

Sunday Leftovers

The End of the Beginning - The Scourging and Crucifixion

What's This Message About?

Quick flash back: A couple of weeks ago we explored Jesus' experience at the Garden of Gethsemane. When Jesus asked His father, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me", was He afraid of dying or was there something else? Most believe He was not afraid of dying, but was not looking forward to the intense pain that was about to be inflicted on Him.

Now let's move forward in this story, to His post-trial experiences, and attempt to gain a better understanding of just what He experienced. When Jesus committed to God's plan for our salvation He was making a commitment to allow Himself to be betrayed, deserted, humiliated, tortured and terminated. He was accepting the pain that others (ourselves included) deserved for our rebellion and selfishness. But one must ask, "Why did God choose such a gruesome, painful path?"

Justice needed to be served. Unfortunately, we did not have the ability or the capacity to pay that penalty without suffering, ourselves. God chose this path to communicate to mankind, in a very graphic and memorable way, that there was no obstacle, no limits to what He would do to re-establish a personal, loving relationship with mankind. If the sin and pain that causes us to move away from that relationship was in the way, then He would take that pain upon Himself and erase that barrier, once and for all eternity. Does this sound like a God who doesn't care? Maybe, by examining His willingness to experience our pain, we will truly begin to understand the extent of the love and commitment He has for us.

Questions to Ponder:

- *What do you think was the main point of Matt's sermon?*
- *In your own words explain why you believe God chose this particular, horrifically painful path, to redeem mankind?*
- *What part of Jesus' painful journey resonates with you, personally? Why?*
- *What does Jesus' pain teach us about our relationship with God?*
- *How does understanding the reason for Jesus accepting this pain, for us, affect our relationship with Him?*

Do Something About it: Take time to read the post-trial/pre-resurrection story for yourself. Consider the commitment God made to you by allowing Himself to experience this pain. Now, knowing that you are truly loved and that all this was done to help you find your purpose, what commitment(s) will you make to further the Kingdom of God?

Scripture References: Psalm 22; John 19; Isaiah 53; Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:18; 4:1-3;