

Mark

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- [0 : 00] As the Lord may help me this evening, I would direct your attention to the Gospel according to Mark and the last clause of verse 21.
- The Gospel according to Mark, the tenth chapter, the last clause of verse 21. And come, take up the cross and follow me.
- And come, take up the cross and follow me. The end of this is described to us in the verse that we have just sung.
- Much less Jesus, may we be wholly taken up with thee, and in every deep distress, lean upon thy truth and grace.
- And though, at the initial giving of the commandment of God, we may not realise the glory of which is to crown the end of such a path.
- [1 : 27] Yet nevertheless, as we go along, we shall get a glimpse, as we may say we have in this hymn this evening, of the end of the whole matter.
- What is it that enables any person to continue in anything? It is, as they are, the ultimate objective.
- Even in the ordinary things in which men and women engage, there are many discouragements.
- And if there are many, many frustrations which accompany the working out of these things.
- And in consequence, we may inquire as to what it is that enables these people to continue and not give up the project which they have in mind.
- [2 : 48] It is because they constantly are drawn to the ultimate object, the final scene. And they think that everything is worthwhile enduring because the final objective will supersede everything.
- Well now, if we can find this kind of illustration being worked out amongst men, we shall surely be able to find it, though a rare find, amongst those who are the people of God.
- There is no doubt that you will need an object. And for this reason, when the Lord calls his people out of an ungodly world, whether it be the world of profanity or the world of empty profession, he gives them a glimpse of the object.
- So that they are able to say, sometimes, object of my first desire, Jesus crucified for me.
- All to happiness aspire, only to be found in thee. Now this is important.
- [4 : 39] Religion without it is not worth the name. There is much religion without it. And if our religion is different to the religions without it, it is because of the mercy of God.
- Through the command of God in the first instance, the revelation of God in the second instance, and giving us a sight of the glorious object which, by the power of God's grace, becomes the first desire of the soul.
- And ultimately, there is the persevering of the saints.

How do they endure? The word of God tells us this. He endured as seeing him who is invisible.

Now the words of our text fall into three points. Come, take up the cross, and follow me.

[6 : 08] To whom was this said? In the context, it was said to a person that Jesus loved.

A point which is not to be lost sight of. And then Jesus, beholding him, loved him.

And said unto him, one thing thou lackest. Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.

And having done this, the command followed. Come, take up the cross, and follow me.

I know, of course, that there are opinions regarding this person which differ vastly.

[7 : 29] But I'm satisfied in this point that if you've had the experience in your soul of the person here mentioned, you will understand it and be glad to receive the point that the man was blessed with the favor of God.

it would surely put us into a difficulty if we were to say as some have said that this man was lost in which case the Lord did not love him.

so therefore if we are to disregard the scripture words that though Jesus here loved him he only loved him with a natural attachment but ultimately he was lost we may say the same applies to Martha and Mary and Lazarus because it uses exactly the same description he loved them and so the ground is swept from under our feet if we do not accept here what the scripture says then Jesus beholding him loved him who could have seen that he lacked one thing except that this love proceeded from the son of

God himself the eternal son clothed in humanity without any restrictions looked upon this person and because he loved him he told him that he lacked now what about us has God been kind enough because he has loved us sometimes to tell us that we've lacked something now we may ask the question as to why the man was not disturbed with the other commandments and yet was greatly disturbed when a further commandment was impressed upon him if you look down the ten commandments

I dare say you may with a measure of honesty say not spiritually considered but as this man spoke that you had kept them great mercy very desirable if being asked concerning the commandments we can speak and as this young man did or this man did and said master all these have I observed from my youth but there is one besetting sin which belongs to us all it may be different it may be with some that they would not be able to say so conclusively as this man did that he had not committed any of these it might have been one of these but in your case is a besetting sin indeed but we come to the point go thy way sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven now you see this man we are told was evidently a rich man now it would be very difficult to disassociate a rich man from the sale of covetousness because of the hardness of people's heart and the blindness of their minds they are not always aware of this spirit working in them if we were to turn to the 20th of exodus and there read about the 10 commandments we shall find that the last one mentioned is so embracing thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife nor his man servant nor his maid servant nor his ox nor his ass nor anything is thy neighbors

