

THE EVERLASTING LOVE OF CHRIST

Dear brothers and sisters, the first time I sang this hymn “Since Long Ago at Bethany”, I was with a brother who had a very musical gift. We tried to sing this song, but we could not finish it. We were all weeping because the sense of the Lord’s return was so imminent. Our hearts so longed for His return that we all cried before the Lord: “Oh, dear Lord, come, come quickly!”

So when I heard this song, I looked at you dear brothers and sisters and wondered if the Lord should come now, would this auditorium be empty? This is the prayer of my heart. The Lord is coming, and He is coming soon! It is quite possible that He will come in our lifetime. All the prophecies preceding His return have been fulfilled; the next one will be His coming. Are you waiting for His coming? Or is there anyone here who is like the wicked servant thinking that the Lord will not return soon and begin to beat his fellow servants, to eat and drink, and enjoy his life? Suddenly the Lord returns, and he will be cut into two (see Matthew 24:48-51). That is the Scripture that always comes to me when we sing that song. We long for His return, but are we ready? That is the most important question. Are you ready? I was thinking if the Lord should come now, will this auditorium be empty? Or will there still be some who have to remain behind? What if He should come now and this auditorium is not empty? That means there will still be some who are left behind. It is just like the Bible says about that wicked servant in Matthew 24. He thought the Lord would not return now so he began to enjoy himself. Suddenly the Lord returns and he is cut into two and cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. May it not be so with any one of us here this morning! My prayer is that should the Lord come now this auditorium will be empty. Thank God, if this be the case!

I always feel that our conference has already ended with the worship time around the Lord’s table because that is the climax of our conference. Thank God, He has brought us into His very presence. We are in the holiest of all beholding His beauty, and we bow in worship. I believe this is the climax. So I always feel that after such a meeting, another meeting will be an anti-climax, but I have to obey my brethren, even though I do feel I should not speak because we have the Lord with us. What else do we want? But because the brothers have arranged it this way, I have to obey.

The Garden of Gethsemane

In Luke 22, we are told of the scene in the garden of Gethsemane. This was a scene that cannot be described. Towards the end of our Lord’s life on earth, He led His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. The Bible tells us that He was grieved even unto death. We need to understand the sentiment of our Lord at that time. He knew He was going to be crucified, but suffering was what He expected. It was not a surprise to Him. What really touched Him so deeply is that He would be separated from His beloved Father. Since eternity began, the fellowship between Father and Son had been sweet and uninterrupted. How They loved each other, how They were one in all their thoughts! There was never any sense of separation. But when the Lord entered into the garden of Gethsemane, the Bible tells us He was grieved even unto death. Was He afraid of the cross? No! He came for that purpose. But what is it that grieved Him so tremendously? He told His disciples that He was grieved even unto death. Why was He so

grieved? It was not that He would die on the cross because that was the reason for His coming into the world. He was grieved because He knew He would be separated from His Father. This was something unbearable to Him. Since eternity, the fellowship between the Father and the Son had been sweet. They had always been one with each other. But as our Lord entered into the garden of Gethsemane, He knew He would be separated from His Father. That was something unbearable to Him, and it grieved Him almost unto death.

This scene in the garden of Gethsemane is beyond description. It reveals the innermost feeling of our Lord Jesus. There had been such sweet fellowship between the Father and the Son. Even when the Lord was on earth, there was never a time when there was any separation between the Father and the Son. Oftentimes He said, "I speak because I have heard My Father speak. I go because My Father wants me to go." He did everything according to His Father's will; that was His life.

When our Lord Jesus took His disciples to a high mountain, He was transfigured before them, and He was filled with glory. Moses and Elijah appeared talking with Him about His exit. Now this was a most important time because so far as the life of our Lord is concerned, He could have exited from this world at that time. He had lived on this earth for thirty-three years, and He never did anything against His Father; He always did His Father's will. There was such sweet communion between Him and His Father. The sufferings He endured in the world were nothing to Him because of His fellowship with His Father.

However, now the time had come, and He had to be separated from His Father. He could not bear it. That was the grief in our Lord Jesus. Do you think that the Lord was afraid of the cross? No! He came for that reason. His grief was that He was to be separated from His Father. Even though it was for only a few hours, to Him that was unbearable.

