

Mary at the sepulchre (i) (Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Humberstone, George (1896-1977)

[0 : 00] If the Lord will enable me, I would draw your attention to the chapter that we read, the 20th chapter in the Gospel according to John, and the 11th verse, verse 11.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre.

The 11th verse in the 20th of John. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre.

But you read in the preceding verse, the 10th verse, then the disciples went away again, onto their own home.

What a difference there is in these two verses, what they express. The disciples, although they had been told time after time of the resurrection of Christ, they had, he had often told them of his solemn death, his sufferings, that he should die, and the third day he should rise again.

[1 : 26] But we read in the ninth verse, as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

And oh, what a description this is of you and I, really. We may have heard of these things time after time, perhaps in our youthful days, but they were nothing to us.

And we didn't receive the word. We had no capacity to receive the word. And they seemed to be left again to this.

They were disciples, mind you, and they loved this blessed Jesus. But it was hidden from them at this time.

And they could, as it were, almost indifferently go back again home. Although they had looked into the sepulchre, Peter and John had, they had seen all that was now left in the sepulchre.

[2 : 39] But they went home again. Although we read that in the eighth verse, then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed.

But it doesn't seem as if he really believed fully in the resurrection of Christ. He believed what he saw and what they had been told of the things that remained in the sepulchre.

But we certainly read that they went away again unto their own home. But Mary, what a significant but this is.

Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping. This was Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

A terrible, notorious character. We're not going to talk about that, no. She had much forgiven her. And where there is much forgiven, there is much love.

[3 : 54] Christ said so, didn't he? And here she was found lingering at the sepulchre. What was it that kept her there? Why didn't she go away with the other disciples?

It was love, love in her heart, that kept her there. And she couldn't leave that sepulchre. There was something in her that could not be satisfied.

And they could not comfortably go back home again. Now, something held her, bound her, fast as it were, to that sepulchre.

She knew that her Lord had been placed there. And her love, oh, what love it was, manifested in this, that she said, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

I believe she felt all such strength in herself that she would have borne him away if she could have found him, not realizing as yet that he was risen.

[5 : 11] But, oh, there is much to learn in this, if the Holy Ghost will give us to see a little into the depth of it, and how dependent we are upon him.

It was the Holy Ghost that moved her in this love to Christ. It is a wonderful mercy, if any of us have ever known any of this same love in our hearts.

We didn't come into the world with it, you know. We came into this world, we inherited, through the fall of our first parents, a fallen nature.

That nature is absolutely an enemy to Christ. And however we may be brought up, we may be very, very morally good.

We may have a very kind disposition, naturally. And we may do good things, and may be very upright in our lives.

[6 : 26] Or, on the other hand, we may be like something like Mary had been. We may have been left to go into the world in all its wickedness, its vanity, its sin, as I was.

But, looked at from heaven, in the sight of an almighty, holy God, we are all on one level. Dead in trespasses and in sins.

And yet, yet, in the eternal mind of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that great God, who rules everything, who is eternal, and eternal in his purposes, they foresaw the fall.

They knew that those two creatures that they had created and placed in Eden's garden, beautiful creatures, no sin in them, nothing in them at all to make them unhappy.

Perfect God pronounced them good. And they had everything around them for their peace and their happiness. But, the Lord knew that they would fall.

[7 : 54] In their foreknowledge, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, foreknew that they would fall. And in this shines forth the wonderful grace of the Trinity, in that before they fell, before they had a being, before sin entered into the world, this covenant that we call the covenant of grace, was entered into by these three glorious persons.

And they determined from all eternity that all Adam's race should not be damned for their sin, though they all deserved it.

And they eternally, the Father chose a number out of Adam's lost race. He wrote their names in his book.

He gave them to his eternal Son in a covenant of grace, mercy, peace, love. Oh, who can understand it?

Why it should have been, when we were all sinners, lost, ruined, no claim upon him for any mercy, nothing in us, no, no, to attract him, to show mercy, but everything the very opposite, to bring out his wrath, for wherever sin is, wrath must essentially come out of a holy God against that wrath.

[9 : 29] And I often repeat it, and it is solemnly true, that every sin, in thought, word, or deed, that has ever taken place since the fall of Adam, and will do to the end of time, must essentially come under the wrath of that holy, holy God.

Must be so essentially. His justice demands it. If you were ever led into the solemn justice of a holy God, I will show you what a pure, holy God he is, and how that he cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.

But oh, the blessedness of this covenant of grace, which was made before time began in heaven, between these three glorious persons in the Trinity, the sins of his people were laid upon the heart and head of Christ, the eternal Son of God, who would in the fullness of time, as the Father had given him this number, to be his spouse in this world, his bride everlastingly in heaven, as the Father had given him this people, to save, to redeem, from their transgressions, their sins were laid upon him.