[13 : 37] I shall not press this point any further because it will be between you and God to consider the matter as to whether you are free from the spirit of covetousness the apostle said I had not known lust except the law had said thou shalt not covet and in another place we read this covetousness which is idolatry now this covetous spirit had paid its dividends and it doubtless contributed largely to the wealth which this man had gathered together but at the same time you see he was still in the position to speak of having kept numerous of the commandments and therefore would present himself to many a person as an upright person as a godly person but God looked at the heart now you see we're not suggesting that this man did not do his business properly but God looked into his heart and when he looked into his heart he may well have found that which the man was unaware of but the time had come when

God was going to make him aware of it and so he says to this person go thy way sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven oh what a crushing consideration give everything away for the treasure that is in heaven I can see my treasure upon earth I cannot see my treasure in heaven therefore we read he was sad at the saying and went away grieved for he had great possessions now my experience has been this that when God began the work of grace in my soul there were those things that

God required that I should part with and without any question my feelings were exactly the same as this man's and he was sad at that saying and went away grieved for he had great possessions now often the word of God leaves the issue not clearly decided and yet the final issue is clearly discernible if our eyes may be opened to discern the doctrine of God the truth of God the faithfulness of God in it and everything hinges upon these words then

Jesus beholding him loved him what did this mean we refer to this hymn that we just sang again loved of God to Jesus given in the purposes of heaven they are brought bought with loved blood divine and they must in glory shine and because of this word must all the powers that may assemble in your heart all the enmity that may seem to be increasing its vigor will ultimately be overcome if we should say but this man went away surely he could not be right

I would refer you to the parable of the man that had two sons and he said go first go work in my vineyard and he said I will not go but afterward he repented and went and he presented the same question to the second son who said I go sir but went not then the question is posed who did the will of his father there is no doubt as to the answer he that repented and went cannot we bring the application of these words that by the overpowering grace of

[20 : 06] God though there was a determination not to go a determination not to come a determination not to take up the cross a determination not to follow the Lord if it meant leaving all yet by the power of grace repentance was given and the man went and can you trace it in your life the evidence of grace in your soul that you can line yourself along with that son who said I will not go and it was the words of his father but afterward he repented and went repentance you know repentance is a word that is very rarely mentioned in the religious world today but it's an experience which is essential what is repentance well people may say it's a change of mind which of course it is but if it's to be effectual it means that God has got to make a change of heart so that the things we once abhorred now become the things that we cherish and the things that we once cherished are the things that we now abominate and abhor now the first word of our text and come where the word of a king is there is power

I do like to set before the congregations the power once have I heard this that power belongeth unto God nothing seems to me to be more dreadful than to present a Christ which would say come come and was overcome by the person to whom it was addressed who said I'm not coming who are you that I should come or as Pharaoh said who is the Lord that I should obey him now if you've known that spirit you'll know that if God has given you repentance not only change your mind but change your heart that he's also given you a willingness to come now of course businessmen before they engage on a venture in their wisdom will want to know a great deal as far as possible about the future if they take this step what is the prospect what are the conditions what is the economic situation and so on and this mind has to be changed with respect to the children of

God it is declared to us clearly in the case of Abraham he went out not knowing whither he went except he knew that he was seeking a city now this is what God will say to you when he says come come but there is reference to Abraham it is said truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out they might have had opportunity to have returned but now they desire a better country that is in heavenly wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city now the spirit of

God in the course of this great work of repentance in the soul he gives them a little glimpse of the city they cannot understand it maybe they are still the old nature tucking the other way and saying to you you dare come you dare answer this call you haven't weighed the cost you don't know what's in the future and if you've parted with all that you've got now then what assurance have you that what you'll be left ready to be cast out and God is able to deal with these matters so we present to you this evening we preach to you this evening the Lord

