

- **\*READ Luke 22:39-44\*** We know well from **Ephesians 5:19 & Colossians 3:16** that when we sing, we are not doing so simply because it is something that God has allowed us to enjoy, but we are singing with a purpose in mind. Our singing, firstly glorifies and pleases God. It has a vertical purpose, you might say. But it also has a horizontal purpose between those who are gathered to sing. When we sing, we are singing to praise God, but we are also speaking, admonishing, and teaching one another through the words that pass through our lips.
- In order to have this exchange to be as productive as possible, it is important that we understand the words that we are singing and hearing from one another. Our lesson on Spirit-Filled singing made mention of the importance that we understand the words of the songs we sing. We need to understand firstly to know whether they are true or not...we don't want to teach heresy or falsehoods and we shouldn't want to sing them either. But we also want to understand so that we can truly feel the impact that the songs we sing can have on us.
- Often we sing certain songs at certain times in our assemblies because they assist us in focusing our minds on a particular thought or idea. We might sing "Give Me The Bible" before our Bible study hour. We might singing "Sweet Hour Of Prayer" before a prayer. We might sing "It Won't Be Very Long" or "Ready To Suffer" before the preacher's lesson. (JK) Or we might sing any number of songs before our observance of the Lord's Supper or our giving.
- This practice is a good and wise practice, but doing such, while a good thought, might be made empty if we don't understand the words of the songs we are singing. We must admit that some of the songs we sing are pretty old having been written 200-300 years before now, and some of the language in these songs are just archaic to us. Therefore, it is good that we take time to come to understand those songs that might seem strange or out of the ordinary from the words we use. So with that in mind, we are going to take some time this evening and in later lessons considering some songs that might need a little further explanation. Let's begin learning how to better sing with the understanding by looking at "Night With Ebon Pinion."
- As mentioned, there are some songs we sing that can't example be described as contemporary hymns. "Night With Ebon Pinion" would certainly qualify as such a song. The lyrics to this song were written way back around 1850 by a man named Love H. Jameson. Mr. Jameson was actually a contemporary with well known figure of the restoration movement, Alexander Campbell. The music of this song is quite serene, yet the words paint for us a vivid picture that helps for us to imagine in our minds what Jesus endured during that fateful night so many years ago. The words are without a doubt foreign to our ears, but I hope that our study this evening will help to shed some light on a powerful song.
  - **Verse 1:** "Night with ebon pinion, brooded o'er the vale; All around was silent, save the nightwind's wail, When Christ, the man of Sorrows, in tears and sweat as blood, prostrate in the garden, raised His voice to God."
  - **Verse 2:** "Smitten for offenses which were not His own. He, for our transgressions, had to weep alone; No friend with words to comfort, nor hand to help was there, When the Meek and Lowly humbly bowed in prayer."
  - **Verse 3:** "Abba, Father, Father, if indeed it may, Let this cup of anguish pass from Me, I pray, Yet, if it must be suffered, by Me, Thine only Son, Abba, Father, Father, let Thy will be done."

## I. Verse 1: Paints the scene for the evening of Jesus's betrayal and arrest.

- **Verse 1:** *"Night with ebon pinion, brooded o'er the vale; All around was silent, save the nightwind's wail, When Christ, the man of Sorrows, in tears and sweat as blood, prostrate in the garden, raised His voice to God."*
- A. The strange language is definitely something that can hinder our understanding of this song.
1. What or who is Ebon Pinion, and how does it brood o'er the vale? The words "ebon pinion" are not a person, but they simply mean "wings of darkness." Ebon being a similar word to ebony.
  2. Then attached with these words and completing the picture are the words "brooded o'er the vale." The picture painted is that of a dark night surrounding our Lord and the place where He was as He anxiously prayed to God in the Garden of Gethsemane. Maybe the picture of a flock of black birds closing in upon one who is overcome with sorrow and distress.
- B. This picture in our minds of the place where our Lord spent His last few moments of freedom before His death ought to be created within us a solemn mindset if sung before observing the Lord's Supper.
1. I know some get hung up on the idea of "preparing our minds" to eat the Lord's Supper, but I think there is something to this because there are many different thoughts and feelings that can be felt and expressed when we eat of the bread and drink of the juice. Some songs might inspire joy in our hearts for His sacrifice. Gratitude might be the prevailing thought, or we might partake with a very solemn mind because our minds have been taken there by a song such as this.
  2. I find it difficult to imagine the scene of Jesus by Himself in the garden surrounded by the black of night and sweating drops of blood without feeling a sense of sadness and despair for that which our Lord faced on our behalf. But it wasn't just the setting that was difficult, but this song also speaks to what Jesus Himself was actually feeling in the garden.

