

Title: ~~The~~ Place of the Skull

Text: John 19:16-22

Turn in your Bibles to the gospel of John chapter 19. The Gospel of John chapter 19 beginning with Vs 16. (2B) Today, we come to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

John chapter 19 beginning with Vs 16.....(Read Vs 16-22

PRAYER

In our last time together we examined the trail of Jesus before Pilate. Pilate ask Jesus 5 questions in which he tryed to find some reason to crucify Him. But of course, he could find no reason. So, Pilate then had Jesus beaten and tortured, hoping that this would please the crowd. But, it didn't. And they cried crucify Him...crucify Him. And Pilate said to them, "shall I crucify your king"? The chief priests answered, "we have no king but Caesar." And so Pilate delivered Jesus to them to be crucified.

But, the point that you should remember, from last week, is that Jesus died on the cross under the direct plan of God. He wasn't put on the cross because wicked men in a moment of time happened to crucify Him. NO WAY! the Bible says in Acts 2 that Jesus was taken and crucified by the planned counsel of Almighty God.

The book of Revelation says that Jesus was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. It was no accident of history. And Jesus didn't die merely as a martyr of His own cause. The Son of God came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. In fact, Jesus even predicted His death and shared that prediction with His disciples several days preceding His crucifixion. He told them how He was going to die; and He told them that on the third day He jwould be raised up. And all of this was happening in fulfill fulfillment of prophecy. 30 different propheciesz were fillfilled during the week we call Holy, as Jesus died on a cross on a hill outside of the Nothern wall of Jersusalem.

(1C) Now, (first^{and} of all), Let's examine the place where Jesus was crucified. And I want to share several things with you about this place of crucifixion in Vs 17-22

(1D) Number one, it was a place of identification. It was a place of identification. And I believe Jesus was identifying with three things, here.

(1E) First of all, he was identifying with suffering. We read in Vs 17...

"He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the PLACE OF THE SKULL."

"Bearing a cross ~~only~~ ^{again} remains us of the agony and suffering He was under.

As we know from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was unable to bear the weight of the cross and a man by the name of Simon was pulled from the crowd and made to carry the cross of Jesus. ^{And Dear Friends,} ~~And I find this to be~~ ^{is} a fascinating story.

Because Simon of Cyrenian, according to the Gospel of Mark chapter 15, ^{Vs 27} was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Now, who in the world is Alexander and Rufus?

Would you turn in your Bibles, please, to Romans chapter 16. The book of Romans chapter 16 verse 13.

You know, there are so many things about this crucifixion that are so wonderful; and, yet, we pass right over them. Romans chapter 16 verse 13. Paul is writing to the church of Rome.

By the way, the church in Rome was probable started by those strangers from Rome who were in Jersulam on the day of Pentecost. The Bible does say that they were there. And they were probable part of those 3 thousand souls that were saved as Peter preached the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. And then they went home and started a church in Rome.

Paul wrote to this church and in greeting the people he says in Vs 13...

"GREET RUFUS, A CHOICE MAN IN THE LORD, ALSO HIS MOTHER AND".....What is the next word?...anybody?....."MINE"...

Now, ~~that doesn't mean that Paul had a separate mother, from him.~~ ^{this was Paul's}

Literally, the Greek would read, "THE MOTHER OF HIM AND THE MOTHER OF ME."

Same woman... which means one thing:..at least..that if it wasn't his direct mother, which it probable wasn't, it was a lady who brought Paul up in Jersualèm. And became like a mother to him. And he loved her in the Lord.

omit

omit

Now, this mother of Rufus was the wife of Simon of Cyrene..Boy, you talk about a Christian home that had a testimony? The Apostle Paul was effected by the home of the man who bore the cross of Jesus....It is just so fantastic.

I imagine he would have told the great apostle what it was like to carry the cross of Jesus. He could have told Paul what it was like at Calvary when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Oh, dear friends, it is so exciting to put these little details together.

