such religion is “vain” and is foreign to the true Christianity in the Bible.
- The apostle John states that those who refuse to show compassion to a needy brother demonstrate that they do not have God’s love dwelling within (1 John 3:17)
- When a person is truly heavenly minded, they will be of immense earthly good; when a person loves God, he will love his fellow-man.
- The whole of God’s law is summarised in loving God and loving our neighbour (Matthew 22:37-40)
- The perfect example of this is the Lord Jesus Christ. No man was ever more heavenly-minded, yet no man ever did more earthly good (Acts 10:38)
- And even on the cross, we find Jesus doing good for others.
- The first three sayings of Jesus from the cross have a focus on the people around Him.
- The remaining four sayings deal with His own sufferings and the redemptive work He was accomplishing on the cross.
- Here in this saying, as Jesus suffers for the sins of mankind, we see His selfless love and compassion demonstrated as He makes provision for His grieving mother.

I. THE MOTHER’S COMMITMENT

- A. There were many groups of people present at the crucifixion of Christ
 1. The soldiers, the malefactors, the chief priests, members of the Sanhedrin, some of His followers, as well as onlookers from the area.

2. On the cross, He was drawing “all men” to Himself, even as He does today (John 12:32)
- B. Only a few of His followers were present
1. At His arrest, Jesus’ disciples all forsook Him and fled (Matthew 26:56)
 2. However, Peter and John did follow Jesus to the High Priest’s house (John 18:15)
 3. Of the eleven disciples, John is the only one named as being present at the crucifixion
 4. It is of particular note that there is only one male follower of Jesus named at the cross, while there are at least four women followers named there.
 - a. Mary, the mother of Jesus
 - b. Salome, wife of Zebedee, mother of James and John, and possibly sister of Mary the mother of Jesus
 - c. Mary, the wife of Cleophas/Clopas
 - d. Mary Magdalene
 5. Though some “stood afar off”, John and these women stood “by the cross”
- C. This was exceedingly traumatic for Mary
1. She had experienced hardship for the sake of Christ
 2. The aged Simeon prophesied of this soul-piercing time (Luke 2:34-35)
- D. Mary’s devotion to Jesus was proof of her faith in Him
1. She was a sinner
 2. She was justified by her faith in God (Luke 1:46-47)
 3. She regarded herself as “the handmaid (slave) of the Lord” (Luke 1:38)

II. THE SON’S ENDOWMENT

- A. Christ perfectly obeyed God’s law to the last
1. This is His obedience to the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12)

2. Christ was made under the law and fulfilled every requirement of it (Galatians 4:4)
 3. The righteousness of His life is imputed to those sinners who put their trust in Him (Romans 3:25-26)
- B. The Lord performed His responsibilities as a Son
1. These words are in effect His will and testament
 2. Mary was a widow, and in this culture the eldest son was responsible for caring for the mother
 3. He had no earthly possessions to leave her, but He entrusted her to John
- C. "Woman, behold thy son"
1. "Son" refers not to Himself, but to John
 2. Note that Jesus never once in the Gospels calls Mary "mother", but always "woman" (John 2:4; Matthew 12:46-50)
 3. Calling her "woman" concealed her identity from the mob's insults
 4. Calling her "woman" indicated their natural relation had now ended
 5. Calling her "woman" teaches us that while Mary is to be honoured, she is not to be worshipped

III. THE DISCIPLE'S FULFILMENT

- A. "Behold thy mother"
1. John was to take care of her as if she was his own mother
 2. Mary had four other sons as well as daughters (Matthew 13:55-56)
 3. Yet they did not believe in Christ until after His resurrection (John 7:5)
 4. But Jesus wanted the very best for Mary
 5. John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" – His dearest earthly companion (John 13:23)
 6. Though John had forsaken Christ with the rest of the disciples, he alone had returned to the foot of the cross to own His Lord

7. Christ honoured John's faithfulness by entrusting His mother to his care
- B. John's obedience to the command
1. "From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home"
 2. He did not delay his obedience
- C. He obeyed thoroughly
1. He took her to his own home
 2. Mary is last seen in Scripture praying with the disciples (Acts 1:14)
 3. Tradition says that Mary lived with John at Jerusalem, and died there in the twelfth year after Christ's resurrection, being 59 years of age, and was buried by John in the garden of Gethsemane (Gill)
- D. Obedience to Christ's commands is evidence of one's love for Him (John 14:21)
1. His commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3)
 2. "Blessed are they that do his commandments" (Revelation 22:14)

CONCLUSION

1. Even on the cross, amidst unspeakable suffering, Jesus would not relinquish His duty to obey God's commandments
2. What excuses do you use for your disobedience to the word of God? (cf. John 2:5)
3. Jesus' earthly work was complete – the work He began would continue through His disciples (John 20:21)
4. John had the honour and joy of being called to minister for the Lord because he was faithful
5. Do you meet the requirement to be a steward of God, which is faithfulness? (1 Corinthians 4:2)
6. In spite of opposition and persecution, John took his stand at the cross
7. Are you as those who stood afar off?
8. Or are you willing to "go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:12-14)