

This morning we look at a somewhat difficult passage for us, which is the Lord's Crucifixion. But I just want to recap a little bit on last week so that we can see the connections between what we spoke about last week and what we're going to be looking at today. Last week we spoke, if you recall, about the structure of the external mind and how that mind had an internal and an external. And we looked at the fact that the internal had its own willing and thinking and that the external also had its own form, or correspondential, willing and thinking. And one of the things that I really wanted you to get a hold of was this idea that the internal constantly seeks to make the external conform to it.

And so we saw that when we looked at this internal and external division in the mind, we saw that the internal, which was represented by the council, the chief priests, represented the things of the will or, in terms of the lower mind, those lusts that are residing there. And how that these lusts worked on the understanding represented by Pilate to get that understanding to confirm what they wanted and so we come to this week, which is the Lord being led out to be crucified.

So this week, in terms of the natural mind, we look at its utter rejection of truth and goodness. The desire represented by the chief priests and the council having secured the power of natural reasoning, we now move to the act being carried out. For those two things have to come together, the affection and the understanding and then there is the act. Now I'm pursuing our look at the natural mind; this mind is, termed the lower mind at times it's also called the earthly mind, and that is because it is orientated towards the external realm. And we'll see that this mind, if we haven't realized it already, is totally and utterly opposed to heaven and to the Lord and to the Word.

This is its normal natural state as far as we are concerned. There is nothing in it that desires anything spiritual. So the very fact that we are on the spiritual path is the Lord's doing and his alone. The natural mind does not want it. We have difficulty seeing this fact. We are in a way shielded by the Lord's mercy from seeing what this mind really is like. And we are introduced to it progressively and slowly as we build within us the capacity for loving things good and true. And those things of the natural mind are shown to us because when we see them, the Lord knows we are ready to deal with those elements that come to the fore. It's time.

The natural mind cannot and will not willingly bend to any authority other than its own. Its chief delight is its pride in its own intelligence or reasoning. And this is what is described in the treatment of Jesus by those; the soldiers, the chief priests, all those involved in trying Him, sentencing Him, beating Him and finally nailing Him to the cross.

This is the normal response to truth from the natural mind. This is what it does and it does it continually. This is what the Word and the Heavenly Doctrines teach us despite what we might think. Our own reasoning will tell us that we are not so bad. What doctrine teaches us is that that is not the case with regard to the natural mind. It is totally opposed to the Lord and to his Word. What we have to realise is that the condition of the natural mind as demonstrated here is such that it is capable of nothing else. All the natural mind can do when it is not governed by spiritual truth is crucify the Lord. It does it continually. What it does is it creates all manner of reasoning to dismiss what truth is trying to bring to our attention. It works constantly to lock the Lord out of our life. And it is through realising that, through seeing what truth teaches, through seeing what the doctrines teach, that we can begin to be governed

by higher principles, and so begin to deal with this rebellious Barabbas that exists at that level of life.

The natural mind in creating these reasonings, which resist truth, says to us, it's okay, you're not too bad, don't worry. It is the voice of the serpent. And when we read our reading today, it is the myrrh which is mixed with the wine that was offered to the Lord, trying to make things more palatable, trying to numb our spiritual sensitivity. These things we have to become aware of if we are to progress in the spiritual life. So, the question for us today is, do we believe what the Word teaches us concerning its nature? Or do we run with our own reasoning to soften such teaching, make it more palatable to the natural side of ourselves? Do we place our trust in the Lord and his Word, or do we trust our own reasoning concerning spiritual matters?

So, readings from the Word this morning, the first reading is from the Psalms, Psalm 22.

*1 MY God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? 2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" 9 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. 11 Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. 13 They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. 19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! 20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. 21 Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me. 22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. 23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard. 25 My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him. 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! 27 All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD's, And He rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth Shall eat and worship; All those who go down to the dust Shall bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep himself alive. 30 A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, 31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, That He has done this.*

In reading from the gospel of Mark chapter 15, verse 16 to 32,

16 Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called 3 Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. 17 And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, 18 and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. 20 And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

21 Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. 22 And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. 23 Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it. 24 And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.

