

The journey of the Cross – A journey leading to Easter 2017

For the next few Sundays leading till Easter we will be taking a Journey to the Cross and the Words that Jesus spoke when He was on the Cross and look into what they mean to us today.

“When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:33,34).

A word of Grace

The prophet Isaiah had been allowed to peer seven centuries into the future. There he saw in pictures great drama of salvation played out before him. There was the great Suffering Servant of the Lord, represented as a sheep, helpless and about to be slaughtered.

And silent. Jesus had very little to say to the three “judicial” hearings that condemned him and nothing at all to the guards and soldiers who abused him. They beat him, pounded a crown of thorns into his head, and flogged him. He bore it meekly. Even the brutal crucifixion did not bring curses, threats, and hate from his lips. But the four gospels record that he did speak seven times in those six horrible hours.

One of His utterance was a word of **Grace**. Definition of Grace: unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration or sanctification, a virtue coming from God, a state of sanctification enjoyed through divine assistance.

The gospel message is the good news of God’s grace, so it is important to know what grace is and to constantly seek to get a better view of what grace does in our lives.

Grace is an essential part of God’s character. Grace is closely related to God’s benevolence, love, and mercy. Grace can be variously defined as “God’s favor toward the unworthy” or “God’s benevolence on the undeserving.” In His grace,

God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don't deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously.

“When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:33,34). In those few words, Jesus summarized the entire purpose of his mission to earth--he came to bring the forgiveness of sins to people who are lost and clueless.

The cross of Christ did not cut short his saving work. It was his saving work. There the price of our forgiveness was paid in full. There you will find the forgiveness that you need for a happy life, a peaceful death, and a jubilant resurrection.

A word of Compassion

Another of His utterance was a word of **Compassion**.

Definition of Compassion: a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.

The Hebrew and Greek words sometimes translated as "compassion" also bear a broader meaning such as "to show pity," "to love," and "to show mercy." Other near synonyms for compassion in English are "to be loved by," "to show concern for," "to be tenderhearted," and "to act kindly."

When someone is in pain, They have no patience or compassion for anybody else but themselves. If someone bangs their thumb with a hammer and someone asks if they are all right, Most of the time they will bark back, “No! Of course I’m not all right.”

All the more extraordinary that while he was in his death agony Jesus was thinking about his mother. Left unsaid in the biblical narrative is where his stepdad Joseph was (maybe dead) and where Mary's other sons were (perhaps not believers at this time). But Mary was there and, as had been prophesied 33 years earlier, a sword was piercing her own soul.

Jesus cared deeply for her and wanted to make some important arrangements:

“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother’” (John 19:25-27).

John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” was the only one to come back to witness the crucifixion. It was to him that Jesus entrusted the care of his mother, a charge that John would certainly execute faithfully. In an era without a government safety net, John would be her source of support.

A true servant till the end, our Savior was thinking about the needs of others.