

**Series: The Darkness and the Dawn—Lord of Life, Westfield-4/9/03**

**Meditation: The Way of the Cross—Jesus is Condemned**

**Text: John 19: 5-16**

*Illustration: Nobody cared*

*Jesus is condemned . . .*

- By the legalism of those living under the law
  1. Jewish leaders knew God’s Law & turned a blind eye to justice
  2. *“You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?” Rom 2:23*
  3. *“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.” Rom. 3: 19*
  4. *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” Gal 4:4-5*
- By a government more interested in a fix than in justice
  5. Pilate feigning judicial process, convicted by Jesus’ innocence
  6. Pilate not realizing who was in control
  7. *“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” Rom. 13: 1*
- Even in this condemnation God was in charge of the condemning
  8. *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Cor 5:21*
  9. *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1-2*
  10. . . .*So that we will not be condemned*

**Griffith lived through the Great Depression.** He got a job on the edge of the Mississippi caring for one of those great, huge railroad bridges that cross that mighty river. **John brought his 8-year-old son, Greg,** to work with him to see what Daddy did all day. The little boy was wide-eyed with excitement, and he clapped his hands with glee when the huge bridge went up at the beck and call of his mighty father. He watched with wonderment as the huge boats steamed down the Mississippi. Twelve o’clock came, and his father put up the bridge. There were no trains due for a good while, and they went out a couple of hundred feet on a catwalk out over the river to an observation deck. They sat down, opened their brown bag, and began to eat their lunch. The time whirled by, and suddenly they were drawn instantly back to reality by the shrieking of a distant train whistle. John Griffith quickly looked at his watch. He saw that it was time for the **1:07, the Memphis Express, with 400 passengers,** which would be rushing across that bridge in just a couple of minutes. He knew he had just enough time, so without panic but with alacrity he told his son to stay where he was. He leaped to his feet, jumped to the catwalk, ran back, climbed the ladder to the control room, went in, put his hand on the huge lever that controlled the bridge, looked up the river and down to see if any boats were coming, as was his custom, and then looked down to see if there were any beneath the bridge. And suddenly he saw a sight that froze his blood and caused his heart to leap into his throat. His boy! His boy had tried to follow him to the control room and had fallen into the great, huge gear box that had the monstrous gears that operated this massive bridge. His left leg was caught between the two main gears, and the father knew that as sure as the sun came up in the

morning, if he pushed that lever his son would be ground in the midst of eight tons of whining, grinding steel. His eyes filled with tears of panic. His mind whirled. What could he do? He saw a rope there in the control room. He could rush down the ladder and out the catwalk, tie off the rope, lower himself down, extricate his son, climb back up the rope, run back into the control room, and lower the bridge. No sooner had his mind done that exercise than he knew--he knew there wasn't time. He'd never make it, and there were 400 people on that train. Suddenly he heard the whistle again, this time startlingly closer. And he could hear the clicking of the locomotive wheels on the track, and he could hear the rapid puffing of the train. What could he do? What could he do! There were 400 people, but this was ... this was his son, this was his only son. He was a father! He knew what he had to do, so he buried his head in his arm and he pushed the gear forward. The great bridge slowly lowered into place just as the express train roared across. He lifted up his tear-smudged face and looked straight into the flashing windows of that train as they flashed by one after another. He saw men reading the afternoon paper, a conductor in uniform looking at a large vest-pocket watch, ladies sipping tea out of teacups, and little children pushing long spoons into plates of ice cream. Nobody looked in the control room. Nobody looked at his tears. Nobody, nobody looked down to the great gear box. In heart-wrenching agony, he beat against the window of the control room, and he said, "What's wrong with you people? Don't you care? I sacrificed my son for you. Don't any of you care?" Nobody looked. Nobody heard. Nobody heeded. And the train disappeared across the river....

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**Meditation: The Way of the Cross--Jesus is Mocked**

**Text: Matthew 27: 39-44**

*He was despised and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Isaiah 53:3*

***He endured blasphemy on our account***

- Those who stood by derided and rejected his claim to be God's Son
  1. They reject his word (temple prophecy)
  2. They reject his Godhead by not believing
- As "by-standers" of the cross we often blaspheme by what don't do
  3. *As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." Romans 2:24*
  4. **Ills.: New York Times Square Brutal Murder 1968**

***He endured temptation on our account***

- Satan came with the same mocking temptation as at the beginning
  1. *If you are the Son of God ...change stone to bread, jump off..*
  2. If Jesus had succumb to this pride wrenching taunt, we would still be in our sins with a dead martyr not a living Savior
- Jesus resisted the temptation to prove that he was the Son of God
  3. Actually the fact that he withstood and defeat Satan's temptation proved that he was the powerful Son of God (*All authority...*)
- Jesus resisted temptation on our behalf, in our place, and for our sake
  4. *"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:18*

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**Meditation: The Way of the Cross— Jesus Witnessed to in Death**

**“Courageous Faith”**

**Text: John 19: 38-41**

**Introduction** Lee Stroble’s book *“The Case for Christ”*

***A death that gives birth to a witness (vss 38-39a)***

*“<sup>38</sup>And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. <sup>39</sup>And Nicodemus came also*

- Standing up for Jesus is a risky thing
  5. If they persecuted/crucified Jesus, followers can expect same
  6. Joseph/Nicodemus as members of Sanhedrin stood to lose a lot
  7. In an secularized world, standing for Jesus comes with a price
- Standing with Jesus is reason to have no fear
  8. Joseph/Nicodemus had seen the miraculous power of Jesus’ death
  9. As those who’ve seen life change in self and others
  10. *“No fear exists where his love is. Rather, perfect love gets rid of fear, because fear involves punishment. The person who lives in fear doesn't have perfect love.” 1 John 4:18*

***A sacrifice that compels a response (39b-41)***

*<sup>39</sup>Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. <sup>40</sup>And so they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup>Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.*

- The sacrifice of Jesus was one that was unconditional
  1. *The greatest love you can show is to give your life for your friends.” John 15:13*
  2. **Ills.: War Buddy sacrifice — we leave no one behind**
- Our response of love finds power and resource through His death
  3. *“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.” 2 Cor. 5:14*
  4. Joseph and Nicodemus used extravagant gifts to show their conditional witness and love for Jesus (**Public display**)
    1. Joseph’s gift would have cost \$100's of thousands
    2. Nicodemus purchase of embalming spices would have been from the estate of deceased by Nicodemus picked up tab
  5. How can we respond to show the significance of Jesus our Savior in our life?
  6. *You will honor God through this genuine act of service because of your commitment to spread the Good News of Christ and because of your generosity in sharing with them and everyone else.” 2 Cor. 9:13*