And the justice of a holy God was meted out upon him in their own place and stead.

But oh, oh, what a wonderful mercy this is. What grace shines in it that even before the fall, this covenant was entered into.

[11 : 32] And it will be fulfilled in every letter of it. Oh, yes, it will. Well now, in the fullness of time, Christ came into this world.

He united to his divine person, humanity, in a sacred, holy humanity, a human body, no sin in it.

He did not come into the world in the usual generation that you and I came into it. We inherit a fallen nature from a fallen head.

All Adam's progeny, without exception, come into this world with a fallen nature. We read, don't we, when sin entered into the world, death passed upon all men for they all have sinned.

And this people that he had chosen, their names are in his book. They came into the world just like the rest of humanity. Sinful loss ruined.

[12 : 44] No capacity for good in them. That is acceptable to God. No. But oh, their names are in his book.

The eternal love of the Trinity is upon them. But how could he have dealings with them? Sinful, lost, ruined, even as others.

They are spoken of in Ephesians as children of wrath, even as others. So they are in their nature. There is no difference in them to the world.

And some of them appear far, far worse than many in the world. But, oh, they are loved with an everlasting love. And that wonderful, wonderful, infinite wisdom of God found out a way.

Ah, wonderful way in which he could make these people meet even for heaven and make them meet to receive his love, his blessing in their heart.

[13 : 57] Christ, in the fullness of time, came into this world. God, he fulfilled every jot and tittle in the holy law of God for them.

His work was a vicarious work from his birth to his death. He came into the world by a miraculous conception, the overshadowing of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost.

And that holy thing that was brought forth was called the Son of the Highest, a pure, holy, human body and reasonable soul.

And, he came into this world made of a woman made under the law, that solemn law that can only curse you and I.

There's nothing in that law that can help us. Oh, that law, what a terrible law it is when it is revealed to the soul in the spirituality of it.

[15 : 06] It will do as the Apostle said, when the law came, sin revived and I died. Died, that is, to all hope in the law, though he had been a Pharisee.

But, oh, as Christ came into the world, he came into it with the capacity to fulfill that law. He could say to the Jews in the temple, not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

But, who could fulfill it? None but he. We came into the world with a nature altogether income with no capacity in it to fulfill one precept of that law acceptable to a holy God.

Oh, it is a mercy to know it and feel it. But he came into this world in that holy humanity, fulfilled every jot of that holy law.

He could say to the disciples in the temple, I do always those things which please him, that is, that pleased his father.

[16 : 25] No human person could ever say that since Adam fell except this glorious man, this God man, mediator, Emmanuel, God with us in a human nature.

Well, now he fulfilled that law altogether for his people and that righteousness is imputed to them as though it was theirs.

It is a glorious wedding dress. Ah, and the church at last, his elect, his spouse, his bride will shine as the sun in the firmament on that great day when he sets up his great white throne and all nations are gathered before him in the final judgments.

His spouse, his church will be on his right hand. She will shine as we read in, I think it is in Matthew, as the sun in the firmament in that glorious righteousness of his.

He will say unto her, come ye blessed of my father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world, when millions on the left hand side will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, to hide them from the eyes of him that sits upon the throne.

[18 : 02] Which side shall we be on? Which? Well, what an infinite mercy. This people that he has eternally loved and saved, he will bring them to love this glorious person.

He came, as I have said, worked out a righteousness for his people, and they are forever justified in this righteousness from all things from which they could never be justified by the Lord Moses, and they are clothed in this righteousness in the sight of God.

As he views them in that righteousness, ah, he sees them pure, holy, perfect, without stain, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

And also he, in his wonderful love for them, he bore all that justice had against them.

You know that solemn justice could not rest and would not rest. It could not essentially rest until it was absolutely satisfied.

[19 : 23] It must be satisfied either on the sinner or on an adequate person standing in their own place and stead, an advocate, and whoever could this be, except this glorious Son of God in humanity.

And oh, as he came to Gethsemane, who have you ever viewed him there, as in Gethsemane, fell to the ground, three times, uttering the same prayer, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Oh, the bitterness of that cup, we shall never understand it. It is beyond human reason to understand it. As the Father began to pour out his wrath without any mitigation, no holding back, upon the head and heart of his own dear beloved Son, who had been with him in his bosom from all eternity.

But now, as he took upon him the suretyship of his people, the Father dealt with him accordingly. It pleased the Lord, we read in Isaiah, hundreds of years before it came to pass, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief.

He hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. What a depth there is in that word. This reaches far deeper than the ordinary outward trespassers of that law.

[21 : 16] Yes, oh, it reaches to the thoughts and intents of the heart, this sink of sin that we have within us. He hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all, that depth of indwelling sin that is in the heart of every one of Adam's seed.