## II. Verse 2: Describes the agony Jesus felt.

- **Verse 2:** *"Smitten for offenses which were not His own. He, for our transgressions, had to weep alone; No friend with words to comfort, nor hand to help was there, When the Meek and Lowly humbly bowed in prayer."*
- A. The setting for this dreadful evening only contributed to the agony that Jesus already felt within Himself for what was about to happen to Him.
1. Jesus was about to suffer punishment even though He was sinless. He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. **(Isaiah 53:5)** For any man, even a man who was God...this would be something that weighted heavily upon His mind.
  2. Not only that, but He went through all of this seemingly by Himself without anyone to support Him. Especially here in the garden, He was all by Himself with His closest disciples asleep some distance away from Him. **(Luke 22:45,46)** The only consolation given to Him was a single angel who appeared to strengthen Him in His distress. **(Luke 22:43)** This song takes our minds not just to the place, but it takes us into the mind of Jesus as He prepared Himself for what was to come.
- B. Yet, even with this agony and feeling of abandonment in His heart, Jesus went to God in prayer.
1. Remember, we are seeking to teach one another as we sing, and certainly this is a lesson that can be learned from this song. At His darkest hour, when the future was certain, and only the worst was in the near future, Jesus didn't just fret and worry Himself to death as we sometimes do, but he humbly bowed His head in prayer.
  2. Our Lord knew that the Heavenly Father who was authoring the salvation for mankind through His sacrifice would be the same Heavenly Father He could go to as a means of comfort and reliance. Paul had not yet written the words, nor was He even faithful to Jesus at this point, but Jesus would fulfill the commands and admonitions of his writings in **Philippians 4:6** when he says that we are to be anxious for nothing, but that we are to take everything to God. Jesus shows us through His example and teaches us as we teach one another through this song that we must throw ourselves at the feet of our Almighty God in every circumstance.

### III. Verse 3: Emphasizes Jesus's faithfulness of God.

- **Verse 3:** *"Abba, Father, Father, if indeed it may, Let this cup of anguish pass from Me, I pray, Yet, if it must be suffered, by Me, Thine only Son, Abba, Father, Father, let Thy will be done."*
- A. Jesus knew exactly what was coming, yet He did exactly as God commanded.
1. Part of Jesus's prayer to God was a plea that certainly proves to us all the humanity that Jesus took on in coming to this earth. Knowing what was coming, any sane person would've begged and pleaded with whomever they could that they might be spared from this agony. Jesus did that. He spoke to His Father as any of us would speak to our fathers in this same situation.
  2. But it wasn't just as any child speaking to any father, but this language brings the connotation of the closest of relationships between a father and his son. It was in this relationship the Jesus pleads that this cup might pass from Him if the Father would allow...Yet, His heart was set on doing the will of the Father above all else, even if that meant a death on a cross. **(Luke 22:42)**
- B. Our Lord's obedience should motivate us to be just as obedient.
1. I personally believe that one of the reasons God desires our remembrance and observance of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week is because it serves as a reminder for us in so many different ways. It reminds us of the cost of sin, that being the blood of the Sinless One. It reminds us of the Love of God. It reminds us of God what expects for us in dying to self and living in Jesus. It reminds us that resurrection awaits for us if we will live faithfully for God.
  2. The Lord's Supper is a weekly reminder for us to refocus for the coming week ahead. We begin the week with the remembering of what Jesus did for us so that we might go on throughout that week giving it all to Him. Just as He was faithful to the Father in the face of the cross, so we too must be willing to pick up our cross and remain faithful to God in all circumstances. This song serves as a powerful and succinct reminder of the faithfulness of Jesus, and how we can have that same faith, as well.

We often say about pictures that they are worth a thousand words. Thankfully, we don't need a thousand words in a song to paint for us a vivid and powerful picture that can have a deep and personal impact on each of us. *Night With Ebon Pinion* is certainly a song that tugs at our hearts and minds and feels us with strong emotions that are meant to motivate us to even stronger faith and commitment to our Lord. Sure the words might not be a part of our common vernacular, but a little digging can show us the truth held within the unfamiliar words. May God be praised, and may each of us be taught, encouraged, and admonished to greater faithfulness and obedience by the singing of this song and so many more. May we sing with the understanding, and may it be to God's glory. **\*PRAYER\***