Oh dear brothers and sisters, the scene in the garden of Gethsemane was so sacred, but the Lord shared His feeling with His disciples. He said, "I am grieved even unto death. Stay with Me; pray with Me." Then He went forward and prayed, "Father, if it is possible remove this cup from me, but not My will, Thy will be done." He then went to the three disciples who were the closest to Him and they were asleep—asleep through grief. They could not stand with the Lord for just an hour, and He had to bear it alone. So He went back to the Father and said, "Father, if it is Thy will that it should be done, let it be done." He yielded Himself completely to His Father.

Gethsemane was the place where our Lord Jesus gave Himself knowing He would be separated from His Father. He was not afraid of the cross because He had come for that purpose. The only thing that touched Him was the separation from God His Father. That is the sentiment of our Lord Jesus.

Think for a moment that for your sake and my sake, our Lord Jesus was willing to be separated from His Father, but it grieved Him to the uttermost. What a price He has paid for us! It was not the cross that He was afraid of; it was His separation from His Father.

The Cross

"My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This is the cry from the very heart of our Lord Jesus from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Why? We are the answer. *We are the answer.* It is for you; it is for me. It is for our sakes that our Lord Jesus was

willing to be separated from His Father even for a few hours, but that few hours to Him was like eternity. That is the heart of our Lord Jesus.

How can we look at the cross of our Lord Jesus and still not accept Him? He has done everything for us, even to being separated from His eternal Father. It is for you and for me; so how can we deny Him? The greatest sin in the world is to deny our Lord Jesus because He has loved us so much. We who have been loved much, how much do we love Him? Dare we love the world?! Dare we seek the world when we know that our Lord has died for us, when we know our Lord was willing to be separated even from His Father? What love that must be! We cannot describe the everlasting love of Christ for each one of us. This is His love for you and for me.

The Greatest Sin in the World

Brothers and sisters, have we yielded ourselves to Him? Before such love, can you resist? The greatest sin in the world is to reject the love of Christ. You may consider yourself an upright person. You may compare yourself to other people and feel superior, but if you reject God's love in His Son, you have committed the greatest sin in the world. You may consider yourself as good, but the very fact that you do not appreciate what our Lord Jesus has done for you, then you have committed *the* greatest sin in the world. We will not perish because of our many sins, but we will perish because we reject the love of God in Christ Jesus. One day when we stand before God, the question will not be how many hideous sins we have committed or how many good works we have done. The question will be: What is your attitude towards God's Son? If you reject God's Son, you reject God and live against His purpose. That is the greatest sin in the world.

The Gospel is Presented to the Whole World

When I was in my teens, before I believed in the Lord Jesus, I thought I was good. I always compared myself with the people in the world, and I felt I was superior to them. In my mind I would think: Let them believe in the Lord Jesus; they need salvation, but not me because I am good. However, when the Spirit of God began to touch me, I began to sense that from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet, there was nothing good in me. I felt that I was the greatest sinner in the world. I was just a young man of fifteen at that time, and I would sit by myself and weep because I felt I was the greatest sinner in the world. But thank God, He saves the sinners! When I believed in the Lord Jesus, my sins were all forgiven. He gave me a new life, and He lives in me to be my life. He is my Lord. Thank God, He called me.

Brothers and sisters, what is your attitude towards the Lord this morning? Have you yielded yourself to Him and allowed Him to be your Lord and Savior? Or have you rejected Him? Or do you think there will still be time for you to repent? Two thousand years have passed, and that is a long time. All the prophecies preceding the coming of the Lord have been fulfilled. The next one is the coming of the Lord. Are you ready for Him?

My prayer is that when the Lord shall return, this auditorium will be empty. None will be left behind. Oh brothers and sisters, this is the most serious consideration of your life. You cannot afford to delay it because we believe that the Lord may come at any moment. What if He should come now? Eternity is before you, and you can choose Him and live eternally with God or you can deny Him and be eternally lost. The gospel is presented to the whole world. "God so loved

the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). This promise is for you. Have you taken it? Oh, it is the cry of my heart that everyone in this auditorium has or will receive the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior. Then when He shall return, you will gladly, joyfully leap for joy in welcoming Him. This is the purpose of our time together.

Brothers and sisters, this may be the last call for you. If you do not take this opportunity, you have nobody to blame but yourself. The rich man (see Luke 16:19-31) is suffering in Hades, but Lazarus the beggar is in Abraham’s bosom because Lazarus was a believer. May this be true with everyone this morning! We commit all of you into His hand. May the blessing of the Lord be with you.

Shall we pray:

Dear Lord, as we gather here this morning, this can be the last opportunity of Thy offer to us. If there be still some here who have not yet believed in You, we pray that Thou would touch his or her heart that all may be saved and know the mercy of God. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.