25 Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. 26 And the inscription of His 4 accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. 28 5

So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors."

29 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 "save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"

31 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. 32 "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and 6 believe." Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

And reading this morning from the Heavenly Doctrines from the work, Divine Love and Wisdom paragraph 270.

*All evil characteristics and their consequent distortions, whether inherited or acquired, reside in the earthly mind. The reason evils and their consequent distortions reside in the earthly mind is that in form or in image, this mind is an earthly world. The spiritual mind though is in the form, in the image of heaven, and there is no way for evil to find a welcome in heaven. So, from birth, the latter mind is not opened, only potentially so. The earthly mind derives its form and part from the substances of the earthly world, but the spiritual mind derives its form solely from substances of the spiritual world. This latter mind is kept in its wholeness by the Lord so that we can become human. We are actually born animal but become human. The earthly mind with everything in it turns in spirals from right to left, while the spiritual mind turns in spirals from left to right. So, the two minds are turning in opposite directions. A sign that evil is resident in the earthly mind, and that on its own, it resists the spiritual mind. Further turning from right to left is turning downward toward hell and turning from left to right moves upward toward heaven. I have been shown this by the experience that evil spirits cannot turn their bodies from left to right, only from right to left. While good spirits find it hard to turn from right to left and easy to turn from left to right, there turning follows the flow of the deeper levels of their minds.*

Just before we have a look at this passage from Mark's Gospel, what we are going to do is we're going to look at the first four verses 16 to 20 in some depth, and then we are going to look at other aspects that are found there. And we're going to finish by looking at the story of Simon who was conscripted to carry the Lord's cross.

But before we do that, I just want to talk about those principles or, the two principles that we have a choice as to what we will live from. And these are captured in the beginning of the

Bible in the Book of Genesis and it's in the story of the Garden of Eden and those two trees. So, the two trees represent two principles of life or the principle of life that we have a choice between. For in reality, one is a principle of life proper, that being the tree of life, and the other is a pseudo life that ultimately leads to death and that is captured in this idea of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So, it's a question about which tree will we live from?

Now the tree of life is this principle which is captured in the Heavenly Doctrines. It is that we must acknowledge the Lord and move from a belief in what he teaches into our engagement in life. It has to do with believing in the Word and what the Word teaches above our own reasoning.

So, it is about placing the Word above all else. It's about placing it above our reasoning and what our senses would tell us. So, it's about holding those lower things in subjection to the truths that we have learned from the Lord's Word and from the doctrines. And this is the principle of life: Acknowledging that the Lord or his Word is in fact divine. And then confirming those beliefs and those truths from our experience of life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on the other hand, is the principle of death concerning what is truly human. This principle is one that operates from the illusion that we of ourselves can determine what is good or true, that we can weigh these things up for ourselves and make a reasoned or rational judgment.

This idea pervades human thought, and it is often framed in regard to spiritual things in this way: Well, the Word may or may not be divine, but I'll reserve judgment until I am convinced one way or the other. That statement and statements like it, the idea of being unbiased, these sort of ideas flow from the height of human arrogance.

It is the natural mind or that earthly mind setting itself up as a judge of what is divine or not as if it could do that. So not only is it the height of arrogance, it is also the height of folly. You see, the natural mind has no capacity to make such a judgment. It was never designed to make those kinds of judgements. And the illusion that it can determine for itself what is good and true is the poison of the serpent in the garden that it says we can become as Gods knowing good and evil.

You see, the natural mind is not a judge, much less is it a king. It was created as a servant, a servant of the spiritual mind. It has no capacity to rule or govern, yet the human race has made it king or a governor, and we see that in the story of Pilate. It's created order or use is to confirm divine truth, which is believed, not because we judge that it's divine, but because the Lord has said so. And there is a massive difference between the two states.

The Lord has spoken his Word. That's what makes it divine.