God who when he says come he means it he means it and you will come we read in the word of God and they shall come are we not glad some of us I'm sure are glad of the shall comes and the will comes that we find in the word of God now it would be no need there would be no need for us ever to read in the scripture and they shall come were it not that they shall come in spite of all the opposition that is bound to rise to hinder them and to stop them but they shall come and they shall come as we read in the old testament with weeping and with supplications will I lead them what a difference there is in a man's religion that is contained in keeping the letter of the law and a man whose religion is contained in being drawn and being under the powerful influence of almighty

[28 : 02] God who says and they shall come and with weeping and with supplications will I lead them and I believe that this happened with this person become became shall come and so he was overcome by the power of God and became an overcomer and become take up the cross now many many observations have been put regarding the cross it's an expression which is used in the world but it's not a true expression in the world certainly it is not agreeable to the meaning of the word here take up the cross how often it is referred to in relation to something which perhaps doesn't lay straight with their desires hinders them in their progress yet they never regard it as coming from the

Lord but what about you and me when we say whatever cross lies at thy door it cometh from the Lord what do we really mean you know the apostle had a cross he speaks of it in the Corinthians and that cross was a thorn in the flesh now you know a thorn in the flesh can be very painful and I was struck just recently with that phrase nigh unto cursing and how nigh of you and of

I have been unto cursing when a thorn even naturally has been in our flesh even be it by the scratch but the apostle had a thorn in the flesh take up the cross you may perhaps say whatever cross you may have in mind that it is too heavy for me to take up but be assured of this if you objected to coming in the first place and you were overcome by the grace of God you may well expect to object in the second place but also may expect by the grace of God to be an overcomer there now we find the apostle crying unto God we read that he thrice sought the

Lord that he might remove this thorn in the flesh the messenger of Satan to buffet him he asked for it to be removed but the Lord did not intend to remove it because it was necessary that he should take it up and carry it and if the apostle should say I cannot take it up I cannot carry it then the Lord spoke of several words which became the strength and inspiration of his soul as you will remember doubtless the Lord said my grace is sufficient for thee and my strength is made perfect in weakness come take up the cross but then if we turn to the seventh chapter to the Romans

I believe we shall discover another aspect of the cross which the apostle had to carry and that was the old man of sin and which he ultimately cries out against oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death is that your cross what did it mean the good that I would I do not and the evil that I would not that I do and how to perform that that I would I find not now it is a cross and you went away with it but the Lord says take up the cross and then of course there is the timidity of our flesh take up the cross and bear it you see it was not something that was just to be lifted up and looked at a cross had to be born this was

[35 : 03] I would think not an unusual sight in the days when the Romans introduced this method of crucifixion and there would be as the Lord himself had to do a bearing of that bearing of the cross by the man himself oh then there is to be a bearing of the cross take up the cross now it will be painful for you and the Lord doesn't say that it won't be painful you know the apostle in writing to his son Timothy he says endure hardness as a good soldier of

Jesus Christ and whatever cross is laid upon you will be hardness it will be hard to your flesh and there will be times when you will wonder whether your flesh will say I've had enough perhaps your flesh has said I've had enough and therefore you'll need the same power that in spite of your tremendous opposition said come and you repented and went the same power will need to be used in order to keep you continuing remember Lot's wife oh what a notice this is it was clearly a monument a warning remember

Lot's wife I fear in the present day that there is too much looseness in speaking about scriptural phrases remember Lot's wife now she looked back and maybe with all the pressures from within you're all wondering whether you'll look back but what do we read in the scriptures thine ears shall hear a word behind thee and sometimes that word behind thee will be this no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back back now that's not going back it's looking back it's fit for the kingdom of heaven now where the word where the word of the king is there is power and you'll have every reason to thank God if God has spoken to you from behind when you've been about to turn your head to look back immediately there would be a loss men running in a race if they're leading may sometimes be tempted to turn their heads and if their competitors are fairly near to them it may lose them the race and how foolish they've been even to look back or glance over their shoulder it is contrary to the commandment of the

Lord let thine eyes look straight forward and we have those words in the Hebrews looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith take up the cross the cross here now it is the cross that God has appointed for you and for me now what is the purpose of the cross well the purpose of the cross with regard to the apostle Paul in relation to the thorn in the flesh was this lest lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations there was given to me a thorn in the flesh a messenger of Satan to buffet me you see we can so easily get up be puffed up with the pride of our hearts so we should bless

God for anything that keeps us humble that keeps us in a low place how well as one I think it's Mr.

