

Chapter Three: Jesus' Third Saying

"Behold thy Son...Behold thy mother"

John 19:26-27

"No One Ever Cared Like Jesus"

"He cares, He cares, I know He cares. His heart is touched with my grief. When the days are dreary, the long night's weary, I know that Jesus cares."

Jesus cares.

Yet if we are honest, sometimes we wonder. We doubt. When the storm rages, we need a fresh reminder of His care. Jesus gave us such a display of His care, at the cross.

What happened at the cross? There, while being executed as a hardened criminal, Jesus declared 7 sayings.

Two weeks ago, we considered the first saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Lk 23:34)." On the cross, Jesus forgave those who put Him there. In His first saying from the cross, Jesus was announcing He had secured our Pardon.

Last week, we pondered His second saying, spoken to the repentant thief (Lk 23:43), "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." In His second saying from the cross, Jesus was announcing He had secured our Paradise.

To find Jesus' third statement, we must turn to John's gospel. Luke is the only gospel writer to record Jesus' first two declarations. John alone records the third.

Caution: When studying the Scriptures, we must always be faithful to the author's intent. Our first question must be, not, "What does this verse mean to ME?" but, "What does this verse MEAN?" In this case, the apostle John recorded Jesus' third saying. Matthew did not. Mark did not. Luke did not. Why did John?

First, because it fit with His purpose. He tells us in 20:30-31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus...which are not written in this book; But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ..." Each writer was selective. John admits in 21:25, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did..."

Second, John's gospel was the last of the 4 to be written. John penned this biography of Jesus some 60 years after Jesus returned to heaven.

There's a third reason why John recorded Jesus' third saying. It involved him! Jesus spoke it directly to Mary, and to John. And having heard it, John knew that no one ever cared like Jesus!

How do we know that Jesus cares? Jesus' third saying on the cross, as recorded in John 19:26-27, shows in a very practical way that He cares for the needs of His own.

The Context: Remember, John wrote after Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He didn't repeat the same details. He didn't need to. But remember this. John was there. Luke was not. He got his information from talking to eyewitnesses. But John saw the blood stained earth beneath the cross. He heard the heart-wrenching groans of His Master.

Notice what caught John's eye as he reflected on the scene of the cross. There was the sign nailed above

the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews (19:19)." It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. How ironic that when Jesus' first presentation to the world as king was in jest and mockery! John alone records that this sign incensed the Jewish leaders. Yet Pilate said it would stay!

John then tells us that the 4 soldiers passed out his clothes, and gambled for His coat (19:23). In fulfillment of the OT (Ps 22:18).

And then John recorded what Jesus said from the cross. His first words were words of care and compassion!

Jesus revealed His care in two ways in His third statement on the cross.

I. Jesus comforted Mary (26).

John says there were women at the cross that day. Who were they? Look at verse 25. Some commentators have suggested that in those days women were held in such low regard that these women were not in danger. But remember, Jesus was a person the Roman government considered worthy of death! And the orthodox Jews considered Him a heretic. Being associated with a person like that is dangerous! But to the women, it did not matter. Perfect love casts out fear!

Who was there at the foot of the cross? First, John says, there was Jesus' mother. Have you ever envisioned Calvary from the perspective of Mary? She saw Jesus when He took His first breath, and now would see Him take His last.

Then there was Mary's sister. The punctuation in the KJV makes it appear as if Mary's sister was the same person as Mary, the wife of Clopas (25). It's unlikely that there would be two sisters with the same name of Mary. The parallel accounts indicate the second woman's name was Salome (Mt 27:56). Salome was Jesus' aunt.

If the second woman's name was Salome, why didn't John record her name? It was his mother! Salome was the mother of James and John. In his gospel, John never calls himself by name, nor any of his family members.

Don't miss this. Jesus' mother Mary was an aunt to John the apostle. The third woman was another Mary (lit. "of Clopas"). She was either the wife of, the mother of, the daughter of, or even the sister of Clopas!

The fourth woman was Mary Magdalene. She was the woman out of whom Jesus cast 7 demons (Lk 8:2). She could never forget what Jesus had done for her!

Mt 27:55 says there were "many women" at the cross that day, loyal to Jesus. Where were the men? They had fled. Only John was there.

V 26 "When Jesus, therefore, saw His mother, and the disciple..."

Jesus fixed His eyes on His mother, then on John. Then He spoke to His mother, "Woman, behold thy Son!" With those words, Jesus accomplished 2 things.

A. He fulfilled His Duty as a Son.

Mary's heart was breaking.

Do you see the selflessness, the affection of Jesus? In His hour of greatest need, He thought of others. Their needs. In this case, the needs of His mother.

When He spoke, He fulfilled His duty as a Son. The 5th commandment stated, "Honor thy father and thy

mother (Ex 20:12)." True, Jesus was a grown adult. A grown adult is no longer under the authority of his parents. But the obligation to "honor" is lifelong.

Remember, there were no social security checks in those days! Apparently, Joseph had already died. Mary was a widow nearly 50 years of age. She was vulnerable. Who would care for her?

Just think of what Mary had already been through. She had endured the public accusation of an "illegitimate" birth. She had grieved the loss of her husband. And now her firstborn was dying the most shameful death imaginable.

Yet Jesus cared for her. He fulfilled His duty to her.

One might object, "Didn't Mary have other children? Why didn't Jesus entrust Mary to their care?" They didn't believe in Him (Jn 7:5). Though that would change later after the resurrection, at the time they looked down on Him (Mt 13:55).

