

“His Humility and Patience”

St. Matthew 26-27

April 5, 2020

SERMON 1904

by Michael David Henson

The sermon text is from St. Matthew 26:42, “Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.’”

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel reading is called “The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew.” It presents the last days of our Lord’s suffering and death. The appointed collect sums up those days when it speaks of **Christ’s great humility** and **His patience**. St. Paul in today’s Epistle exhorts us saying, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus....” The mind of Christ is selfless and sacrificial.

The Son of God is true God from eternity. He is the Immortal, Invisible and only wise God. He is Almighty and Omniscient. Through the Son of God all things were made, which have been made. Our Creator was not harmed by man’s fall into sin. He has never been in need of anything. Nevertheless, our Savior saw our need and **He humbled Himself** to save us. The Son of God who should be served, determined to take on our human nature. The Creator took on the garment of his own creation. Though we should be the ones bowing down in humble worship, He bowed Himself down that He might be as a bondservant serving us.

What did He do? Our human race had fallen from our high position as ruler over God’s creation. Though we were made in the image of God, or original righteousness, we lost it. The just judgment of death now hung over our heads. **He had mercy upon us and determined to rescue us from our predicament.** Both Jesus and our heavenly Father, were in complete agreement. The Father sent His Son, and our Jesus became obedient to His Father’s will that He must suffer and die.

In this service toward us, our Savior needed to be true man so that He might die as our substitute. He also needed to be true God that He might defeat the devil. His divine-human sacrifice was sufficient for the atonement of all men. His actions were merciful. His motivation was love. In the end, the eternal God gave Himself up to death that we might have eternal life. **His great humility** served to our benefit.

This plan to restore in us the lost image of God was conceived before the world began. His plan of salvation would require **patience** beyond measure as He needed not only to perform the sacrifice in due time, but also to **patiently** proclaim the good news so that faith would be created to receive the benefit of the gift. Listen as I read Romans 15:1-6. It includes not only a humbling of the strong to help the weak—like what our strong God did for us while we were still weak—but it speaks also of patience. It calls Him the God of patience, especially in His teaching us.

Romans 15:1-6, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his

good, leading to edification. ³For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." ⁴For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we **through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope. ⁵Now may **the God of patience** and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In today's Epistle from Philippians, we are told to have the mind of Christ, who humbled Himself to serve us. And now in Romans 15, we are to be like-minded, so that we are patient toward one another.

Our God has **patiently been publishing His Word.**

-The Triune God patiently waited for Adam to name the animals so that He would learn that none of the animals would be his helpmate.

-Adam taught his children, but patiently endured the death of his second son and the excommunication of his first son. Adam watched as Cain went away unrepentant. Finally, through Seth came a godly people.

-That righteous preacher Noah proclaimed a salvation through water for some seventy years.

-God sent Moses back to Pharaoh countless times as the ten plagues taught both the Egyptians and the Israelites who was the true God.

-God miraculously provided for the Israelites in the wilderness as He spoke through Moses in the hopes of saving that wicked generation.

I could go on and on speaking about **our Lord's patience in proclaiming the message of salvation.** Matthew 23:37 sums it up this way, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" Today's Passion from St. Matthew is the story of the great humility and patience of our Lord and Savior and the response of those who were not willing to confess their sins and be saved by His suffering and death.

I pray that you are not one of those who are unwilling, but are a believer in our Savior Jesus Christ and thus a partaker of His resurrection from the dead. Although you probably don't have palms in your hands this Sunday, we still pray the processional prayer, "grant that we may ever hail Him as the Son of David who comes in the name of the Lord and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life., that, when He comes again, we may go forth to greet Him with a faithful and steadfast heart."

There is a reason that St. Paul in Philippians chapter 2 instructs us to have the **humble and patient mind of Christ** in us. At the end of Philippians 1:29-30 it says, "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, **but also to suffer for His sake**, ³⁰having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me." **Believers in Jesus Christ will endure suffering.** St. Paul says in Romans 6 that if we are united with Christ's death, we will also be united with His resurrection. It would seem to me that we need to remember that it also goes the other way. If, as believers we are united with Christ's resurrection, we shall also be united with His suffering and death.

This is an important point, lest we come to the conclusion that something has gone terribly wrong with our life in Christ. Those who think that being a Christian involves a perennially victorious Christian life, are shocked when suffering comes their

way. 1 Peter 4:12-13 says, “Beloved, **do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you**, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” The Son of God suffered. St. Paul suffered. **You, too, will suffer.**

The world is going through suffering and trial, right now. These are the times that try men’s souls. It shouldn’t surprise us that with a virus, comes the threat of sickness, death, loss of family, food shortages, etc. We not only fear the disease, but the treatment. We fear a depression, withdrawn freedoms, hucksters and lies. In the midst of all this, you will not be able to tell the difference between God and the devil. What I mean is that trials are like that. You cannot trust your inner motives to be pure or not. You cannot be sure of the motives of others as they seek to help or protect you. You cannot be sure of the facts or the advice which you have been given.

Did you think the devil would cease his lying and murdering? Did you think the devil is sheltered at home and not working? St. Paul knew the answer when he said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10). Our job is not to figure everything out, but to believe in Christ and follow His Word.

Did you think that there would always be an abundance of the Word of God? Of course, the devil would seek to remove the Word from you. I have reminded you countless times in the past to receive the Word when you have had the opportunity. If the church is open and offering the Word and sacrament then come for the day will come, when you will not be able to receive. **My Christian friends, that day has come.** We pray that saner minds will allow the reception of the life-giving and comforting Word of God soon. We will continue to pray for the freedom to gather freely and openly to hear the Word of God and receive Christ’s Body and Blood. Until then, we cling to the Word which we have already heard.

Through faith in Christ we have “the greatest consolation in all afflictions” (Ap IV III 59). The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us that we are forgiven of all our sins. Our sins of pride and impatience are swallowed up the great humility and patience of God’s Son who suffered and died to take away our sins. The righteous wrath and manifold punishments which we have deserved will not be placed upon us. Psalm 73 reminds us, “Truly God is good to Israel” (Ps 73:1). And verse 36, “My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

In the midst of all this, we “let this mind be in us which was also in Christ.” Our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane did not withdraw Himself from the cup appointed for Him. He prayed, “Thy will be done.” Now that “...we have been justified and regenerated by faith, therefore, we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our afflictions. Then we also begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses” (Ap IV III 125). We have been given “the expectation of God’s help in death and all afflictions” (AP IV III 7). With the humble and patient mind of Christ we pray, “Thy will be done.” We are “obedience to God in death and all afflictions, lest we try to flee these things or turn away when God imposes them” (AP IV III 7). Furthermore, “Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9-10).