

Father, Forgive Them

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34

LET US go to Calvary to learn how we may be forgiven; and then let us linger there to learn how we may forgive. There shall we see what sin is, as it murders the Lord of love; and see also how almighty mercy prevailed against it.

As we behold our Lord nailed to the cross, and hear his first words upon the tree, let us watch, and learn, and love.

I. WE SEE THE LOVE OF JESUS ENDURING.

- To the closing act of human malice.
- To the utmost endurance of shame (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 12:2).
- To the extreme limit of personal suffering (Ps. 22:1-18).

We see not alone patience that bears without complaint, but love that labors to bestow benefits upon its enemies.

II. WE SEE THAT LOVE REVEALING ITSELF.

- Love can use no better instrument than prayer.
- Love, when in a death-agony, still prays.
- Love thus brings heaven to the succor of those for whom it cares.
- Love thus, to the highest, blesses its object.

To this present our Lord Jesus continues to bless the people of his choice by continually interceding for them (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

This is his daily prayer for us.

III. WE SEE FOR WHAT THAT LOVE PRAYS.

- Forgiveness is the first, chief, and basis blessing.
- Forgiveness from the Father can even go so far as to pardon the murder of his Son.
- Forgiveness is the great petition of our Lord's sacrifice.

Love admits that pardon is needed, and it shudders at the thought of what must come to the guilty if pardon be not given.

IV. WE SEE HOW THE LOVING JESUS PRAYS.

- For his wanton murderers in the very act.
- For their full and immediate forgiveness.
- For no other reason except their ignorance; and this plea grace alone could suggest or accept.

Are there any so guilty that Jesus would refuse to intercede for them?

V. WE SEE HOW HIS PRAYER BOTH WARNS AND WOOS.

- It warns, for it suggests that there is a limit to the possibility of pardon.
- Men may so sin that there shall remain no plea of ignorance; nay, no plea whatever.
- It woos, for it proves that if there be a plea, Jesus will find it.

Come and trust your ease in his hands; he will draw out his own brief, and invent his own arguments of love.

VI. WE SEE HOW HE INSTRUCTS FROM THE CROSS.

- He teaches us to put the best construction on the deeds of our fellowmen, and to discover mitigating circumstances when they work us grievous ill.
- He teaches us to forgive the utmost wrong (Mark 11:25).
- He teaches us to pray for others to our last breath (Acts 7:59-60).

That glorious appeal to the divine Fatherhood, once made by the Lord Jesus, still prevails for us.

Let the chief of sinners come unto God with the music of "Father, forgive them," sounding in their ears.