Now, let's come back to John chapter 19....

Jesus identified with the suffering ~~of men~~. The Bible says that he was a man of sorrow, a man of grief. He even told the women not to weep for him, but to weep for themselves. And at the cross we see Him suffer. And through all that suffering for us, according to Hebrews 5:7-9, He learned obedience by the things he suffered and became the author of eternal salvation for all who would believe in Him.

Dear friends, do you remember in the garden when Jesus prayed "LORD, IF IT BE POSSIBLE, LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME"? ^{Now.} what did he mean? Was He praying that he might escape death on the Cross?..Oh, no...He wasn't asking to be removed from the cross. He came into the world to die for your sins and mine. When he prayed, "LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME", he was referring to the cup of suffering....He ^{Because} knew what suffering would be like. And so ^{in his humility,} in the garden He was struggling with the whole issue of suffering. Terrible suffering that he would go through as he hung their on the cross.

^{God}, Hebrews 5:7 tells us that he became obedient unto the Father's will. That it was God's will for Him to suffer. WHY? Because through that suffering Jesus became the ^{means} ~~author~~ of our salvation.

I am not going to give you, ^{Today} today, an insight into the suffering of Jesus on the cross. I am tempted, because I believe we treat the cross so lightly. We think of the death of Jesus as though it were the death of anyone. You know, great men die all the time... ^{And others die of Cancer or Heart attacks}

But, my friends, in no way was death by crucification similar to any other form of death. *AND we will see that in a few moments* And I just urge you to read some of the accounts of Roman crucification. And then realize that Jesus, instead of being tied to the cross, was nailed to the cross. And to realize what that might have meant in terms of agony and suffering.

And the final part of His death was when the spear pierced His side and there came out blood and water. Jesus clearly died of a heart rupture. His heart was broken, both spiritual and physically.

Oh, friends, Jesus identified with suffering.....WHY?..... Because of you and me. I cannot set, passively by and read all of that and say, "WELL, I AM GLAD IT IS OVER.".....It was because of my sins that Jesus died. And it was because of your sins that Jesus died.

You can leave this service, ~~today~~ *today*, and act like it wasn't true. But, it is true. And He loved you. And that is why He went through all that suffering on the cross. It was for you and for me.

I wish we had time to develop this subject in detail. It might cause us to appreciate all that Jesus went through because of love. *He identified with suffering*

Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2 says that Jesus "endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before Him."

And that "joy that was set before Him" is referring to you and to me. *you* He knew, because of his suffering, that people all over the world would come to know Him. So, he endured the suffering because people like you and me, would one day walk down a church isle and give our hearts and life to the King of Kings and ~~the~~ Lord of Lords.....

(2E) Now, the second way in which we see this identification is with a skull. ~~How appropriate.~~ *The* This reason this hill is called "THE PLACE OF THE SKULL" is because in the side of the hill, or the way the hill is dug out, it forms a skull. And I thought, how appropriate that Jesus who died on that hill would be identified with death. It was the place of death. Death for all of us when He died that day.

(30) The third way in which this place is identified is with sinners. Jesus was identified with sinners. Two thieves were crucified with him.

We see in Luke chapter 5 verse 30 that the constant pressure against Jesus was: "HE IS ALWAYS WITH SINNERS." People were always accusing Jesus of the very thing that to us is so wonderful. He was a friend of sinners.

And we need to remember that no matter what our life might ~~have been~~ ^{be} like, Jesus is our friend.

As we sang a few moments ago...

Jesus! what a friend for sinners! Jesus! lover of my soul!

Friends may fail me, foes assail me, He, my Saviour, makes me whole.

Hallelujah! what a Saviour! Hallelujah! what a friend!

Saving, helping, keeping, loving, He is with me to the end.

So, how fitting that on this occasion of His death He would be identified with two thieves, two sinners.