You see the natural mind when not governed by divine truths from the Word acts in its confirmatory role by confirming that what we desire at a natural level is indeed what is good and true for us. This runs contrary to the Word of the Lord. You see in its proper order it needs to be engaged in confirming the truths of doctrine. Because in confirming those truths through the things that it gathers through the senses it places us in a better position to be more loving towards others, more understanding and more compassionate. It shows us how we can be more useful. So, to live from the tree of life is to first and foremost hold that the Word is true, that the Word is divine, and then use what the natural mind gathers to see those truths become good in the way we respond and work with other people. This is the proper order of

the natural mind of the spiritual life. Any other approach is to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And so, we come to the natural mind's treatment of the Word of God.

Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison, and they clothed Him with purple and they twisted a crown of thorns, putting it on his head, and began to salute Him, hail King of the Jews. And they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him and bowing the knee they worshiped Him, and when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put his own clothes on Him, and led Him out to be crucified.

Here we see the nature of that lower mind. What we see here is the Word being led away as the denial of truth leads always to it becoming ridiculed in the face of falsities prior to its destruction.

The interior affection and thought represented by that council we looked at last week, has brought down the sentence of death and this has been confirmed in the response of Pilate, the natural reasoning. Thus, there is implicit in the natural mind here a denial of the Word and of doctrine, a denial of its divine origin, which leads to the reign of darkness within the mind.

The comment is that Jesus is led away. And to be led away is to be led in error. So, the Word and its teaching is here made to follow the reasonings of the lower mind. They lead Him out, whereas it should be Him leading us. The application of this mind to the Word and to doctrine, particularly the literal sense, brings it into contact with this soldier element.

So, the affections have secured the understanding and now the soldiers begin to beat the Lord, and what this represents, this represents how the natural reasoning faculty brings false ideas to the Word and begin to do violence to it. The soldier element of the mind, in its proper order or use, that is when it is governed from higher spiritual principles, is a faculty designed to defend what is good and true. However, when given over to the command of the loves of self and the world, it defends what is evil and false through attacking what is good and true. Such as the natural mind in its inversion, now being the seat of everything evil and false.

And we see here that truth is to be found in the courtyard, in the Praetorium. In the story this is the realm of the outer region of the mind; outer reasoning, and it is in this realm that the Word is subject to the abusive scrutiny of natural reasoning.

I just want to read a quote from the work *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, numbers 1 and 2.

*It is generally agreed that the Word is from God is divinely inspired and therefore holy. But hitherto it has remained unknown where in its divinity resides. For the Word in the letter appears like common writing in a strange style, lacking the sublimity and brilliance, which are the apparent features of the literature of the world. For this reason, the man who works at worship's nature or self instead of God or in preference to God and who consequently thinks from himself, that is his proprium, (that is thinks from natural reasoning) and not from heaven from the Lord may easily fall into error, respecting the Word and into contempt for it and say within himself when he reads it, what does this mean? What does that mean? Is this divine? Can God to whom belongs infinite wisdom, speak in this way? Where is the sanctity or whence derived, but from man's religious credulity? He, whoever who thinks in this way*

*does not consider that Jehovah himself, who is the God of heaven and earth, spoke the Word by means of Moses and the prophets, and consequently, that it must be divine truth itself for what Jehovah himself speaks is divine truth. Nor does he consider that the Lord who is the same as Jehovah spoke, the Word written by the evangelists, much of it from his own mouth and the rest from the spirit of his mouth, which is the Holy Spirit. For this reason, he himself declares that in his Words, there is life and that he is the light which enlightens and that he is the truth.*

Such is the nature of natural reasoning when it is used to make a judgment as to whether a thing is divine or not. This is to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the end is death, not inflicted because of an act of historical disobedience by a God wanting to punish but it arises due to a denial of the very source of life itself. And a denial of the source of life brings a disconnection from life. And anything that is not connected to its source dies. There must be an acknowledgement that the Word is divine before truth can be seen. Without this acknowledgement, the natural mind is in deep darkness where there is no principle under which the loves of self and the world can be constrained.

