

The Sweet Savor

by Henry Law

The cross is the sweet savor of God, satisfying justice, truth, holiness, and mercy, and bringing joy and satisfaction to God's heart.

Scripture: Genesis 8:21, Psalm 45:7, John 3:16, Romans 3:25, 2 Corinthians 2:15, Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 5:12

Topics: "The Cross", "Divine Mercy"

Description

Henry Law preaches about the sweet savor of Christ, emphasizing how the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is the key to gaining acceptance and favor with God. The sermon highlights how the death of Jesus has an irresistible power with God, bringing joy and redemption to all who believe. It delves into how the attributes of God, such as Justice, Truth, Holiness, and Mercy, find satisfaction and delight in the sacrifice of Jesus, leading to the assurance of pardon and grace for believers.

Transcript

"The Lord smelled a sweet savor." Genesis 8:21

Reader! do not you desire that your soul may prosper at the throne of grace? Perhaps you reply, "Such blessedness is beyond all price. But how can one so low as a creature--so vile as a sinner, gain happy acceptance?" Blessed be God! there is a ready door. Draw near, leaning by faith on the arm of Jesus--robed by faith in His righteousness--pleading by faith the costly merits of His blood, and you enter encircled with songs of welcome! All heaven rejoices over you with joy unutterable.

Our Bible seems written with the grand intent thus to guide, by an ever-living way, to the rest of God. Therefore it is, that in its pages we see the golden portals flying open, when touched by hands like ours. Abel comes with the appointed Lamb--no frown repels him. "God accepted Abel, and his offering." Noah comes with the same key--no bolts obstruct him. His service is grateful incense. "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." So it ever has been. So it ever must be.

There is a virtue in the death of Jesus, so precious, so mighty, that it has resistless power with God. Whenever the poor sinner presents it, there is new chorus to the hymns on high; "again they say Hallelujah." How important is it, that this truth should be as a sun without a speck before us! Hence the Spirit records, that when Noah shed the blood which represented Christ, "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." Thus the curtains of God's pavilion are thrown back; and each attribute appears rejoicing in

redemption. The Lamb is offered, and there is fragrance throughout heaven. O my soul, these are blessed tidings. They show the irresistible plea, by which we may obtain pardon, and every needful grace.

This lesson might indeed have been spread over a wide expanse of reasoning and of proof; and still the outline might have been scarcely touched. But the Spirit simply states, "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." We catch one glance, and all is seen. The cross is raised, and clouds of prevailing odor pierce the skies.

This image is a bright jewel in the Bible-treasury, because it speaks the language of every class, in every age, in every climate. It was light to pious pilgrims in patriarchal times. After the lapse of centuries, it is equally light to us. It revived our elder brethren. It will revive the last saint. It stoops to the lowliness of the most lowly hut. It soars above the loftiness of the most lofty intellect. "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." All read and understand alike, that Jehovah reposes in Jesus, and is satisfied to the extent of Deity. Just as one orb contains all light, so this brief word is the whole Gospel of reconciliation. The children of Israel were taught in the twilight-rites the fullness of the work of Christ. The flowing blood preached all forgiveness. But to assure their hearts, over each victim this olive-branch was waved--"The priest shall burn all on the altar to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord."

So, too, when the Apostle Paul uplifts the cross, he proves its power by the same emblem. "Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." This is the magnifying medium, through which we see, that the dying of Jesus is the garden of God's sweetest perfumes. His one sacrifice is eternal and unbounded fragrance.

Let us now draw nearer, and learn how the whole Godhead here expands itself in limitless delights. When we contemplate God in His majesty, we see upon His head the many crowns of every pure and holy excellence. They all shine in one grand harmony of infinite, unchangeable glory. They cannot be parted. They cannot exist asunder. They are united by bands, which God alone could frame, but which God can never disunite. The question instantly arises, How can they all concur in raising a sinner to share the Eternal's throne?

First, let JUSTICE speak. Its claim strikes terror. It has a right to one unbroken series of uninterrupted obedience through all life's term. Each straying of a thought from perfect love incurs a countless debt. It has in its hand an immeasurable roll, written within and without against us. If it be willing to relax, it would merely overlook evil, and God would cease to be God. Therefore it sternly cries, pay me what you owe! But how shall he pay, who has nothing of his own but sin?--Behold the Cross. Here Jesus pays a death, the worth of which no tongue can reckon. Justice holds scales, which groan indeed under mountains upon mountains of iniquity--but this one sacrifice more than outweighs the pile. Thus justice rejoices, because it is infinitely honored. For if all the family of man had been cast into the prison-house of torment--if they had writhed forever, paying the penalty of hell-pains--the whole could never have been cancelled. Eternity could not have seen the end. But Jesus dies, and justice at once is crowned with everlasting satisfaction.

A case from common life, though far short of the entire truth, may help to clear it to our view. A debtor's debt amounts to thousands. His means can render a penny on each day. The creditor arrests him and takes the daily mite. Years pass, but the mass scarcely lessens. The removal of a daily grain will not wear out the ocean's sands. But let a rich man come, and in one sum discharge the whole. The claim ceases. The prisoner goes free. The creditor exults in a payment, which is unlooked-for gain. Thus at the cross, justice receives a cup of atonement, so full, that it can hold no more. It revels in the sweetness of the savor.

