**VOLUME 7; CHAPTER 06 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE PATHWAY OF THE PASSION by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.*

*Matthew 16:21*

THE ULTIMATE THINGS IN THE EARTHLY MISSION OF OUR Lord were implicit in His doing and teaching from the commencement of His public ministry. They became explicit after confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. This is very clearly revealed in the synoptic gospels. Matthew and Mark distinctly say so, "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples …"; and Luke's narrative by its method corroborates Matthew and Mark. Until this moment He had said nothing concerning His Cross. In many a deed He wrought, and in many a word that passed His lips, there is evidence that He knew of His Cross from the beginning; but there was no definite statement, no clear word spoken.

In the words of our text we have a careful summary of teaching of the dark days between Caesarea Philippi and Calvary. The statement of Matthew here is characterized by simplicity, definiteness, and clarity; and enables us to approach our Master as did those first disciples, in order to consider what He Himself thought of the final things of His earthly mission.

As we reverently attempt to do this, let us remember that these men failed to apprehend His teaching until after Pentecost; and, recognizing that the promised Interpreter is with us, let us reverently and confidently depend on His guidance as we attempt to consider this revelation of the Master's conception of the meaning of the last things in His earthly mission.

Before considering the statement itself, let us observe the Speaker, the occasion, and the hearers. In proportion as we can get back into the very atmosphere of that hour at Caesarea Philippi, and the days that followed, and are led to the Cross, we shall be able to understand the Master's statement better.

Let us first look at the Speaker, Jesus, and attempt to see Him as they, to whom He gave this teaching first, saw Him. What did they know about Him at that time? They knew much concerning His personal perfections, for I have no hesitation in saying that the supreme attraction to the early disciples was that of the Lord Himself. They knew Him as One characterized at once by majesty and meekness, as One - if I may use so simple and colloquial a form of speech - with Whom no one might take liberties: full of dignity, characterized in one sense by an aloofness even from His nearest disciples, so that they never came into very close fellowship with Him. Yet He was characterized by meekness in the broadest, largest sense of the great and wonderful word, being perfectly familiar with His disciples, and treating them as His own close personal friends. Thus they could tell Him any secret, even though they knew they could not discover His profoundest secrets, and could come to Him with all their sorrows, even though they must always have been haunted by the sense of sorrows in His heart which they could not fathom. Paradoxically, He attracted them at once by the appalling severity of His terms and the infinite compassion of His method.

They had also caught something of the glory of His great ideals. If I believe they were first attracted by the personal charm of Jesus, I also believe that they were held near to Him by these great ideals and spiritual conceptions, His reverent and yet apparent familiarity with eternity and with God, that touch of His spirit on all things material in answer to which the material things flamed with the light and glory of the spiritual and abiding realities. They were held, too, by His conceptions of God and His conceptions of man, and His ideals as to the material conditions of life, as He had revealed them in the great Manifesto, and in many incidental words - that strange and wonderful picture He had given them of the Kingdom in which the King is Father, in which men will have no further anxiety for the luxuries of life, but will have a new joy in the possession of the necessary simplicities. There, He taught them, the carking care about what men shall eat and what they shall wear will pass away forever, there the passion for righteousness will be supreme, and the realization of the law of love will come to its great and gracious fulfilment.

They knew Him also in the strange activities of His ministry, a ministry of pity and of power. Unable to understand Him, they had nevertheless seen Him Master in every sphere of life: in the material realm, in the moral realm, in the mental realm, so that with apparent ease he wrought wonders that amazed them and always in answer to the surging pity of His own heart.

Thus they followed Him until He led them to Caesarea Philippi; and it was this One Who now began to tell them that I le must go to Jerusalem and suffer, and be killed, and be raised again on the third day.

The occasion of the commencement of this teaching was that of the hour of triumphant foretelling following on the great confession of Peter. Peter had said to Him, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and in answer to that Jesus had made His great confession to Peter and His disciples, "On this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In that confession we detect the note of assured triumph: no doubt, no tremor, no conditions; certain, positive, complete: "I will build … and the gates of Hades shall not ... I will give unto thee the keys."

"From that time Jesus began to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."

The confidants to whom He told this hitherto unrevealed secret loved Him. They were those - I dare not have said this if He had not said it a little further on, under the very shadow of the Cross - who had continued with Him in all His temptations. They were those who were appointed to share His toil and His travail. They were, as at last, in infinite love and appreciation, He termed them, His friends.