[41 : 00] Hart said make me well my vileness no keep me very very low and that will be a cross and God says take it up take it up you know the best views of Jesus Christ and the excellency of his glory are seen from a low place I have read I think somewhere that miners deep down in the mine shaft if they look up we'll get a better view of the son than we do and surely if we're in a low place we shall get a better view of the son of righteousness the more thy glory strikes my eyes the humbler I shall lie so take up the cross and follow me so there is encouragement there is inspiration even naturally when you may be serving under a person who would say I shan't ask you to do anything that I would not be willing to do myself

I shall not expect you to engage or follow a course which I myself would not embark upon or perhaps we should say have not embarked upon how the Lord Jesus Christ here when he says come take up the cross and follow me will be your inspiration to follow him and how sweetly as one put it through floods and flames if Jesus lead I'll follow where he goes and perhaps some of you know that to be a real truth confirmed by one such secret word I seek no further light light but walk depending on my Lord by faith and not by sight and follow me now we can consider for a few moments what this means what me means how many misconceptions are presented to the minds of many in relation to these two words follow me

I like Mr. Hart's point on this which you can read in his own experience there was a time when in his religion he was much more concerned about having revelations and being able to speak of great experiences until the time came when the Lord came and simply said this will you have these things or will you follow a despised and crucified man now in this world that's what it means you may be despised you may suffer crucifixion but do be encouraged by this that you are called upon to come and take up the cross as he did and follow a despised and crucified man in his epistle to Galatians to the

Galatians the apostle says I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me and if this precious portion is sealed upon your soul you'll say welcome cross if they'll remember me it will be a cross and a heavy one for the people of God to take up as they pass through this world perhaps we can sum it up like this when e'er they meet the public eye they feel they feel the public scorn for men their fairest claims deny and count them basely born and this is the family on earth whose father fills the throne and o'er seed of heavenly birth to men their little known and the family of

God you know his little known sometimes I've thought about that word concerning Israel of old ye shall not be reckoned among the nations and I believe it may truly be said that the true Israel of God is not reckoned among the nations they come they pass through this world and generally speaking they're unknown but they're not unknown to the people of God and they're certainly not unknown to God and so as they pass through this world they feel that they are separated nothing in common I felt at lunchtime today as I sat with three of my business colleagues for lunch that I had nothing in common

[48 : 26] I didn't join in the conversation because I couldn't I had nothing in common now to your flesh there will be a crucifixion that your spirit will be content and will be willing more than willing to have it so you see the Lord God sent his spirit I will send the comforter unto you the Holy Ghost which is the comforter whom I will send unto you and he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have spoken unto you and follow me there's a sweet word in the property of

Isaiah where it is written fear not I will hold thee by thy right hand fear not I will help thee I believe that is instructive in respect to following the Lord it is good when you and I can feel that the Lord is holding our hand just reminds me of when I first went into the ministry I had a letter from one of our other ministers and in it he was very encouraging and

I remember this expression he said put your hand in the hand of Jesus Christ and go forward well it may be that we should find it more strengthening if he had said may you feel the hand of Jesus Christ taking your hand and leading you forward follow me now the Lord will take you into no place for what he has been there before and just notice as we must hastily conclude the end of the matter all how these words may truly apply to the Lord Jesus Christ his sufferings now have reached a close and heaven affords him sweet repose now this is the end of come take up the cross follow me sufferings will in the end will reach a close and heaven afford you sweet repose and the trials of the way will save nothing when we get to the end of that way we shall have to leave it at this point may the Lord enlarge it in your soul and give you the clear evidence that he loves you by giving you that grace and that repentance despite all the opposition and rebellion of your natural mind to say lo glad I come lo glad I come to thee blessed land thou shalt take me as I am may the Lord grant it

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