

“My Cross”

Luke 9:23 NIV - “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

As we have journeyed through the season of Lent, through Holy week, and the celebration of Easter I have been trying to see where and how my life fits into the Resurrection story. I think from time to time we get can get lost in the many different roles that take place to fulfill Christ’s purpose in the world. We are called to be disciples, so naturally we see ourselves in the place of Peter, James, John and the others. We have a desire to be like Mary and the other women to “see” the risen Jesus. We try to make sure we are not like the people in the crowd who were behind Jesus on Palm Sunday and yet turn to “Crucify, Crucify” him later in the week. So many participants played key roles, so where do we fit in.

Recently, I have had my thoughts on the 2 individuals who were also crucified that day with Christ. There is not much explained about these 2 individuals. Most references only call them bandits or thieves. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John do not speak very much as to their involvement other than the fact that they are present. The Gospel of Luke, however, shares some dialogue between Jesus and these men. Their conversation has consumed me in this past month.

In Luke 23:39-40 it says that one of the thieves, asked Jesus, “Are you not the Messiah? Then save yourself and us!” The other thief responds, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? We have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he says, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

I feel there are times that we are the first thief. We know Christ is the Messiah and we want to be saved. However, we fail to remember that we are deserving of the cross. We think of our sins and begin to rate them with one another. We think that the deeds of our life “aren’t that bad”. We simply think that Jesus should remove the pain and suffering in our lives, without true repentance and understanding that we deserve to be on the cross. Christ took our position.

Earlier in the Gospel of Luke, Christ tells those would be followers that if they wish to be a disciple, they must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him (Luke 9:23). Basically, we are called to die. We must realize that the sinful nature of who we are, makes us deserving of the cross. We are to accept the fact that without belief, trust, hope, and complete surrender to Christ, our destiny is the position of these thieves.

The second thief understands this position. He does not ask to be saved in the earthly sense. He simply confesses that he understands the punishment he receives is deserved, and asks Christ to remember him when the positions in eternity are established.

As my life of a Christian has evolved, I have come to understand that pain and suffering are still there. The “cross” of life must be carried and I am guilty of sin. The punishment of death is deserved. My lone hope is that Christ remembers me in his Kingdom and that I may be with Him in Paradise.”

Prayer- Lord Jesus, We trust in your grace this day. Allow me not to forget that the cross must be carried daily and that alone I am deserving of death. With you by my side, I can overcome anything and even death is not the end. Christ remember me today. In Jesus’ name. Amen