We turn now from these preliminary matters to the teaching itself. The method I propose to adopt is that of examination and application. Our principal business is that of examination. By way of application, I shall only suggest some possible lines of inquiry.

As I have said, Matthew summarizes all the teaching from Caesarea Philippi to Calvary in these words: "He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."

In that summary there are three matters which demand our attention. The first is that of the compulsion: "He must go unto Jerusalem." The second is that of the course marked out: "suffer … and be killed." The third is that of the consummation: "and the third day be raised up."

We begin with the compulsion, for that is the supreme note: "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must." He did not from that time begin to show them that He was going to suffer and be killed, and be raised again. That is true; but to read the text so is to entirely miss the supreme note and emphasis, that which must occupy our attention, the declaration that He must. The idea of the word is quite simply that He was bound, that He was in bonds; the thought is that of compulsion.

We are immediately at the very heart of our meditation as we ask the question, Why must He go to Jerusalem? I desire, as quickly as may be, to deal with certain insufficient reasons which have been advanced as explaining this declaration of compulsion.

It has been said that the "Must" is simply a revelation of the fact that He was in the grip of circumstances, that we should interpret the "must" by the inevitability of the circumstances into which He had now come as the result of His own ministry. A careful reading of the story will show that this was not so. If He go to Jerusalem He must suffer, He must be killed, there will be no escape. But why go? Why need He go to Jerusalem? His loved ones attempted to dissuade Him most earnestly during the months that followed. Let it be remembered that escape was quite possible at that time. There was no material necessity for Him to walk back into the trap men were laying for Him. Then why could He not escape? It would have been quite easy for Him to leave the region. We have not found the meaning of the "must" when we think of the circumstances in the midst of which He found Himself.

Once again, it has been said that the "must" of Jesus was simply the declaration on His part of devotion to a great ideal, that He had preached the Kingdom of God, and men had refused the Kingdom, and that now He said to His disciples in effect: I have preached the Kingdom, I have enunciated its principles, I have revealed its laws, I have given illustrations of its benefits in the works I have wrought; men will not have it; I cannot depart from My ideal; consequently, I may as well go to Jerusalem, even though I die in the going.

According to that view, there was the suggestion of a touch of hopelessness in the words of Jesus, loyalty to the ideal, but hopelessness as to its ultimate victory. No, that is not it; that is Elijah under the juniper tree saying, Let me die and not live, because this people will not have my preaching; that is Jeremiah cursing the day he was born, because his ministry was an apparent failure; but that is not Jesus, as He set His face toward Jerusalem. That would have been to have abandoned His ideal. If all that He came to give the world was an ideal, a suggestive vision, a few principles of life, then I ask you to remember that such an ideal could best be realized, such a vision be interpreted, such principles be started in their mighty working career, not by death but by life. I quote again the preacher of the olden time, "A living dog is better than a dead lion." Moreover, that method would have contradicted His perpetual habit throughout His public ministry. Over and over again when hostility was stirred against Him He withdrew Himself, hid Himself. More than once He said, sometimes directly to His critics, sometimes by messengers, that He would continue His work in spite of all opposition until the hour should come which they could neither hasten or postpone, and to which He was moving with full knowledge of the issue. To declare that He simply meant that He must be true to an ideal and die for it, shuts out of view entirely the last part of the teaching, the fact of resurrection. We have not yet discovered the meaning of His "must."

Let us now attempt to find it. Here I say solemnly that speculation is not to be permitted. Mere opinion is untrustworthy. Unless the Lord explained Himself we are without explanation. Did He explain Himself? Is there anything that will help us to understand the real meaning of the "must"? Did He ever say anything like this before? If I tax your patience a little I am sure you will bear with me. I am going back chronologically, and I turn first to Luke's gospel.

"I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent" (Luke 4:43).

There seems to be very little connection between the two, but I have found my word again, and on this occasion Jesus gave the reason for the "must" - "for therefore was I sent." I go back in the same chapter of Luke and find the story of how at the commencement of His public ministry, He read concerning Himself from the ancient prophecy;

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,

Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor;

He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind (Luke 4: 18, 19).

That is the first light I have on my text. "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also." Why? "For therefore was I sent."

I pass a little further back in the chronological order and I find the next incident in John. Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, in the stillness of the night, and once more in this connection the word seems to be incidental, and somewhat separated from our present consideration, but you will immediately see how near it is to the thought that occupies us: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14).

But why the "must"? We are seeking the reason of it.