Jesus delegated the care of His mother to John. John had a double qualification. First, not only was he part of the inner circle, he was perhaps Jesus' closest confidant. He was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Second, he was Jesus' cousin. Mary, his mother's sister, was his aunt.

Jesus cared for Mary. He fulfilled His duty as a Son.

Challenge: In so doing, the Perfect Son of Man set an example for children of all ages. We are to honor our parents. We have a duty to care for them. Are you honoring your parents?

B. He established His Dominion as the Savior.

"Woman, behold thy son!"

Notice how Jesus addressed Mary. Not "Mother," but "Woman." Is that significant?

The Roman Catholic church insists that Mary is the mediator of the grace of Christ. They call her the "Mother of God" and the "Queen of heaven." But you won't find that in the Scripture. In fact, Jesus' words to her from the cross establish His dominion as the Divine Savior.

He says, "Woman." A term of affection, certainly not harsh, but not "Mother." It is similar to our term "Lady."

"Behold thy son!" Here is the need of every descendant of Adam--We must look to the Son of God!

Yet Mary's relationship with Jesus changed that day. Jesus actually broke His natural tie with her. "From now on, not I, but John will be your son." (Jones)

Russell Jones observes (35), "He speaks as Lord. He issues commands to Mary and to John, as if He were a king on His throne. He makes assignments, affecting position and responsibility, to His mother and His disciple and Himself."

Again I agree with Russell Jones who wrote (37), "What was Jesus doing to Mary? Jesus was denying special position or privilege to her because of her peculiar earthly relationship to Him. He was placing her on the same human plane with the rest of those whom He loved."

Do you remember the scene after Jesus ascended into heaven, in the upper room? Where was Mary then? Acts 1:14 says she was with, not above, the group of 120 followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. Mary needed to be saved, too, and she was. She learned that though in His humanity, Jesus was her son, she must also

believe in Him as her Savior.

Jesus cared for Mary so much He addressed both needs. For His widowed mother, He fulfilled His duty as a Son. For one who needed deliverance from sin, He established His dominion as Savior. That day, Mary lost a son to find a Savior! (Jones, 39)

II. Jesus commissioned John (27).

V 27 "Then said He to the disciple."

Don't forget, just hours before, John had abandoned His Master. Along with all the rest of the disciples. But see him now, friend. He had come back to Jesus.

Thus, Jesus commissioned John--"Behold thy mother." What did Jesus mean? What did John take Jesus to mean? To find the answer, look at John's own narrative. V 27 "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Something very important transpired in the shadow of the cross. First, Jesus gave John...

A. He gave him a new Responsibility.

V 27 "Then saith He...Behold thy mother!"

This was a sacred charge. Notice v 28, "AFTER THIS Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished." John was given the responsibility to care for Mary. This was no trivial matter. It was the fulfillment of the Divine plan. After THIS.

John was to care for Mary. He was to be a substitute son. It was his task to protect Mary, to care for her physical and emotional needs. He did just that.

One tradition says that John had a second home in Jerusalem. Mary lived there with John for eleven years, until she died. Another tradition says that John eventually took Mary with him to live, and eventually die, in Ephesus.

Which is true? I don't know. Nor does it matter. The important thing is that John fulfilled his responsibility. From the day he heard his Master's words, "Behold thy mother!" until the day she left the earth, he cared for her.

How do we know? V 27 "And from that hour..."

I stand amazed at the Compassion of Jesus on the cross. He comforted Mary. And He commissioned John. He gave him an important responsibility. He has given us a job to do as well.

There's something else inherent in Jesus' words to John.

B. He introduced a new Relationship.

Why did John record this 3rd saying? The significance goes far deeper than mere sentiment. Jesus' words to John introduced a new relationship, new family ties.

It was John who recorded these words of Jesus--13:34-35 "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you."

When Jesus committed the care of His earthly mother to His spiritual son, He introduced a new relationship.

Our bond in Christ is stronger than blood ties. We are part of an eternal family, the family of God.

When Jesus Christ established the Church, He formed a new humanity, a new people. We are related to each other.

And listen. We are responsible to one another. May we not take that responsibility lightly.

John didn't. The apostle John had more to say about "love" in his writings than any of the other NT writers. To the church, John penned these words in I John:

3:11 "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

3:16 "By this perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Lay down our lives for the brethren? Why? Because Jesus introduced a new relationship. We are to care for each other.

John fulfilled his responsibility. He cared for Mary. He exhorted the church's he led to care for each other. And we are to care for each other. Why?

Because Christ cared for us.

The next time you wonder if Jesus cares for you, look at the cross! Behold the comfort that He gave to Mary. Ponder the commission that He gave to John. And think of the implications.

Allow me to highlight two implications.

1. We must respond to Jesus' care. Every one of us.

Here's the main lesson of the third saying from the cross. Jesus cares for His own. Oh, friend, the Savior is interested in you. Have you ever trusted Him as the Savior of your life?

Here's how--One, admit that you are a sinner, and acknowledge that your sins have separated you from a holy God. Two, repent of your sins, and trust in Christ and His work alone for your salvation.

2. He calls us to care for one another. To follow in His selfless steps. Is there someone right now that Christ would have you to reach out to and show His care? Some of us have living parents that we've shut out of our lives. Some have children that we've cut off. Maybe there's a brother or sister in Christ who needs your help.