But how few know it, how few are troubled about it. He laid it upon him as though it was his. sins, even as he worked out the righteousness and it is imputed to them, so surely did he impute their sins to him as though they were his.

And in Gethsemane began to pour out his wrath upon him, the very hell that was due to his people. Oh, and as he reeled upon the ground, his agony was so great, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.

Ah, three times he uttered the same prayer, more earnestly each time, but there could be no other way, no other way.

He must bear all their transgressions. He must go to the end of the law for righteousness sake for them. And he next was in the judgment hall where they spit upon him, blasphemed him, scourged his back.

[23 : 03] He had already stained his raiment with his blood in Gethsemane. Now it was stained further still. He stained all his raiment with his precious blood.

Ah, and they crowned him with awful oriental thorns. These are far worse than any thorns we have here.

They are like steel and they drove them into his brow with a reed which is a rod. Blood would stream down his face.

We read, don't we, his visage was marred more than any man's and his form more than the sons of men. When he came out of that judgment hall, for you know what scourging is if you've read about it, every stroke went through the skin and brought blood.

We read, don't we, again in the scriptures, they ploughed his back, they plucked off his hair. Oh, what sufferings he went through externally.

[24 : 23] And we would not minimize those, God forbid, but what was going on within, in his holy heart and soul, as wave upon wave, billow upon billow of the dreadful wrath of the holy God was burning within.

Who can tell what he passed through? Ah, I believe I was once led into Gethsemane, the judgmental Calvary's tree.

Ah, what a sight it was. And at last, as I saw him by faith, hung on Calvary's tree, I heard that dolorous cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And I seemed to see him bow that holy head and give up the ghost. He entered into the very throes, all the throes, of human death.

But why should he have done it all? Why should this blessed holy person, sin was never found in him? Why, why should he come to such a pass?

[25 : 41] Out of love to sinners, sinners, Mary was one of them. If the Lord in his wonderful mercy, the Holy Ghost, for it is the third glorious person in the blessed Trinity, God, the Holy Ghost, he is much slighted in these days, but he is very God, equal with the Father and the eternal Son in the God Head, almighty, omnipresent, everything that we attribute to a holy God is his, all power, and it is his blessed office to deal with his people in this life.

And he loves them with the same love as the Father and the eternal Son, this glorious God, the Holy Ghost.

And he knows whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. He knows for whom Christ suffered, bled, and died, and rose again.

He knows who formed the travail of his holy soul, and he will never let one of them pass out of this time state without his blessed work within them.

And oh my friends, how essential is that work within? It is just as essential to you and me as was all the work of Christ.

[27 : 20] You may think that's a, that is extraordinary. You may think it is hardly true, but it is, it is true. It is just as essential is this work within you and me as all that Christ accomplished.

For without the work of the Holy Ghost in your heart and mine, we should never know anything of our sins. We should never know any quickening power. We should be left as we were born into this world, fill up the measure of our sins and sink to hell under the wrath of God.

But the Holy Ghost loves this people. He knows them all. And he will come into their hearts in due time, some in their young days, some in their midlife, oh just according to his sovereignty.

He will come and he will bring about a new birth within them. and this is an addition to them. He doesn't work on something you've already got.

No, no, no. That's sinful. Will never be looked upon by God with any allowance. No, no. How necessary is the new birth, this new creation within.

[28 : 40] This alone is capable as the Holy Ghost uses it, speaks in it, enlightens us with it, and gives us life and feeling in divine things.

It is only as we receive this that we really savingly believe and have living faith given to us.

Oh, how essential is the new birth. But Christ will give every one of his people this new birth by the Holy Ghost. He finished all this great work of salvation for them, out of love to them.

Oh, what a love was here. And what a love was in the Father to give him. What a love was in the heart of the Father when he punished his only begotten son to the extent that he did to save this wretched people.

What a love there is in the heart of the Holy Ghost that he should ever come and dwell in their hearts. And you know where he once takes up his abode, he never leaves that soul until he lands it in heaven at last.

[30 : 03] No, how he may suspend his influence within. We may fear he has gone all together sometimes. When sin prevails and this old man that we were born with is in the ascendancy and we seem left to him and Satan, that great adversary of Christ and his church.

But no, he never leaves his people nor forsakes them. And he will deal with them, teach them, enlighten them. he will use means to this end.

He will use the preaching of the everlasting gospel. He will use this word, his blessed word. Indeed, everything he does in them and through them and by them is according to this blessed word.

It is. But he will bless them with light. He will enlighten them. He will give them to see and feel their sinfulness.

He will give them to see and feel that God is a holy, holy God. They may not have believed hardly that there was a God before, but they believe it now.