"God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him" (John 3:17).

One other reference only, this to a very familiar passage. We have gone back now over more than eighteen years, and we hear the voice of the boy Jesus uttering the first words recorded of Him: "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?"

I interpret the "must" at Caesarea Philippi by the "must" as it recurred in the previous history of the Lord from the first uttering of it, and I discover that the compulsion which was laid on Him was that of the will of God, the fact that He was in the world for a purpose, for the accomplishment of a mission which God had marked out for Him.

From that glance back we look ahead for a moment. Turn to the second chapter of Acts, and listen to this very man Peter in the power of the Pentecostal effusion. What does he say about the Cross? "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" (Acts 2:23). Just a little further on in the New Testament, in the letter to the Hebrews, the writer quotes from an ancient psalm in application to Jesus and declares this to have been the keynote of all His life of ministry: "Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

He takes away ceremonial and ritualistic offerings that He may establish the final offering.

Gather up these passages in order that the light which comes from other portions of Scripture - that interpretation from the actual words of our Lord, that interpretation of the Holy Spirit on The Day of Pentecost and through the writer of the letter to the Hebrews - may help us to understand the meaning of the "must" of Jesus. Why must? Because He was cooperating with the will of God in order to achieve human redemption. That was the compulsion. Not the force of circumstances drove Him to Jerusalem. Not a heroic devotion to an ideal compelled Him to that last journey. The compelling power was the will of God and His devotion to that will. The compulsion was that of His volitional surrender to the purpose of that will in order to redeem the race. Because that was the compulsion, no friend could dissuade Him, no fear of coming pain could deter Him, no devil could deflect Him. He "must," because that was the will of God for the redemption of man.

Granted this compulsion, we are brought to the consideration of the course. If He will go to Jerusalem He will place Himself within the reach of the power of His enemies. Do you see Him going? Do not be afraid to let imagination help you. That One Whose radiant, gracious personality had wooed and won His disciples, that One Whose ideals had been so high and wonderful, that One Whose ministry had been full of pity and of power, resolutely setting His face toward Jerusalem, He is passing now into the very realm where His foes will be able to wreak their vengeance on Him. But He is not passing outside the Will of God. He is walking right into danger, but into danger with God. That is the picture. Do not forget it as you watch the process.

The constituent elements in the life of Jerusalem were all represented in the Sanhedrin. That is, I think, why Matthew was careful to name all the forces that were represented. He must "suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes." The elders were the civic rulers, the chief priests were the spiritual rulers, the scribes were the moral rulers.

What were their conditions? Let us begin with the chief priests. At that time, when Jesus was moving toward Jerusalem, the chief priests were Sadducean, and that meant a devitalized religion, as rationalistic religion always is. The scribes were externalists - how He had condemned them!- - and that meant degraded conceptions of morality. The elders were timeservers, place seekers and that meant degraded authority.

The Lord was now moving toward Jerusalem. Conflict was now inevitable. There could be no escape. Ideals were in direct opposition. There must be what James Russell Lowell described as

One death-grapple in the darknes

'Twixt old systems and the Word.

As He passed into the region where these men ruled, Jesus went deliberately back to the place where He had denounced the priest, the Scribe, and the ruler, denounced them because their rule had issued in the destruction of the city of God. Moved with compassion for the multitudes because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, angry with the rulers because of the suffering of the multitudes, He walked back into their sphere of influence. Now He must "suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes."

I do not believe that Christ was referring in those words to any material pain that was coming to Him, or even to any anguish of Spirit that was in any sense self-centered. I think the suffering to which He went was sorrow of heart caused by the attitude these men were taking against Him, which attitude meant their own destruction. If you challenge me for a reason for that interpretation I take you to the letter to the Hebrews, and ask you to ponder most carefully the significant change in the Revised Version which I maintain is necessary to a right understanding of the sorrows of the Lord. The writer says He "endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves!" The Authorized Version reads "against Himself," There was textual reason for that, but other renderings of the manuscripts read differently, "against themselves." That was the nature of His sorrow, not that men were wounding Him, but that in their wounding of Him they were harming themselves, in their rejection of the ideals that He had presented they were making impossible the realization of their own lives. He must suffer at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and the sorrows of the Spirit of infinite love and compassion are created when men refuse the call of His love.

