

Christ's Twofold Estate

Lesson 12: A Cry of Forsakenness, Mt 27.46

- I. These words are able to break the hardest heart in the world. It's the voice of the Son of God in agony. His suffering was great before, but never in the extremity it is now, when this heaven-rending, heart-melting cry broke from Him, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"
 - A. Divine desertion is when God withdraws His love, grace, and favor from an individual. When these are gone, God is said to be gone. And God withdrew these from His Son on the cross. Three things to consider about this desertion of the Son by the Father:
- II. The **nature** of the desertion
 - A. This desertion was not the withdrawal of the Father's divine support and upholding, Isa 42.1; Jn 16.32.
 - B. It was not the withdrawal of the Spirit of holiness (Christ remained perfectly holy), Eph 5.1-2.
 - C. It was not the withdrawal of love or delight (but only the show of due wrath), Jn 10.17.
 - D. It was not an utter and final forsakenness (but only a temporary withdrawal until His wrath was appeased), Ps 22.24.
 - E. It was not a withdrawal on Christ's part (He remained strong in faith), Mt 27.46.
 - F. It was a very sad desertion. Christ's other sufferings were small in comparison.
 - G. It was a penal desertion, to make satisfaction for our sins, 1Pet 2.24. This was that hell (and its torments) which Christ, our Surety, suffered for us. What He suffered for three hours was equivalent to all we should have suffered in hell for eternity.
 - H. It was a real desertion. The Godhead restrained and withheld, for a time, all its joy, comfort, and sense of love from the manhood, yielding it nothing but hidden support. Christ was not faking it. He felt the burden of loneliness, forsakenness, desertion, and being cast into outer darkness with no light, Ps 22.1.
 - I. It was a desertion that left Christ to the support of His faith. He had nothing else to rest upon in that hell but His Father's covenant and promise.
 1. "*My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*" "Faith speaks first, then sense. His faith goes before the complaint of His sense. Although sense comes in with a complaint, there are two words of faith to one word of sense. And as faith spoke first, so it spoke more confidently than sense. He lays a confident claim to God as His God and only asks about His forsaking Him. His faith took hold of God under a the most suitable title of Eli, My Strong One, My Strong One! He leans on the the One to whom belongs infinite strength, the One who upheld Him all His life and the One whom He trusted to uphold Him now. This desertion left Christ with only these supports of faith. And by these things He stood, when all other visible and sensible comforts shrunk away from His soul and body."
 2. He seized the Father's promise with two hands and stood His ground in the darkness, with one foot planted in faith and the other in hope, and cried out, *My God! My God!*
- III. The **purpose** of the desertion
 - A. It made *satisfaction* for our sins, which deserved that we should be totally and everlastingly forsaken by God. This is the just reward of every sin. The damned feel it for all eternity, and apart from Christ enduring this for us, we would have howled this hideous complaint in hell forever, "O righteous God! O dreadful God! O terrible God! You have forsaken me!"
 - B. It also *sanctified* all the desertions experienced by the saints. Christ turned God's forsaking of us into a mercy, so that every forsaking of God graciously works for our good by drawing us

closer to Him. There is no hell or wrath in our desertions, only mercy, grace, and love. All our desertions have been turned into mercies rather than curses.

IV. The effects of the desertion

- A. Christ was amazed and surprised by the desertion, but He was not driven to despair. It was something He'd never felt before, and although He knew it was coming, nothing could prepare Him for the actual and sorrowful experience of it.
- B. He'd never seen the Father's frown, never felt the Father's wrath, never felt the absence of the Father's love. He who was the Lamb of God, roared like a lion in astonishing, bewildered, and grievous agony. He first began to feel the burden in the Garden, Mk 14.34-36, and it intensified on the cross until, at the height of it, the silent Lamb roared like a lion. And He bore it until, in faith, He committed Himself to the Father's covenant and promise, and gave up the ghost.

V. Inferences

- A. As often as we sin, we deserve to be forsaken by God, Isa 59.1-2. By sin we depart from God and, as a due punishment—unless His mercy and glory run a different way—God disciplines us by departing from us. We should think about that when we're tempted to sin, Job 31.1-3.
- B. Christ never complained until God hid His face. This teaches us that the hiding of God's face is the greatest misery that can befall a gracious soul in this world. The withdrawal of God was more to Christ than a thousand crucifixions, and it's the same for all Christians. When God hides His face, it's the saddest stroke and heaviest burden. *Nothing* can recompense or make up for the the loss of God's favor, Ps 13.1; 27.9; 30.7; 31.16; 44.3; 44.24; 51.9; 69.17; 80.3; 88.14; 89.15; 102.2; 104.29; 143.7; Song 2.14.
- C. Christ's desertion on the cross is a great comfort to God's people because it means we will never be finally deserted. God's forsaking of Him for three hours is equivalent to His forsaking us for all eternity. Therefore this debt is paid in full.
 - 1. Moreover, Christ's desertion serves as a pattern to us in our desertions. God will uphold us, just as He upheld Him. God's promises are as sure a ground for our feet in the darkness as they were for Christ, Isa 50.10. And God will return His favor to us again, just as He did to Christ, Jer 32.40; Isa 57.16.
- D. God may desert us, but He will never wrong us. There's not one drop of injustice in the sea of our sorrows. Though He writes bitter things against us in our trials, He is good, holy, and just.
- E. Christ was deserted, but He was never unloved. And the same goes for us. God may withdraw the sense of His love, but He will never cease to love us, Ps 136.3; 138.8.
- F. Let us expect and prepare for days of darkness. Let's strengthen our faith in God's promises, character, and truth. Let's be thankful for every evidence of His love and presence, but let's never plant our feet on evidences. Rather, let's strengthen our stand on His Word and trust in His self-revelation. Comforts bring more joy to us, but faith in the face of no comforts brings more glory to God and more growth to us. So let's prepare for days in the valley and be sure our hope and confidence and faith are not dependent on our feelings or on our comforts, but are firmly rooted in His covenant, His promises, and His Christ, Ps 27.14.