Now we read in the teaching from divine love and wisdom, that there's a description of these two levels of mind, of the spiritual mind and of the natural mind. And it says it can be likened to spiral-like structures. The natural mind is described as turning downward from right to left, and this is the opposite we are told from the spiritual mind which turns upward from left to right. The direction of the turning is important as spiritually left and right, have correspondence left and right, relate to the great faculties that make up the human mind. Left corresponds to the things of the understanding, whereas right corresponds to the things of the affections or the will.

So, let's think about this and let's see its connection to our story today. The natural mind orientates itself downward from right to left. That is from the things of the will to the things of the understanding from right to left. This is the orientation of the natural mind. And this can be seen in our story last week. It was a movement from right to left. It was a movement from a desire and affection to confirming that desire and affection in the mind, which is the left represented by Pilate. This is the way of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it leads away from heaven downward into the deeper aspects of selfishness or hell.

Now, this is to lead Jesus away within the courtyard. It describes the mind's dissent into hell due to its rejection of the Word's teaching concerning it. This rejection is the arrogance of self-intelligence, which holds that it will be the sole arbiter of what the true nature of the Word is. It judges from external appearances.

Jesus, the living God in human form. Could it possibly be? Imagine Him standing before those who were his accusers. Divine? Hardly. He looks like bleeds, like and feels like any other man. King of the Jews? Not much evidence of royal heritage here. When the natural mind reads or hears the Word or the Heavenly Doctrines it holds within its grasp, the human manifestation of the Lord Himself. And without the influence and higher governance of the spiritual mind and those principles of heaven, the natural mind will always gravitate downward and falls into contempt for it.

*What does this mean? What does that mean? Is this divine? Can God to whom belongs infinite wisdom, speak in this way?*

You see the natural mind without being governed from those higher principles, all it sees is contradictions. Contradictions in the Word that are impossible to reconcile. It reads of things that don't fit into its own ideas about how God would act and be, and so it becomes closed to receiving from the Word. It begins to put its own perspective on the Word. Its own perspective that suits and reinforces its own self-centred loves. They dress it up in purple, or if you want to be more precise in the Greek, they sunk Him down into purple. And this is giving lip service to the value of spiritual teachings like loving others; like keeping the commandments while in the heart there is woven a crown of thorns. Those ideas that justify their own self-centred lives, which do violence to the head or the leading principles of the Word. The leading principles that guide spiritual life; love to the Lord and love to the neighbour. And so progressively is destroyed our very capacity or potential to love others.

You see, where we refuse to have our selfishness brought under the authority of the Word and the Heavenly Doctrines, we exalt them above the Word itself or make divine teaching subservient to our own ideas. This can only lead to further contempt. To merely give external acknowledgement is to salute the Word, hail King of the Jews. This is of course, nothing but a mockery of what is genuinely good and true. And it's more pointed in that the salutation can also be translated rejoice King of the Jews. We saw last week that the title King of the Jews refers to truth grounded in goodness, which refers to the Word itself. And here we see in this mockery that the natural mind only takes delight, only takes its joy in having dominion over spiritual things and ultimately, if it were possible, utterly destroying them. And here is its taunt for all potential joy or delight from the Word is gone with the confirmation of the delights of self-love. Now if the crown of thorns were not enough, so we see that they beat his head with a reed. A reed corresponds to the literal sense of the Word, John the Baptist was described by the Lord as a reed blowing in the wind.

And so here too, we see that the literal sense is being bashed against the head of the living God. It's being applied to those leading principles in a violent way. So the Word is viewed as something archaic, not holding together in terms of its literal sense, lots of contradictions in it. How can it be divine? This is natural reasoning, taking hold of it. And then the result of that is the destruction of those leading principles. Of loving the Lord and loving the neighbour. It describes how natural reasoning judges the Word to have no real value, and so cuts itself off from seeing the divinity that lies within. The Word is stripped, stripped of its power and ability to impact on the life in a positive way, and is judged to be of a lower quality than the best of human authorship.

