

King's Way Church
Message for Apr 1, 2007
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THE WAY OF THE CROSS
Mark 15:21-41

Today I want us to look at three spiritual truths that are found in the story of Christ's crucifixion; three lessons for meditation that will help us experience his healing presence in our lives. First of all...

1. JESUS COULDN'T CARRY HIS OWN CROSS...

Roman custom was to position places of execution near well-traveled roads so that people could easily see what became of those who opposed Caesar. It was now time for Jesus to begin to the journey to his death. On Wednesday we will be showing the Passion of the Christ film. The film is without question too accurate a presentation of the horrible and gruesome beatings of Jesus. After undergoing this type of physical punishment that Jesus had already endured up to this point—it is not surprising that he was physically unable to carry his cross.

(v. 21) A man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the country just then, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon is the father of Alexander and Rufus.)

Jesus couldn't carry his own cross, and so this unknown man—a man just like you and me—had to carry it for him. This is ironic, but one of the most important lessons of the crucifixion is that *even though Jesus couldn't carry his own cross...*

...he is the only one who can help you carry yours.

When you come to the place in your life when you cannot take another step in your own strength, I want you to know that Jesus has been there, too. Remember the verse from Hebrews...(Hebrews 4:15) (Matthew 11:28-30) Jesus came into this world to identify with the human race, to experience all that we experience—the same challenges, the same temptations, the same desperation. He understands you. He knows what it is like not to be able to go on, and he will be there to give you strength in your time of need.

2. JESUS COULD NOT SAVE HIMSELF... (v. 22-23)(v. 24-32)

In first century Jerusalem, there were some who considered crucifixions entertainment. When a man was condemned to die they would follow the procession out of town to the hill called Golgotha and entertain themselves at the dying man's expense. (John 10:11, 17-18)

Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?" (Matthew 26:53)

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In that sense, Jesus could have saved himself. But there is another sense in which he couldn't save himself. This is an important lesson in the crucifixion. ***Jesus could not save himself...***

... because he wanted to save you.

Saving you—forgiving your sins and giving you eternal life—meant that he had to die on the cross to pay the price for your sins, and he was willing to do it. He was willing to die so that you can live. He was willing to die so that you—and everyone who chooses to believe in him—could be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, 21)

2. JESUS EXPERIENCED SEPARATION FROM GOD... (v. 33-34)

But this scene is beyond our ability to understand. At this precise moment the Son of God's own Father abandons him, because at this precise moment, the words spoken in Isaiah have become true...

The Lord laid on him the guilt and sins of us all. (Isaiah 53:6) (2 Corinthians 5:21)

In that one horrifying moment, ***Jesus experienced separation from God...***

...so that you can experience reconciliation with God.

Jesus cried ***“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”*** so that you will never have to cry those words. Here is the heart of the gospel—the reason for it all. We can be reconciled to God, we can be in a right relationship with him, we can be forgiven of our sins and receive everlasting life...through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Listen to the words of Paul...

But now God has shown us a different way of being right in his sight--not by obeying the law by the way promised in the Scriptures long ago. We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. (Romans 2:21-22)

CONCLUSION

He personally carried away our sins in his own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds! (1 Peter 2:24)

Peter is quoting a verse from Isaiah. It's the verse that appears on the screen as the movie begins...

He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NIV)

The passion of Christ—his suffering and death—is our healing and our salvation. Through his wounds we can experience the healing of our wounds. So I encourage you to meditate on the Passion of Christ. Remember the garden. Remember his trial. Remember his crucifixion.

Though his work is finished on the cross, his work is not finished in you. He wants you to experience the fullness of a relationship with him. He wants you to come alive with his life inside of you. He wants you to experience the power of his resurrection. That is why he gave his life for you.

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