And I am sure you know the story. One of the thieves ask Jesus to remember him when He came into his kingdom. And Jesus said "that today you shall be with me in paradise."

The other thief mocked Jesus and said, "we have done nothing to deserve death. If you are the Christ save yourself and us, also."

As I thought about this story, I realized what a beautiful picture of sin. Because in the case of the thief who did not repent, sin was not only in this man, but it was on him from the standpoint of penalty. AND HE DIED...LOST... ETERNAL LOST AND SEPERATED FROM GOD.

But the other thief, Oh, he had sin in him, but it wasn't on him from the stand point of penalty because he turned in faith to Jesus and was saved.

And in the case of Jesus, there was no sin in him, but all the sin of the world was laid on Him in the sense of penalty...

Oh, dear friends, what a sense of contrast between the three that were there on the cross. Here we see Jesus identifying with sinners. *NOT only a place of identification it was*
(20) Now, secondly, the place of ~~that~~ ^{The} crucifixation was a place of iniquity.

Tremendous iniquity. I don't know what it is in your mind. But, I see the darkness. It was dark for three hourse. The earthquakes. And all the terrible things that happened....

But, spiritually something was happening there that we don't often put ourselves into. ^{And it is this -} ~~It is~~...that all the iniquity and the sin of every man, woman, and child was there at that one moment of time. The sin of every person in this room was laid on Jesus. ~~Dear~~ ^{my} friends, that is hard for me to understand

The prophet Isaiah says "that all we like sheep have gone astray. We turned everyone to his own way and the Lord laid on him, on Jesus, the iniquity of us all." All the iniquity of the world was laid on Jesus.

No wonder he cried out to the Father as He hung there on the cross.... "MY GOD! MY GOD! WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME." Because at that one moment ^{of Time,} Jesus bore all our sins.

I Peter 2:24 says "in His own body He bore our sins on the tree." You see, when Jesus died on the cross every sin you and I have every committed, every sin that is presently in our life, was laid on Jesus Christ.

It wasn't just the Romans that killed Jesus, or the Jews, or the High Priest. It was all of our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross.

Just for a moment reflect upon your own sins. If all the rest of the people in the whole world were perfect and you were the only one with sin, Jesus would have gone to the cross to die for you. Do you understand?.....It was our sin that put Jesus on the cross.

And as I think of that beautiful, precious, sinless Son of God in that one moment, bearing my sin, it causes me to see "THE LOVE OF GOD"..What love God has for me. Oh, the cross certainly was a place of iniquity.....

(3) And third, ^{John} it was a place of inscription.

(1E) Vs 19 says, "AND PILATE WROTE AN INSCRIPTION AND PUT IT ON THE CROSS. AND IT WAS WRITTEN, JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

And boy, let me tell you, this bothered the Jewish leaders. So, we find them saying in Vs 21, "DO NOT WRITE, THE KING OF THE JEWS: BUT THAT HE SAID, I AM KING OF THE JEWS."

In other words the Jewish leaders didn't want the people to feel that they had crucified the KING OF THE JEWS. But, friends, THEY DID?.....
He was a King

The chief Priests, also, didn't like the idea that it was written in three languages.

"You know, Pilate, if you would just put it up there in Hebrew, at least, not to many of the others would see it."

But Pilate put the inscriptuon on the cross not only in Hebrew, but also in Greek, the common language of the Mediterany world. He did that so that anybody would walk by and could redd the inscriptuon. And ^{then} to really rub it in, Pilate, puts it in Latin. Latin, the language of the Romans. Now, the Roman soldiers will know that we are killing our own king.

Have you ever wondered why Pilate didnt change the inscriptuon? Well, let me tell you why. I believe that Pilate in his heart knew that there was no offical Roman charge against Jesus. There was no reason, legally, for the crucification. And so Pilate would not change it. He was putting the blame back on the Chief priest. "HAY! YOU LEAVE IT THE WAY I WROTE IT."

omit

[Faint handwritten notes]

That was the first thing that struck me about the place of the inscription

and that is

(2E) The second thing that struck me about the inscription is the control of God behind it all.