Ponder the wonders which are here achieved. Justice not only drops its avenging sword, but it becomes arrayed in smiles of approving love. It is no more an adversary, demanding condemnation. It stands, as an advocate, insisting on acquittal. The principle, which rigidly requires death for each sin, as rigidly refuses to take the payment twice. Cling then to the cross. There justice, by a mighty plea, establishes your right to heaven.

Next, there is a sweet savor here to the TRUTH of God. If justice is unyielding, so too, is Truth. Its yes is yes; its no is no. It speaks, and the word must be. Heaven and earth may pass away, but it cannot recede. Now its voice is gone forth, denouncing eternal wrath on every sin. Thus it bars heaven's gates with adamant bars. In vain are tears, and penitence, and prayers. Truth becomes untrue, if sin escapes. But Jesus comes to drink the cup of vengeance. Every threat falls on His Head. Truth needs no more. It claps the wings of rapturous delight, and speeds to heaven to tell that not one word has failed.

Take another faint image. A king issues a decree. His oath is pledged that death shall follow disobedience. A subject rebels. He is convicted. Execution is required. If the king hesitates, where is his truth and faithfulness, and where is the majesty of his empire? But let the king's son, in the offender's stead, endure the penalty. Then the law is magnified, the statute is inviolate, the sacredness of order rejoices, while the guilty lives. Thus, when Jesus suffers, Truth gains honor for its every saying, and smells a sweet savor of content.

Believer, rejoice in the cross. Here only, the Word, which had forged such mighty chains, finds that it can live in your life. It demands salvation for you; for it has nothing against you, but all for you in the unalterable promise, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Need I add, that Jesus is a sweet savor to the HOLINESS of God. This perfection is the sensitive plant of heaven. It recoils from the approach of sin. It cannot look upon uncleanness. It has no eye, but for unsullied righteousness. It only breathes where all is pure. Now, at the cross a marvel is effected, which is joy to every fiber of its heart--a stream thence flows, which washes out the crimson-dye, until it can be no more found. Nor is this all. The sinner looks to the cross, and, as he gazes, the love of evil withers, and the love of God buds forth. Thus the cross presents to Holiness "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Reader! would you obtain a title and fitness for heaven? Live at the cross. It gives a fitness to inherit. It gives an aptness to enjoy. Ministers of Christ, would you weaken the sway of Satan? Preach the cross. They only die to the rule of sin, who die in Jesus to its penalties. There is no sanctifying principle but faith in Christ!

Sweet too is the savor which MERCY here inhales. Mercy weeps over misery. In all afflictions it is afflicted. It tastes the bitterest drop in each cup of woe. But when anguish is averted, the guilty spared, the perishing rescued, and all tears wiped from the eyes of the redeemed, then is its holiest triumph! Loud is its rapture, when it sees a countless multitude snatched from the bitterest agonies, and borne to celestial bliss! Overflowing is its delight, when it hears voices, like ocean's waters, hymning the victories of the Lamb! Infinite is its joy, when it realizes that this adoration will swell louder in melody through endless ages! But it is only at the cross that Mercy raises this exulting head. I am painfully aware that many of the sons of sin have some vague thought of finding mercy without finding Christ. Oh! that they might learn, before it is too late, that God's saving mercy is only found at Calvary!

Reader! I trust, that you now distinctly see, how every attribute sings, and rejoices, and gives thanks, and glories in the all-satisfying Jesus. His incense ascends, and heaven luxuriates in the savor. Hence the Father brings in the Son with the happy voice, "Behold my elect, in whom my soul delights;" and again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Reader! is the like mind in you? Is the joy of heaven your joy? Is its refreshment the refreshment of your heart? Is its perfume the perfume of your spirit? Does your every faculty expand and rejoice in Jesus? Is He your Paradise of every spice and every flower? Is He your Garden of Eden, in which each moment is a moment of blossoming, and each blossom opens in increasing fragrance?

Believe me, every sweet savor is in Him. Believe me, there is no sweet savor elsewhere. The world is a foul desert. The vapor of its weeds is corruption and rottenness. Turn from its thorns and briars. Come and walk up and down in the verdant places of the Gospel. Partake of the deliciousness which here abounds. The ransomed all sing in the ways of the Lord; "His name is as ointment poured forth." "He is the Rose of Sharon." "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved unto me." "He is as a cluster of henna blossoms." "All your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." He is the sweet savor, which can never fail.

Can any hear this and turn to Christless habits? Ah! child of sin, pause, I beseech you. Apart from Christ, your person is accursed--Your merit is a filthy rag--Your prayer is an abomination--Your praise is an insult--Your service is a mockery--Your walk is a daily step from God--Your death is a downfall into hell. Tell me, is it not far better to be unto God a sweet savor of Christ? Think! a life redolent of Christ will be an eternity of fragrance through the realms of light. But a life which is the scent of earth's corruptions, becomes at last a loathsome fume in the charnel-house of darkness.

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