The worship and mockery here is again, giving lip service to spiritual principles, but having no desire to make them the ruling authority in one's life. Once the natural mind construes the Word into some form that has no influence over its own life it then can bow the knee in pretence. However, we see the Lord was taken out of that purple and his own clothes were then placed upon Him.

And what this speaks of is the fact that even the pretence is done away with in the end. The false external represented by the purple is stripped and his own clothes are put back on Him. There is nothing desirable in the Word, or even in the Word, now falsified. The natural mind here utterly rejects what the Word and the Heavenly Doctrines teach. It doesn't regard them as divine and so, truth is led out to be crucified.

I just want to make a few comments now on verses 22 to 24. And this is where they bring the Lord to Golgotha. And they give Him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, which he doesn't take, and then they divide as garments, casting lots for them.

Golgotha is the place of the skull or the skull's place. And it speaks of, all that is left is the dead letter, everything living now has gone. And this picture of the natural mind, while difficult to accept, at one level, is a picture we must accept in order to move on. And we must resist the temptation to make it something that it isn't, to make it more palatable. And this is the giving of the wine mixed with myrrh. Myrrh represents something of the senses or sensual truth or appearances of the senses. And these appearances deaden the spiritual sensitivity of our life. And this is why the Lord refuses it. Truth sees things as they really are and does not receive this mixed potion.

They divide His garments. And this is what happens in the end with the natural mind is that it divides things up and it cannot put them back together. And in the end, because there is that lack of consistency, it is of no use, and it's cast to the four winds.

There were two robbers crucified with the Lord. These two robbers, because they're two, represent the faculties of that lower mind, the will faculty, and it also represents the understanding faculty. Now notice that the robbers were crucified, one on his right and one on his left. And this is the crucifixion, if you like, or the death of the natural mind of the human mind when truth is destroyed. And notice that what is destroyed is the power of that natural mind here. So, it is a message of hope. And notice the orientation for right is mentioned first, then left. So, we have this idea again that was described in the work Divine Love and Wisdom, a movement from right to left.

Crucified with the Lord are orientated from right to left. One on his right, mentioned first one on his left, mentioned second. Now with the destruction of the Word in terms of its authority in a person's life, when we will not heed to what we understand the Word to be teaching us, but rather seek to gratify the loves of self in the world, then we can't but bring upon ourselves the destruction of our capacity to reason.

If we will not allow truth to govern our lives leading to good, that is that opposite orientation from left to right, then the reasoning faculty within the natural mind takes to itself what is false and what is evil, and usurps the use for which it was given so that which was given was to confirm what is good and true, and rather than doing that, what we see is that there is a movement to confirming its own selfish lusts and desires. And when it does this, it is effectively a robber. It plunders our life. It plunders the life of all that is good and true, leaving the life empty and devoid of anything living.

And so, we see, that with the destruction of truth within the natural mind the two robbers represent the destruction of the two great faculties that make us human, the will for good and the understanding of truth without which all rationality and freedom in spiritual things is lost. This also highlights that principle that is expounded within the Heavenly Doctrines with regard to the nature of evil and that is this; that evil has within itself its own destruction.

Because evil brings disconnection. And that's what it really means, a disconnection from the source of life. And when that disconnection occurs, then death must follow. The nature of that death being illustrated here in the crucifixion of these two robbers with the Lord.



We now come to verses 29 to 32, and I'm just going to read those again.

*And those going by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, aha, you who are demolishing the temple and building it in three days, save yourself by descending from the cross. Likewise, the chief priest also with the scribes scoffing with one another said, Others He saved Himself He cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross that we may be perceiving and should be believing. And those crucified together with Him reproached Him.*

So, we see here further blasphemy in mockery, firstly by those who passed by and then the chief priest and the scribes, and finally those who were crucified with Him. But I just want to make a comment on the taunts made towards Jesus while he hung on the cross, and specifically this idea of Him descending from it.