That inscription was and still is the truth. Nothing can change it. Jesus is the KING OF THE JEWS. You don't make Him king. He is King. It was a statement of fact. And God controlling that, controlling the emotions of Pilate, was controlling the whole thing.

You ask: "Pastor, how do you know that?....."

Turn, in your Bibles, please, to I Timothy chapter 6. This is a wonderful passage. I Timothy chapter 6 verse 13- 16. Even ~~The~~ Book of Revelation chapter 19:16 in speaking about the second coming of Jesus says, "he is king of kings and lord of Lords."

~~But~~ notice notice I Timothy chapter 6 verse 13...(READ Vs 13-16)

The infinite God with all of His attributes is being expressed here. HE IS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And He witnessed that confession in front of Pilate. So, that inscription was and is and always will be the truth.

(4D) Then, finally, this place of the crucifixion was a place of invitation.

a place of invitation

~~I have already mentioned this to you.~~ *at, what* a joy to know that even in this moment of suffering and death was a moment of invitation. For Jesus turned to that thief and said, "TODAY, YOU SHALL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."
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You know, it always excites me to realize that in one moment of time a person can turn to Jesus and be saved.....AMEN.....

When I look at all the religions and cults in the world and hear what they have to say. It seems so legalistic. They say..."here are 36 points that you can get involved in and maybe they will help you find heaven." And then they give you a whole set of regulations and rules to follow with the hope that somehow you can please God. Religions and cults are full of this.

But, that is not the Gospel....The Gospel is one person aware of his or her sin and realizing you cannot save yourself. It is one person looking at the Cross and the Saviour doing ~~for his or her~~ *for* sin and believing in Jesus.

At that one moment you are ~~transformed~~ *redeemed*, you are saved. WHAT AN EXCITING Gospel we believe.....

Dr. A.J. Gordon was pastor of First Baptist Church in Boston, many, many years ago. One day he met a little boy out in front of the church. The boy was carrying a rusty bird cage in his hands and several little birds were in the cage.

Dr. Gordon ask, "Son, where did you get those birds?"

The boy answered, "I trapped them out in the field."

"What are you going to do with them," the preacher asked.

"I'm going to take them home and play with them."

"What will you do with them when you get through playing with them?" Dr. Gordon asked.

"Oh", said the boy, "I guess I'll just feed them to an old cat we have around the house."

Then Dr. Gordan asked the boy how much he would take for the birds and the boy answered, "Mister, you don't want these birds. They're just little old field birds and they can't sing very well."

Dr. Gordon said, "I'll give you two dollars for the cage and the birds." "Great", said the boy, "you have yurself a deal."

The exchange was made and the boy went whistling down the street. Dr. Gordon took the cage out behind his church and opened the door of the cage and turned the birds loss. And they went flying away into the sky singing as they went.

The next Sunday Dr. Gordon took the empty bird cage to the pulpit to use it in illustrating his sermon. He told his congregation all about the little boy and what had happened to the birds. Then he said, "That little boy said that the birds could not sing very well, but when I released them from the cage they went singing away, and it seemed that they were singing, "REDEEMED, REDEEMED, REDEEMED." — (PLEASE)

^{SOFTLY} Oh, my friends, you and I were like those little birds. Satan had us in the cage of sin and was taking us to hell. Then Jesus went to the cross and paid the price for our release...and He rose from the dead for our redemption. And when we come to Him in simple faith we, too, can sing... "REDEEMED...REDEEMED....I'VE BEEN REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB."

I close by saying that it will profit you nothing but sorrow and suffering if you gain the whole world and lose your soul. But it will profit you everything in this life and the life to come if you will only receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. ~~MAKE THAT DECISION, TODAY...~~

Let us close in prayer