

Living in the Light of the Gospel of John

#7

John 19, 20, 21



“Pilate took Jesus and had Him whipped. The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on His head, threw a purple robe over Him, and approached Him with, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ Then they greeted Him with slaps in the face.”(John 19:1-3 The Message Bible) Jesus was whipped with stout leather thongs attached to a heavy handle. Tied to the outer edge of these thongs were pieces of metal or bone. Jesus was beaten, ridiculed and crucified in behalf of our sins. Isaiah 53:5 declares “by His stripes we are healed.” What does this mean to you?

As we study the unfolding of the events that lead up to the cross and then those around the cross we see that God is in control of each and every detail. When “Pilate said, don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, ‘You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above.’”(John 19:10, 11 NIV) After Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified we see one event after another taking place fulfilling prophecies made hundreds of years earlier. In Isaiah 53:3-5 we read, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we consider Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But 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.” Think about it. Hundreds of years before the Romans were in power and nailing people to the cross even took place these words, “He was pierced for our transgressions” were spoken to be fulfilled later by Jesus. But that is not all. Psalm 22:16-18 said, “They have pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all My bones; people stare and gloat over Me. They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.” As you read John 19:23, 24 you will see how this was fulfilled at the foot of the cross.

Even in the midst of agony as Jesus is hanging on the cross He does not forget His mother Mary. Looking down from the cross He, “said to His mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple (John), ‘Here is your mother’. From that time on, this disciple took her into his home”. (John 19:26, 27 NIV)

The creator of all streams, springs, rivers and fountains of refreshing water know what it was to thirst. Jesus declares, “I am thirsty,” and a sponge with wine vinegar is lifted to His lips. “When He had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished’. With that, He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit.”(John 19:30) When Jesus cried, “It is

finished,” It was a declaration that the greatest battle of the ages was won. Satan had been defeated. Christ’s death and His resurrection following broke the hold Satan had on humanity as a result of sin. Hebrews 9:22 says, “and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”. The shed blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. The words, “It is finished” are the most significant words in the Bible. It means the work of redemption has been completed. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he/she is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”(II Cor.5:17) So let us declare together, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”(2 Cor.9:15)

“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus side with a spear bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.”(John 19:34) “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the one who came by water and blood— Jesus Christ.”(1 John 5:6,7) Some feel the phrase “came by water and blood may refer to Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion. Others point out that the water of the word brings forth faith (Romans 10:17) in the fact that the blood of Jesus, His (God’s) Son, purifies us from all sin”.(I John 1:7)

“These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of His bones will be broken,’ and, as another scripture says, ‘They will look on the one they have pierced,’ “There scriptures are found in Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10. Common sense tells us that there is no way these prophecies could have been fulfilled if it were not for the fact that God was in total control of all events taking place at the cross. But this was not the only place God was in control. He controls the complete universe and all that is in it. This means that everything you and I are encountering at this very moment is under God’s control. In this reality we can experience peace. Peace in the fact that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus death and even where He was buried was prophesied hundreds of years earlier. In Isaiah 53:8,9 it declares, “For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death.” Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus with Pilate’s permission placed Jesus in a new tomb in the garden in which no one had ever been laid. Joseph of Arimathea is a rich man, and Nicodemus is the ruler of the Jews who came to the Jesus in John 3.

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don’t know where they have put him.’”(John 20:1, 2) Everything seems like its going from bad to worst. First Jesus is tortured. Then executed. Now His body is missing. What else could happen? All of us have had

moments like that. Times when it seems everything is caving in around us. It is so easy to panic. We begin to ask where is Jesus in the middle of all this hopelessness and despair we are facing. The answer is He is here. Jesus Christ is Risen.

After Peter and John explored the empty tomb they went home leaving Mary alone outside the tomb crying. Someone appears. She thinks it is the gardener and says, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.”(John 20:15) Jesus calls Mary by name. She recognizes Him and goes to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord”!(John 20:18) As we hear the Lord call our name in the midst of our hopeless situations we will also begin to see Jesus in a new way as our Resurrected Lord. It is especially encouraging to realize that Mary Magdalene the one who Jesus had delivered in such a powerful way is the very first one He appeared to. But she is not the only one. “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.”(John 20:19,20)

How in the midst of our fears and uncertainties we need a fresh vision of the resurrected Christ, Oh how we need to hear and believe His words of “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you. And with that He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”(John 20:21,22)

Instead of believing and receiving the words of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit we have tendency to be like doubting Thomas, demanding evidence before we believe. Jesus response is “stop doubting and believe.”(John 20:26) “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”(John 20:29) How we need to draw daily closer to the Resurrected Christ by reading the scripture and then abiding in the reality of His presence. “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”(John 20:31)

John chapter twenty-one gives us further insight into what it means to have life in His name. Christ is Risen yet Peter and six of the other disciples decide to go fishing. Jesus doesn’t stand on the shore and tell them they should be fishing for lost souls. He tells them where to throw the net so they can catch 153 large fish. He then invites them to breakfast. “When they have finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘You know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed My lambs.’ Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?’ He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of My sheep.’ The third time He said to him, ‘Simon son of John do you love Me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed My

sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.’ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death, by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, ‘Follow Me!’(John 21:15-19)

Simon Peter had denied Jesus three times. Now Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” Jesus wanted to be sure that the impetuous Peter of the past, who declared he would never deny Jesus, and then did, no longer existed. Jesus was challenging Simon Peter if he truly had life and love resulting from believing that Jesus is the Christ. When Peter answers Jesus affirmative three times, Jesus tells Peter what it truly means to follow Him. In Peter’s case it meant being taken where he does not want to go and ultimately experiencing death itself. When Peter wanted to compare himself to John and how John would die Jesus says to him, “what is that to you? You must follow Me.”(John 21:22)

What does it mean to you to follow Jesus Christ? Are you willing to suffer for Jesus? What losses are you willing to experience? How about death itself? It is not possible to follow Jesus unless you believe that Jesus is the Risen Christ, the Son of God. If you truly believe this fact then you will have life in His name. It is this life that will pressure, strengthen and renew you each day. Because of Jesus “we are more than conquerors,” as Romans 8:37 declares. “Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”(Romans 8:38,39) It is for this reason that John declared he wrote this gospel, “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”(John 20:31) Do you believe this? If so then you are truly free to begin to live both now and for all eternity.

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