And you'll notice that in terms of this descent that it is mentioned twice, and it's mentioned by two different groups of people. It is mentioned by those who are described as passing. And secondly, it is mentioned by the chief priests and the scribes. And what we have, because we have these two groups of people, both of which taunt Him to come down from the cross, the idea that there are two groups of people, again points to the fact that what we have, is described in these taunts, is the nature of the corrupted understanding represented by those passing by, and the nature of the corrupt will represented by the chief priests and the scribes. So, the first group represents the understanding, and the second group represents the will, and we can see this because the first group appeal to the trial and what Jesus was falsely accused of, or that false accusation that was brought against the Lord in his trial. That accusation, of course, being the idea of, Jesus destroying the temple and building it again in three days. We also know that this group represents the understanding because they're described as wagging their heads, the head of course being a correspondence of the understanding.

And what is it they say? Save yourself by descending from the cross. The corrupt understanding faculty cannot see anything divine in this man nailed to the cross. For, in this is described the Word's powerlessness in its ability to affect anything in the life through a rejection of truth. And so it is that this understanding sees nothing of any benefit in the Word.

It challenges the whole notion of obedience, of obedience to the truth, particularly where the self-orientated life is brought under threat. Its anthem, its message is the salvation of self. Save yourself and descend from the cross. The Lord's command is that one must die to self in order to find life.

And what then of the corrupted will faculty which in concert with the understanding faculty also asks that the Lord descend from the cross saying,

*let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross that we may be perceiving and should be believing.*

Thus is their scoffing. But we can see here that the call is for truth to demonstrate its power. For Christ the King of Israel speaks of truth and their wanting it to descend from the cross is to have truth on their own terms. Let's see its power. Whereas the Lord had been with them for those three and a half years and had demonstrated the power of God for the salvation of men, and they recognized this, there is a perception of this and that they spoke, and they said

*others He saves. Himself, he cannot save.*

But it is interesting that they talk of seeing before believing. And you'll remember at the beginning of this message, we spoke about the two, the two trees in the garden. And there we spoke about the principle of we see what we believe. And that in regard to the Word, we must acknowledge the divine before we are able to see the power of the Word work in our lives.

And so, this will principle in its corrupt state, does not acknowledge the divine but rather looks to see, and then to believe. And this looking to see has to do with approaching the Word from the ground of our senses and investigating it from its external forms. And of course, those contradictions and things within the sense of the letter form a veil which prevents the corrupt mind entering into the divine things.

The heart must be open to the Lord in order for the understanding to see Him within the Word. And that openness of heart is demonstrated in a willingness to be led by the Lord. Which brings us now to the story of Simon captured in a single verse, verse 21, where we read of one who is conscripted to carry the Lord's cross. And so that life of obedience through a willingness to follow the Lord and to carry one's cross. The story of Simon offers us a wonderful break in the general dark atmosphere of this horrendous story. For he represents the Lord's ability to turn our orientation toward Himself despite the seemingly savage nature of the natural mind when unbridled from spiritual influence.

Now it is no coincidence that this person's name is Simon. And the fact that his name is Simon throws him into direct contrast with Simon Peter. And you'll recall that Simon means hearing and that hearing is spiritually obedience. Simon Peter literally means "*Hearing (Simeon) Rock (Petros)*" or the type of hearing that belongs to the affection for truth in the natural man. We know this because a rock corresponds to truth. The faith represented by Peter has truth as the end in view, and we have seen how this stage or state of spiritual life has attached to it the loves of self and the world and therefore demonstrated a resistance to the prospect of the Lord's death.

In contrast, this Simon is from Cyrene which tells us that while he may be a Jew, he is from a gentile country. Who is he and what could he possibly represent? Well he represents a new kind of faith coming into consciousness, the quality of which is gentile in nature. Now the Heavenly Doctrines, speak of the gentile state, is one of loving to do good, but as yet without truths to show one how to do this more effectively. So, it is a state of ignorance concerning the Lord specifically, but a life of loving and serving others from a sense of reverence, from the general idea that it has concerning the divine. So, Simon, the Cyrenian represents this sort of faith, a faith that seeks the things of love as its end or good or charity. And this is in direct contrast to Peter who represents a faith focused on truth.

