

Crisis at the Close 5 of 6

The Cross

#0365

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—1961

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, And saying, If Thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself” Luke 23:33–37.

You and I are going to Calvary in just a little while, dear friends. We’re to go over the road that Jesus traveled. Concerning the remnant it is written:

“...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth...” Revelation 14:4.

As I have pointed out, there is much in the agony of the Savior in Gethsemane and on the cross that human beings can never fathom much. There is also much that we can understand through an experience and *only* through an experience.

Paul longed not only to know the power of Jesus' resurrection but before that the fellowship of His sufferings. And to the remnant church will be given in special measure, the great privilege to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His baptism.

We have seen how that as Jesus, knowing that His hour had come, took Himself to prayer in the garden. So the remnant, knowing the time according to the prophetic clock, must take themselves to prayer, and must enter into that experience written:

“...With strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God”
Early Writings, page 269.

Those who Jesus invited to pray with Him slept through much of the time in Gethsemane. So today, there are those who, while professing a fellowship with the Savior, *sleep* in the crisis hour. And we have seen how the coming of the mob finds Jesus alert and ready and the disciples unprepared.

So today, the hour of persecution will find those who have pled with God and received the Latter Rain *ready* to meet the mob, while those who, like the disciples have slept, will perhaps after a show of strength leave the church in the crisis hour.

Never forget that it is those who fail, who flee. The remnant who remain gather strength from the process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy. And as Jesus in the judgment hall gave that supreme exhibition of meekness and love, so the remnant, in the closing hour, will reveal to all the world, their persecutors and all who look on, such forgiving love as the Savior manifested.

Now, coming directly to the climax of the Savior's trial, we note several details which are to be paralleled today. Let us think of what brought about the death decree upon the Savior. In the first place, it was a *uniting* of religious prejudice and bigotry with political power. That's what crucified the Savior.

The mob, influenced by the leaders of the Jewish church, clamored for the blood of Jesus. And we're all familiar with the story of how Pilate was drawn along, pulled along and pressed along, until finally, yielding to their insistence, he signed the death decree. Note the agencies that combine in the story given in Luke 23. Speaking of the mob who were influenced by the religious leaders:

“And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will” Luke 23:23–25.

We know how today, as the 13th chapter of Revelation clearly shows, that there will be such *mass pressure* that legislators will yield to the popular demand. The people themselves back there joined in that cry for the blood of Jesus. And do not think that this great persecution is going to be something that a few evil-minded individuals are going to put over on the masses. The world itself is going to crucify Christ afresh in the person of His saints. Notice this statement in the *Great Controversy*:

“As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration” *Great Controversy*, page 615.

Notice that religious and secular authorities *combine* in this great persecution that's just ahead. They did back there, and they will again. Notice that it was through fear of the people that Pilate yielded. He was yielding to mass pressure. The inference is clear in the Scripture I read. There's a statement on this.

“Through fear of losing his power and authority, Pilate consented to the death of Jesus” *Early Writings*, page 174.

He was a politician and he yielded to the pressures. And so today it is written in the *Great Controversy*:

“The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor the Sunday... Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance” *Great Controversy*, page 592.

Do you see the striking parallel? Pilate *yielded* to the popular demand to sign the death decree against the Savior. And so again today, legislators will *yield* to the popular demand that the people of God shall be put under condemnation. As back there the people were stirred up by the religious leaders, so it will be down here today.

I want you to see the argument that religious leaders used to bring to focus the *thought* that Jesus should be put out of the way. Caiaphas had what he thought was a great inspiration:

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” John 11:49–50.

Caiaphas put forth the thought that even if Jesus was innocent, He still should be put out of the way because His influence tended to unsettle everything and to destroy the authority of the religious leaders and that eventually, the Romans would take away their nation if Christ was allowed to go on. And so he said the question of whether Christ was innocent or not was beside the point—He’s was making difficulties, and it is better for the nation that He should be put out of the way.

Now note the parallel down here today:

“It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument many centuries ago was brought against Christ by the ‘rulers of the people.’ ‘It is expedient for us,’ said the wily Caiaphas, ‘that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.’ John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be

issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death” *Great Controversy*, page 615.

