

## Good Friday Meditations

**Text: Luke 19:28-44**

**Theme: Conversations from the Cross**

### **Meditation 1 - Jesus Responds to the Women who Weep for Him**

**Luke 23:26-31**

<sup>26</sup>As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. <sup>27</sup>A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. <sup>28</sup>Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then ““they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us! <sup>31</sup>For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

As I read through Luke’s account of Jesus’ passion, it struck me that Jesus is in a constant conversation with those around Him. Sometimes He responds to their words, but there are other times when He responds to their deeds.

As He began His journey to Golgatha, He was so weak, that He was not even able to bear His cross. A man named Simon was Cyrene was conscripted to carry the cross for Him. Actually, this was a blessing for Simon. He and His family became believers in Jesus as their Savior. If you were at the Dead Sea’s scroll exhibit at the museum this year, you would have seen the ossuary, which is a burial box of bones from Simon’s son Rufus.

As Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on the donkey, His disciples were singing, “Hosanna, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” Now, He was barely able to walk as He left the city. The women of the city were weeping for Him. This was something that they did for criminals who were sentenced to death. They pitied Jesus for the suffering and death that He was going to suffer. It would be horrible.

We understand their cry. Many times we look at lent as a time to pity Jesus. We want to stand on the sides of the streets and lament His suffering and death. Isn’t it awful that Jesus had to endure such disgrace and pain. We spend this season and especially Good Friday feeling sorry for Him.

How does Jesus respond? He turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” For days of destruction were coming, He told them, when the barren would be considered blessed . This was a prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem which happened some 40 years later, in 70 A.D. Because the city rejected Him, it would receive a horrible judgement. The Lord’s heart went out to the city. Their lack of faith broke His heart.

This is a lesson for us yet today. Jesus doesn’t want our pity. He wants our faith. He doesn’t want us to feel sorry for Him that He had to suffer so much. He wants us to trust that He went to the

cross to take away all of our sins.

Where there is no faith, Christ begins to weep. The unbelief of Jerusalem caused Him to weep over the city as He entered it and as He left it. Wherever there is unbelief in the Gospel today, Christ also weeps. Christ would have us lament our sin and unbelief, and trust that He took this path to the cross in order to redeem us.

#### **Meditation 4 – Jesus Responds to His Father’s Acceptance of His Sacrifice**

##### **Luke 23:44-49**

<sup>44</sup>And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. <sup>45</sup>When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. <sup>46</sup>“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” <sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup>but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” <sup>49</sup>When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?”

Jesus made some big promises from the cross. He prayed for His Father to forgive those who crucified Him. He also promised a repentant criminal that He would receive paradise when he died. Jesus gives us the same promises, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in His glory.

But all of this hinges on one thing. That is that the Father would accept His sacrifice for all of our sins. If God didn’t accept it, Christ’s promises would be worthless. It would be like me writing you a check for a million dollars. That check would not be worth the paper that it is printed on.

But just before Jesus died, the Father showed that He had accepted Christ’s payment for all of our sins on the cross. The curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This curtain separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple. The Holy of Holies was the place of God’s presence. It was the place where the Ark of the Covenant had been placed. The only time that anyone was allowed in this part of the temple was on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) when the High Priest made atonement for the sins of Israel with the blood of bulls.

Now that veil that separated God from man had been torn in two. Christ’s sacrifice for our sins on the cross made atonement for our sins, once and for all. St. Paul puts it this way in Romans 5:1, *“Therefore, since we have been justified through by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

The Father received Christ’s payment for our sins. How did Jesus respond? He died in peace with the words, *“Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.”* He lived His entire life to carry out His Father’s will. He continued to trust in His Father, even as He suffered on the cross. He was able to die in peace that His mission had been accomplished. Our sins were atoned for.

When Jesus died, the Father received His spirit in the glory of heaven again. A lot of people think that Jesus went to hell after He died to suffer more, but that isn’t true. His Spirit returned to

His Father. But it didn't stay there. In three days Christ rose from the dead. As the resurrected Christ He would descend into hell and declare His victory over sin, death, and all the power of the devil. He would also rise from the grave on this earth and declare His peace to His disciples and the world.

Christ was able to die in peace. When we mourn those Christians who have gone before us, we are able to find peace that their spirits are with the Lord until the day of their resurrection. When our own last our comes, we will also have that same peace through faith in Christ. We will be able to commit our spirit to our Heavenly Father in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection through our Savior Jesus Christ.

May God give us that faith in His atonement for our sins, that we will be able to commit our lives to the good and gracious will of our heavenly Father, knowing that nothing, not even death, can ever separate us from God's great love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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