And we read here that Simon is said to be passing along, and this passing speaks of this form of life and its proximity to the Lord or the heavenly life. For the heavenly life is nothing but good. It has nothing but goodness as its end in view, and this is the true spiritual life. However, prior to having the principles directly from the Word and the Heavenly Doctrines, it is a parallel life, yet one open to receiving the Lord when he is present whether in this life or the life to come.

This story of Simon shows the beginnings of a new spiritual consciousness that arises when the old ways of being in spiritual things comes to a close. Historically here we have the close

of the Jewish Church's dispensation and the beginning of the Christian Church's dispensation. But even with us, the principle still applies as our old way of thinking or an old way of viewing things, of being, comes to a close through our desire to follow the Lord. So, a new way of being comes into consciousness. And we have spoken of the transition of moving from knowledge about spiritual things to a life in accordance with those things.

He is said to have come from a field and the field corresponds, the Heavenly Doctrines tell us, to the good of charity. And we see this goodness of life here, a life focused on doing the right thing, moving according to its understanding of truth. And such a mind is open and receptive. It is called a field because it is open and receptive to receiving seeds and from those seeds of truth that enter into that good ground, is able to harvest the goodness that crops produce or those ideas about how to live life more effectively in the heavenly pattern. Principles that enable a person to become more loving and understanding in life, or to become truly human.

This is why this desire for what is good represented by Simon is called the father of Alexander, which is a name meaning, "defending man" and speaks of the new ideas and principles that this state of life gains, and these principles are such that they are able to defend what is genuinely good and true. And so, in this son called Alexander, we see the associated truths that sit with this spirit of charity represented by Simon. He is also described as the father of Rufus, which means red haired. Now red always corresponds to goodness or to love, and it is the colour of passion. And here being on the extremities of the body corresponds to the good that comes from obedience, which can become spiritual.

Simon is a light of hope in the midst of great darkness, and he teaches us the importance of acceptance and obedience to what we understand to be true in the external life. The natural mind may rage in its desire to rule over what is spiritual, but the Lord provides the means for the fathering of a new kind of truth and goodness that will form the basis for our spiritual redemption. And we read that Simon is conscripted to do this service to the Lord. And this conscription speaks of the importance of self-compulsion in the spiritual life. The natural mind is opposed to the spiritual life, and it has to be brought into subjection. And therefore, we have to compel ourselves to bring that truth that we know into life, to live our lives according to it, and deny those desires and those pleasures and those delights that are associated with selfish gratification.

We need to do what we know, despite how we feel or how the situation looks.

The truth born of this life, a life of obedience for Simon follows the Lord. This sort of life defends what is good and true, not with the sword, as Peter did in the garden, to preserve that which he was and that which he was unwilling to let go of, but in this case of Simon. It is an acceptance or an accepting of the path, taking up the cross and following the Lord.

This life is that which is opposite to the spiral of the natural man. Remember that that life is an orientation described as being from right to left.

Simon is that spiral described as belonging to the spiritual life, which ascends turning from left to right, or from the things of the understanding. That is the understanding of what it means to enter into a life of good toward the things of love. This path moves from its understanding of what is good through obedience to good itself.

So here we see that Alexander, as the things who represents the things of the understanding or the things of truth, is mentioned first and that is followed by Rufus, which is the good that flows from that understanding. You see, we cannot trust the natural mind as it is opposed to the life of heaven in every respect. We must trust the Lord, which is to trust what truth teaches us from the Word and the Heavenly Doctrines concerning our states of life. This truth must govern that lower understanding, which would seek to make it more acceptable, would make the natural mind something that's okay with a few flaws within it. No! What the Word in the Heavenly Doctrines teach us is that it is corrupt to the core. We must adhere to what the Word teaches and keep our thinking, our feeling and our doing in subject to this if we are to enter into the good of the heavenly life.

Amen.