[31 : 23] Oh, yes. Oh, I know what I speak here. For years I tried my utmost to be an atheist in the world, threw this book away, never entered a place of worship for years and all the pleasures and vanities of this sinful world.

But I know this, when God the Holy Ghost begins with you, brings his law into your conscience, convinces of sin, of righteousness that you have none, and brings judgment into your heart.

Are you believe there's a God? Are you will that? To your altogether consternation and your trouble. Real religion begins with trouble, grief.

Not always to the same degree. No, God the Holy Ghost is a sovereign. He works just according to his sovereignty, as he will.

In some cases he works very deeply, forcibly, sharply, in some cases not so deep. You know when Christ spoke to Nicodemus concerning the new birth, he said it was like the wind.

[32 : 47] He said, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

Oh, we see the sovereignty of God in this. The wind is not always literally at high velocity. No. Sometimes it is the other extreme.

It is but just a movement, shall we say. Just a breeze that fans the cheek. But it's wind, it's wind, it's movement of air.

So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. Some the Lord deals so gently with. They can't go back to a beginning and that they can't say really that they have had very, very much dealing with in their life.

But in every case they will know this for the teaching of the Holy Ghost, whether it is gentle or whether it is more forcible, will bring them to know they're sinners, sinners, sinners.

[34 : 00] And oh what a mercy it is to be brought to know and feel before God that you're a sinner, that living and dying in your sins, you must essentially come under his wrath.

Well now, I hadn't designed to speak in this way at all this morning, but however, there it is, I'm not my own master in the pulpit and I don't wish to be, but he had wrote this work in Mary, Mary Magdalene and no doubt in her case it was a deep work.

She was a great sinner sinner. And I do believe that where the Lord, where he finds his people as it were, in the depth of sin in the world perhaps, they need a deeper work and he brings them out of it in his sovereignty.

Oh, they need much to bring them out of it. But he will bring them out of it. But sooner or later the Holy Ghost, he won't leave them, he doesn't half do his work, he does it wholly and perfectly.

And sooner or later he will bring them to see something of Christ, Christ, as the way, the truth and the life.

[35 : 35] and he will bring them to see and feel that salvation, redemption from their sins is in him and that peace, forgiveness, pardon for their sin is only to be found in him, this glorious man.

And he will begin to reveal the beauty and the loveliness of this person to them. Oh, I've said many a time there's no forced work in the gospel. No, he'll bring every one of his people to love this blessed person and he'll show them him, the Holy Ghost will reveal him to them.

And sometimes they'll see such beauty in him, such a loveliness in him, they can't describe it beyond description, better felt than described, but it will bring out such a feeling of affection to him.

him. I will draw his spouse to him. And when he does draw, she'll run after him. She can't help it.

He will become to her the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely one. They had been so to Mary, hadn't he? Yes.

[36 : 56] Oh, she had felt that sweet peace that passes all understanding in the forgiveness of her sins. She wouldn't forget her sins, neither do I.

They come up many a time. I used to think they were dead and buried, but they resurrect many a time. And it is a felt sense continually of our sinfulness, our lost condition, ah, when the Lord himself in his infinite mercy comes again to your soul and he says, I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you, though he brings her into a wilderness and tries her there, shows her what is in her heart, her natural heart.

He knows what's in it, but he'll make her know what's in it. It is all to one end to glorify this wonderful Christ. And at times as he sanctifies these things in your heart, oh, how lovely he becomes.

Oh, how sweet is his very name. Have you ever sung that little hymn in our book, how sweet the name of Jesus sounds? In a believer's ear, it so, it so this sorrow drives away fears.

ever sung it with feeling in your heart, or have you ever been as you couldn't sing it? It's been so sweet, and the name of Christ has been above every name to you, and you have really worshipped him in spirit and in truth.

[38 : 45] Well, this is what Mary felt, and at this sepulchre, she couldn't leave it. love, love, in her heart bound her fast to it.

Though the disciples had gone away home, and you know he upbraided them after for their unbelief, but oh he blessed Mary, as we read in the chapter, how he favoured her, made himself known to her, and favoured her in her heart, gave her this command, go and tell my disciples that I'm risen again, and oh what a wonderful mercy this is.

Well, many and many a time you will feel if you know these things in your heart, if you have known something of what I've been trying to put forth, there will be many a time when you will long to feel again and again the resurrection power of Christ, even as the apostle did, that I may know him, the power, the power of his resurrection.

What is all this? His death, his resurrection, what is it to us? If we never know the power of it, my friends, it's the power of it we want to know and feel within, lifting us above our sins, our unbelief, the things of time and sense at times and drawing us to his blessed feet in sweet worship and sometimes in anticipation of a blessed heaven at last.

Here I must leave it, the time is gone. May the Lord bless his word to us. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.