But there is another and final step in the course: "and be killed." The death of Jesus was sin in its final manifestation. It can do no other than crucify, for that is itself. That is sin in the heart and essence of it. Once more, it could do no more, for all is done. That is the crime of all crimes. That was the ultimate sin against love. That was the ultimate sin against life. It was the sin of all sins - they killed Him. In that killing, human sin said its last word, had its last day. It was the ultimate in evil; it was the murder of the Son of God.

Look again. Why did He die? He need not have died. He might have abandoned His great ideals; and He might have wiped the dust of the region that would not have His ideals from off His shoes. Or, like Socrates, He might have drunk the hemlock because men would not have Him. But that was not the meaning of His dying. We have seen that the compulsion was not that of circumstances. We have seen that our Lord died within the will of God, delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. In His death He was not trying to persuade God to love men. He was God, loving men to the very end and to the very death. In the death of Jesus grace is seen in its ultimate mystery and manifestation. Here we stand in awe. That is the course of the "must": inevitable and unutterable sorrows and death, the death in which sin is compelled to its ultimate outworking, its last word, its final act.

Is that all? If there be nothing else, I have misinterpreted the story. If there be nothing else, Jesus was indeed as a son of man who died high and noble in his aspirations, but beaten, defeated. If there be nothing more, then sin has won, the last word of sin is the ultimate doom of goodness, the last deed of sin is victory over every aspiration that is high and noble. If there be nothing other than Jesus' death, then God have mercy on me, I am of all men the most miserable.

There is more! There is the consummation: "and the third day be raised up." The overwhelming importance of that word cannot be insisted on too often or too earnestly. I want you carefully to remember that this is not an accidental word, it is not an occasional word. It was persistent through all the teaching of the shadowed days. Take the New Testament and read carefully the Lord's references to the Cross from Caesarea Philippi until it was an accomplished fact, and you will find He never referred to His Cross without also referring to His resurrection. Of course, if some man say to me, I question the truth of the records, I have only to say that such an attitude affects the whole story. It is not honest to make a selection of things that square with a view, and to reject a matter so persistent as this. There is no occasion when the Lord foretold the Cross that He did not also foretell the resurrection.

In view of that foretelling of the consummation what was His estimate of His own death? How difficult it is to answer that question! Let me try. When Jesus died death died; sin ended itself when it grappled with God; God in the unfathomable mystery of pain destroyed the works of the devil.

That is the final note in the must of Jesus. Geographically, Jerusalem; processionally, suffering and death; ultimately, the resurrection and life; spiritually, God willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. God made a way by which His banished ones may return to Him again.

In a few sentences let me suggest some lines of application. There is an immediate illustration in the protest of a disciple; Not that; that be far from Thee, that shall never be unto Thee! Not what? Peter was talking about the course, about suffering and death. The things he did not understand, which were not in his mind when he made the protest, were the first thing and the last thing: the compulsion and the consummation. The "must" he did not understand; the raising the third day he did not understand. How was he answered? By one of the severest sentences that ever passed the lips of our Lord, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Why? "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." What are the things of men? The course, the suffering and death at the hands of lawless men! What are the things Of God? The compulsion of redeeming love, the consummation of redeeming victory. Let that illustration be pondered and we have a line of application.

Is this ancient history? What of religion to-day? What of morality today? What of authority today? Are we in our national or civic life approximating to the ideals of Jesus? Is not much of our religion Sadducean, rationalistic? Is not much of our morality that of externalism? Is not very much of our authority that of office-seeking, place-seeking, selfishness, forgetfulness of all the shepherd qualities which are necessary to the exercise of true authority?

Are we not coming to an hour in which the Church of Christ has earnestly to ask herself whether indeed she really understands her Lord, whether she indeed is representing Him in the life of today?

I am not criticizing the Prime Minister, not for a moment, but when he had to make his appeal to two sides in the coal strike, which I am not now discussing, he pointed out to the owners that if this dispute went far they would suffer loss of property; he pointed out to the men that if this dispute went far they would suffer most from hunger. It was an appeal to selfishness on both sides, necessarily so, because we are so far from realization of the high principles and promises of Jesus. How are they to be established? The first thing is that the Church of God shall act under the compulsion which sent her Lord to Jerusalem, the must of the will of God, and the must of the will of God in order to redeem and remake individual men and the whole race.

Is that the master passion that drives us, consumes us, inspires us? If it is, the world will provide the Cross, believe me! And believe me, God will take care of the resurrection! Oh that it may be given to us to see the meaning of the "must," and in some measure to enter into fellowship with God's sufferings and make up that which is behindhand in His affliction