This is the very argument that’s going to secure the death decree today. It’s exactly what secured the death decree against Jesus. This argument will appear conclusive and a decree will finally be issued against those who hollow the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment, and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. That brought the death decree against Jesus. That will bring the death decree against the saints down here today.

I want to notice the similarity of even some of the *expressions* dealing with those scenes back there, and as they are reenacted down here today. My eye caught these four words so closely paralleled in the experience of Jesus and the experience of the remnant. You remember the scene as Pilate finally signed the death decree and turned Jesus over to the mob, and they took Jesus and led Him away to Calvary to crucify Him. There’s a little expression in *Early Writings* that gives a picture of the mob spirit:

“The Son of God was delivered to the people to be crucified;
with shouts of triumph they led the dear Saviour away”
Early Writings, page 175.

Have you ever been around a howling, hooting mob? Probably few of us have, but we will very soon. And, ah friends, it’s not a pretty sight. It’s a terrible sound, the howling of the mob. I want you to notice that expression again “with shouts of triumph.” Those shouts are going to be repeated. This is picturing the final scene as the hour comes for the execution of the death decree:

“With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of
evil men are about to rush upon their prey...”
Great Controversy, page 635.

There you have it, my friends. We’re going to hear those shouts. It is true that the remnant will not actually be killed as Jesus was killed. There the parallel is not followed. Jesus *actually* died. They nailed Him to the cross, and He was hung up, and He finally expired. But the deliverance of the remnant will come *just at* the point of death. But as we shall see tonight, friends, they will go through many of the experiences that Jesus went through and died.

I want to say to you that the worst thing about dying is not to quit living. The actual *expiring* of the Savior was a release from the awful anguish and suffering that He had been going through for hours, was it not? Yes. And the agony and anguish that the saints experience during the time of Jacob’s trouble will be a far greater trial than the death of the martyrs. Never forget that: it is a fact that they will not be executed. But let

not that in *any* sense dim the vision of the trial, the test. For it will be a trial and a test *greater* than mere physical death.

Jesus, on the cross, of course, suffered many things on the cross that you and I will never know. He had resting upon Him the weight of the sins of the whole world. The guilt of every descendent of Adam was pressing upon His heart. And we'd do well to meditate upon that. But that is not our subject tonight. We are studying particularly those experiences of Jesus, which to some extent, we shall enter into.

We read at the beginning of our study that various groups of people united in deriding Christ as He hung upon the cross. The rulers derided Him saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ." The soldiers mocked Him saying, "If Thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself."

And even the thieves that were hanging there said, "If you are really the Christ, save yourself and us." Others of the Gospel writers tell us that the multitude that passed by joined in that reviling of the Savior. From one and another came the words flung in His teeth, "If You are really the Christ, why don't You come down from the cross?"

In their ignorance, they thought that they had made a point and an argument. They thought that the *silence* of Christ and the apparent *weakness* of Christ proved that His claims were false, and that He was not truly the Son of God. But you and I know, friends, that it was because of love and pity that He hung there and bore all that abuse, and *stayed* on the cross when He might have come down.

The remnant are going to suffer in a similar way the howling of the mob and the jeering and imprecation. Notice this statement and get the picture of coming time of Jacob's trouble:

"It was an hour of fearful, terrible agony to the saints. Day and night they cried unto God for deliverance. To outward appearance, there was no possibility of their escape. The wicked had already begun to triumph, crying out, 'Why doesn't your God deliver you out of our hands? Why don't you go up and save your lives?' But the saints heeded them not" *Early Writings*, page 283.

I was glad to find in *Great Controversy* that one of the things that's going to help us in that crisis hour is remembering that the *same* expressions were used by the people around the cross, friends. Perhaps some of us will remember that right here in this meeting tonight, this was impressed by the Holy Spirit upon our hearts. These scenes may be very much nearer than we have any idea of. These are the things to be impressing our minds. If we listen to the inspired counsels, we shall have little time to spend listening to the moaning of the winds of doctrine that are blowing. Oh, to listen to what God says.

“Yet to human sight it will appear that the people of God must soon seal their testimony with their blood as did the martyrs before them. They themselves begin to fear that the Lord has left them to fall by the hand of their enemies. It is a time of fearful agony. Day and night they cry unto God for deliverance. The wicked exult, and the jeering cry is heard: ‘Where now is your faith? Why does not God deliver you out of our hands if you are indeed His people?’ But the waiting ones remember Jesus dying upon Calvary’s cross and the chief priests and rulers shouting in mockery: ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him’” *Great Controversy*, page 630.

