

Exhortation 16 – Jesus Recommends His Mother to John

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John 19:26-27 and Matt. 27:34

I. The Text Opened

A. John 19:26-27

1. “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home,” (John 19:26-27).
 - a) The handful of family and friends that pursued the Lord to Mount Calvary in his time of need was hardly measurable compared to the crowds that pursued him when he was going about doing good.
 - b) The multitudes followed while he provided them with bread and fish, but how soon did they flee when he himself cries out for a drink?
 - c) They like his robes but not his rags; they like the prospect of a crown but not of a cross.
 - d) Just days before, they had swarmed around him in that sunshine of Hosanna’s praise, and yet now they run for shelter in the storm of his crucifixion.
2. Out of all those multitudes, there remain but a few women and only one apostle now, here.
 - a) And yet in the midst of unspeakable tortures and suffering and barely enough strength to stay alive, from the cross Christ turns his attention to care for these few.

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: What was the source of Christ’s Strength?

1. When you examine this Giver, you wonder what could he have left to give?
 - a) His garments are divided, his skin torn, his blood spilt.
 - b) Every one of his closest friends, save for John, has deserted him.
 - c) There are almost none left about him besides his loving mother and that beloved disciple.
 - d) So, with nothing more to bestow, he mutually gives them each other. “Woman, behold thy son; son behold thy mother,” (John 19:26).
 - (1) *Mary’s eyes weep, her legs tremble, her hands wring, her heart breaks, her soul bleeds drop for drop alongside her son’s body.*
 - (2) *No nail was driven into his hands that didn’t first pierce her heart.*
 - (3) *No thorns punctured the skin of his brow that don’t first cut through her bowels of affection.*
 - (4) *No blasphemy or insult reached his ears that did not first rend her soul with anguish and remorse, especially knowing she bore him to all this misery.*
 - e) John’s heart, too, is shattered with the loss of his dearest Lord and closest companion.
 - (1) *Nothing on earth or in heaven could ease the grief he felt over the loss of his Master’s life, nothing but his tenacious faith in the benefit of his death.*

f) Mary and John: the one carried our Savior in her womb, the other leaned on his breast.

(1) And yet Mary is more blessed in that she carries his sayings in her heart than himself in her womb, and John in that he leaned on the Lord's promises more than that he leaned on his breast.

(2) What did it benefit Saul that he was a prophet, or Judas that he was an apostle?

(3) For outward duty without inward grace – physical proximity without spiritual transformation – serves only to enhance and dis-excuse a man's damnation.

(4) True and lasting benefit from knowing the Lord can only be found when you welcome him into your heart.

2. We are reminded that the Lord refers to His followers as a 'little flock' (Luke 12:32).

a) He has shown us, through His teachings, that when the Shepherd is struck, the sheep may scatter (Zech. 13:7).

b) And yet, even in these trying times, consider the immense love and tenderness He exhibited for those few souls at the base of the cross on that fateful day.

c) Furthermore, we must recognize that each believer is a member of His divine family.

(1) While we may feel the weight of our imperfections and sometimes see ourselves as Mephibosheth, who became lame from a fall (2 Sam. 4:4), we should never forget our origins.

(2) Just as Mephibosheth's lameness was a result of a tragic accident, our own weaknesses stem from the fall of our forebearers, Adam and Eve.

(3) But here's the good news: the Lord, who watches over the birds in the sky (Luke 12:24) and the grasses in the fields, will undoubtedly extend His providence to us, His own beloved children.

(4) It is of paramount importance that we nourish our souls with such wisdom and knowledge.

(a) We must feed on the milk of His word, so we may grow in spirit (1 Peter 2:2).

(b) It's vital to understand that external acts of devotion, though commendable, are insufficient without the grace that fuels our inner beings.

(c) The external can never truly satisfy if our internal spirit isn't flourishing in His grace.

(d) In the words of the psalmist, "I will hide your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psa. 119:11).

(e) With this, we can find solace in the promise that even in the world's darkest moments, we remain close to Him.

B. Christ is Offered Gall and Vinegar

1. At this time, the text in Matthew 27:34 reads, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink."

a) It was customary for Roman soldiers to offer someone about to be crucified vinegar wine mixed with a bitter herb intended to dull the senses for this cross of death he was facing.

b) But when this sedating mixture was offered to Jesus, he refused to drink it, likely so that he might bear the suffering of God's wrath to its fullest extent (Matt. 27:34).

c) A few hours later as he was nearing the end of his life, however, Jesus was offered a second bitter drink when he cried out from the cross, "I thirst."

d) This time, "a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch" was given him (John 19:29), fulfilling that messianic psalm of David, "for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," (Psa. 69:21).

2. Considering what he had been through – his fasting and sweating and bleeding, then spilling out what little remained of blood and water when his side was pierced through by the soldier – he would certainly be thirsty.

- a) And yet, greater is his thirst of soul to complete the mission to which he was ordained before the world began than the satisfaction of any of his own needs.
- b) As John 19:28 notes, he said “I thirst,” that, “the Scripture might be fulfilled.”
- c) Christ knew before he asked that the drink they would give him would be out of that same bitter Marah of their inexhaustible malice, (Exod. 15:23).
- d) He knew their grapes were grapes of gall and their clusters bitter because he knew their hearts.

(1) Still, Christ was prepared to drink from this cup of their malice as well as from the bitter cup of the wrath of his Father.

III. The Text Applied

A. Compassion

1. How ironic that the one here thirsty is the same God whose compassion is so beautifully demonstrated in this Old Testament invitation, “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,” (Isa. 55:1).

- a) It is also that same compassion displayed in the New Testament when the Samaritan woman encounters the Savior at the well.
- b) He lovingly explains to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.
- c) The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life,” (John 4:13-14).
- d) It is the same one who when he was thirsty thought of his mother and her well being, as well as his disciple.

(1) And yet, He thirsted so that we may never thirst again.

(2) But do we, in turn, thirst for him?

(a) “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God,” (Psa. 42:1).

2. Our Lord is described as the ‘water of life’ (John 4:14).

- a) Those who embrace Him, quenching their spiritual thirst with His teachings, are assured they will never experience thirst again (John 14:1).
- b) Think of Him as the Vine, bearing the purest wine, inviting us to both taste and recognize His immense grace (Psa. 34:8).
- c) Yet, while we may be tempted by our transgressions, considering them as delightful as stolen waters (Prov. 9:17), to our Lord, they represent bitterness, gall, and wormwood (Jer. 9:15).
- d) Just as the Lord found His sustenance in fulfilling the divine will, may we too find our true purpose and sustenance in living by His will (John 4:34).

(1) Let us be ever eager, ever hungry and thirsty for His righteousness (Matt. 5:6).

(2) Inspired by David, we should not only walk in the light of His teachings but run fervently following His commands (Psa. 19:7-14).

(3) With such devotion, we may one day yearn, as David did, to be as doves, taking flight to our ultimate rest (Psa. 55:6).

e) In this world filled with distractions and temptations, we must not be lured by the fleeting attractions of corruption.

(1) Instead, we should feast on the pure, nourishing grain of His Word.

(2) Like the dove that cherishes the pristine streams, let us be drawn to the clarity of His scriptures (Song 5:12).

(3) Let us be like Mary and John who remained at his feet no matter where he was.

(4) Always seeking refuge, let our spiritual abode be found in the holes of the rock (Song 2:14), for His sacrifices and wounds are our steadfast shelter, our rock of refuge (Psa. 18:1).