As we tread the winepress, won’t it be a wonderful thing to look back and know that Jesus endured in an infinitely greater way all that we are experiencing. Won’t it? Ah, yes. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.”

Now, do you know what the angels’ reaction was when they heard the chief priests and the soldiers and the multitude deriding Jesus and saying, “If He is the Christ, why doesn’t He deliver Himself?” Do you know what they wished to do?

“The angels who hovered over the scene of Christ’s crucifixion were moved to indignation as the rulers derided Him and said, ‘If He be the Son of God, let Him deliver Himself.’ They wished there to come to the rescue of Jesus and deliver Him, but they were not suffered to do so. The object of His mission was not yet accomplished” *Early Writings*, page 177.

Do you get the picture? Jesus on the cross, the multitude urging Him to come down if He’s the Christ. There’s commotion among the angels. They want to go and deliver Him right there and *prove* that He is Christ. But the tall, commanding angel suffers them not—not yet. Now get the parallel of that in *Early Writings*, page 272. Notice how striking is the parallel down here in Jacob’s trouble:

“Soon after they had commenced their earnest cry, the angels, in sympathy, desired to go to their deliverance. But the tall, commanding angel suffered them not. He said, ‘The will of God is not yet fulfilled. They must drink of the cup. They must be baptized with the baptism’” *Ibid.*, page 272.

Why friends, I suppose it’ll be the same angels. The same angels that wanted to deliver Jesus will want to deliver the remnant. But God’s purpose must be fulfilled. The saints must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism.

The next thing that I would like to have us notice is the darkness that fell upon Calvary as Christ entered into the deepest and most difficult experiences of the closing crisis.

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Matthew 27:45–46.

These were the opening words of Psalm 22. David writing prophetically a thousand years before the scene took place, wrote down the words and the thoughts of the Savior as He hung there in the deepening darkness of Calvary. Meditate on Psalm 22, and remember that these were the things that were in the mind of Jesus as He hung there in the darkness. You will note that there was a struggle of faith and hope. He seemed to Himself to be forsaken, not only by men but by God. There was no intercessor. I want to give you a picture of this as it's presented in *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 2; in this wonderful chapter on the sufferings of Christ. It speaks of it as an amazing darkness that hovered over the cross, and especially about the soul of Christ. It says:

“He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. And He was struggling with the power of Satan, who was declaring that he had Christ in his power...” *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 2, page 214.

How did Jesus get through that struggle? Well friends, when hope was gone, faith and love carried Him through—faith in His Father's justice and love for the people for whom He was giving His life. And as far as His relation with God, He had to fight the battle by faith alone. There are a few words here which tell volumes which we need to meditate on our knees:

“Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ because God had removed the assurance He had heretofore given His beloved Son of His approbation and acceptance” *Ibid.*, page 210.

Now watch how He'd got through:

The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened Him, that His Father accepted His labors and was pleased with His work” *Ibid.*

At Jesus' baptism, the Father said, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." He said it again at the transfiguration. But there was no voice now there in

the darkness on the cross. There was no dove that came to Calvary. There was no ray of light.

“In His dying agony, as He yields up His precious life, He has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been His joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom” *Ibid.*, pages 210–211.

How did Jesus win the victory? By faith, and by faith alone. Now do you see a deeper meaning in Revelation 14:12?

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”
Revelation 14:12.

I say to you, if we are to *keep* the faith of Jesus, we must first *get* the faith of Jesus. We must have it, and then we must hang onto it. I think of this statement:

“Oh, for a living, active faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us or drive us to despair. It is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5*, page 215.

That's what took Jesus through—His past experience. When did He get it? At Calvary? Oh no, friends, oh no. He got that at Nazareth and Capernaum. He got it in Judea and Berea. He got the climax of it in Gethsemane.

You and I need to be getting an *experience* from day to day in knowing for ourselves the will of God, and in knowing that God accepts us. We can't afford to drift along to the time of trouble without that *certain* experience. We must have an experience, and *then* as we go into the darkness of Jacob's trouble, we will be able to rely upon the experiences that God has hitherto given us. We will have had an experience in claiming the promises of His Word by faith, and we will be anchored. Thus we will go through without an intercessor.

Must we stand without an intercessor through Jacob's trouble? Oh, yes. And as Jesus won the victory by faith alone, so in Jacob's trouble, we must win the victory by faith alone.

“The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried... Those who are

unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! ...When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God” *Great Controversy*, page 621.

Oh friends, I pray that we shall understand that *this* is why time has lengthened out to give us an opportunity to have this experience. It isn't because the nations aren't wicked enough. It isn't because there are some prophecies that have to be fulfilled, and nothing can be done until those prophecies are fulfilled. *All* that has been written on the prophetic scroll will unroll fast and become history whenever the people of God have the *experience* that this is talking about.

Therefore we can see it's clear. You and I have the key. If we will enter in with Jesus and have an experience in getting rid of sin, claiming God's promises, relying on the righteousness of Christ, having the burden of guilt rolled away, and receiving power for witnessing, these other events will follow in rapid succession, and we shall be ready for the homecoming.

Now in our next meeting, God willing, we shall study the trials of the crisis at the close. We shall see the great triumph of Jesus in His resurrection and ascension, and we shall see the wonderful triumph of the remnant as they come up to their crisis hour and are delivered by the voice of God. All that is a *wonderful* climax to this series.

But tonight, friends, let us remember this: those who triumph with Jesus will first suffer with Him. Those who follow Him in glory will first follow Him through shame. Those who share His throne will first share His cross. And before the cross must come the trial and the test. And before the trial and test must come Gethsemane. And before Gethsemane must come a day-by-day experience over a period of time to develop a character and a prayer experience that can successfully meet the crisis at the close.

This is the message for this hour. This is the thing to fix our minds upon. Let the winds blow as they may. Let Satan invent all manner of things to distract. Let him say, “Lo here! or, lo there!” (Luke 17:21). There is one object that we must fix our eyes upon.

The first vision that was given to Ellen Harmon was given in December of 1844 in South Portland, Maine. She said she raised her eyes and saw a narrow path cast high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling. Who was at their head? Jesus. From His right arm came a glorious light as He waved it over the Advent band. And do you remember this statement? “If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus they were perfectly safe.”

I think that's wonderful, friends. If they kept their eyes on Jesus, they were perfectly safe. Why do we need to keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus? It isn't just some

figure of speech, some arrangement of words, some poetic fancy. As no group of people have ever done in past ages, this people—the remnant, must follow the Lamb. And if you're going to follow someone, you have to keep your eye on them. It's that simple, and it's that important.

Let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God on the cross. Behold the Lamb of God in Gethsemane. Behold the Lamb of God in the experiences that prepared Him, and that will prepare us for the crisis at the close.

I experience that every dark hour is the prelude to a glory hour, and the darkest hour will be the prelude to the most glorious hour. And we must learn that every day and every week in our experience. Whenever we go into something dark we are to say, "There must be something wonderful just ahead. God help me to pray through this dark experience, because there is a glory beyond." We must know that, and have it learned so well before we go into Jacob's trouble that we won't faint and fail in that day of trial.

[Audience sings "Near the Cross." Testimony service follows.]

One of the most important lessons that Heaven is trying to teach us is to accept the assignment from day to day. Jesus said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11) Oh, how much we could learn if we would just be willing to accept the assignment. But there is so much mental effort used in trying to escape the assignment, to evade the assignment, and run away from it, or pass it on to someone else. Anything to get away from the assignment. God knows our human nature is like that, friends. But Jesus went to Gethsemane to get that power from Heaven that would enable Him to drink the cup.

Will you drink the cup? Or will you merely pray, "Let this cup pass?" Will you drink the cup from day to day? Will you say, "I've been spending time in trying to *avoid* the cup, that I ought to have spent praying to God on my knees for grace to *take* the cup. I've been spending time *evading* responsibilities that I should have spent *accepting* and *carrying* responsibilities. I've been spending time trying to figure out *my* way and get my way done when I should have spent time in praying God to help me to accept *His* way and how to fit in with His plans for me and others." There are souls here tonight that if they could get hold to this, it would make an entire change in their attitude about certain matters. Oh, I challenge you in Jesus' name, do not try to get away from the cup. It's the Father's hand that holds it.

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