

Day Twenty-Three

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

Are you willing?

Matthew 27:45-49(NLT) Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. **46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”** that is, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** **47** Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, **“This Man is calling for Elijah!”** **48** Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. **49** The rest said, **“Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”**

Mark 15:33-36(NLT) At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. **34** Then at three o’clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, **“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”** which means **“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”** **35** Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. **36** One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. **“Wait!”** he said. **“Let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down!”**

The moment the darkness is lifted, Jesus speaks. **He speaks words that cause an immediate response from the onlookers and words that will echo throughout eternity.** His words are both revelatory and fulfilling. The words He speaks help us to get a glimpse of what He experiences while veiled in darkness. **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** The words are revelatory because they reveal the depth of sacrifice and the measure of judgement; the sacrifice of God in the flesh, who is made the very object of judgment for sin. But the words are also fulfilling because they come directly from Scripture. Jesus quotes **Psalm 22:1(TPT)** **“God, my God! Why would you abandon me now?”**

David wrote Psalm 22 as a Psalm of Lament. It expresses a cry to God in times of deep despair, anguish and pain. It describes the suffering, failure, loss and ultimately, trust in God. Jesus is not questioning the Father by what He prays. He is quoting the Scripture and, thereby, showing His ultimate trust in the Father’s plan. Jesus was not, at any moment, surprised by what He had to go through. He was not surprised by His suffering before the cross or on the cross. When they came to arrest Him, and Peter did his best impression of a pirate. Jesus said in **John 18:11(TPT)** **“Jesus ordered Peter, ‘Put your sword away! Do you really think I will avoid the suffering which my Father has assigned to me?’”**

Throughout the gospels, Jesus refers to the measure of His suffering and the manner of His death, as well as His resurrection. Jesus pressed through the suffering of

Gethsemane. Jesus was resolute as He suffered by the hand of man. Jesus willingly suffered the wrath of the Father on the cross. The measure of suffering that Jesus experienced will never have to be repeated. Jesus suffered once and for all. No longer is any other sacrifice necessary. No lamb needs to be sacrificed anymore because the Lamb of God was sacrificed. Jesus is suffering on the cross because of the Father's plan. The only way for mankind to be redeemed back to God is for there to be an offering for sin. Jesus becomes that offering of sin. **Acts 2:22-23(LB)** *"O men of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing tremendous miracles through him, as you well know. 23 But God, following his prearranged plan, let you use the Roman government to nail him to the cross and murder him."*

The agony of the cross is not just seen in the words that Jesus speaks, but also in how others respond to what He said. Suddenly, the mocking has turned to concern. If you think I am over reaching here, just read further on after Jesus had died. You will see that the crowds leave in sorrow, which gives us some insight into the grief within the voice of Jesus' cry. They suddenly want to hear what He has to say. So, they offer Him a drink that would give Him clarity of mind. Sour wine was a drink that soldiers and field workers would drink to refresh themselves on a very hot day. This is what Jesus was offered (more on this later). Is He calling for Elijah? These people have just experienced darkness that fell on the earth for three hours. This darkness has no natural explanation. Trust me, they wanted to hear, and they expected to see.

Jesus would speak three more phrases from the cross and then He would die. All of this pain and suffering, all of God's wrath poured out on Jesus, Jesus would endure all of it, and He did it willingly. No one forced Him. No one coerced Him. No one made Him do it. No one took His life. Jesus volunteered for this. Listen to His own words in **John 17:17-18(NLT)** *"The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. 18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."*

In Jesus, there is only complete submission to the Father's will. There was nothing that Jesus suffered that was not commanded by the Father. Everything that Jesus suffered was suffered willingly. Jesus did all of it for me! He saves me. He rescues me. He suffers in my place. He does all of this, willingly, without grumbling or resisting. Knowing what Jesus has done for us should give us the impetus to obey Him completely. I have to ask myself, "Why do I struggle to lay down my life for Him when He so willingly laid down His life for me? Why am I so good at making excuses instead of simply obeying? Why do I find ways to justify my lack of passion when all I see in Him is passion? Why am I not more passionate about what He is passionate about? Jesus loves people; why do I struggle to love them?"

“What can possibly motivate me to live for myself, when Jesus so clearly has asked me to live for others? Why do I complain over things that will not matter in eternity? Why do I feel sorry for myself instead of giving myself? Why do I constantly want to quit when my eyes should be on the finish line? Why? Why am I abandoning my responsibility in exchange for temporary rewards?” You might find the answer too simplistic for your taste (but I am talking about me, not you). Maybe, just maybe, I am not willing like Jesus is willing...

How can I become more willing? By doing what the Hebrew writer encourages me to do. **Hebrews 12:2-4(MSG)** *“Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he’s there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. 3 When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls! 4 In this all-out match against sin, others have suffered far worse than you, to say nothing of what Jesus went through—all that bloodshed! So don’t feel sorry for yourselves.”*

Here is Jesus’ recipe for a willing mentality: **Eyes on Jesus. Study how He did it. Don’t lose sight where you’re headed. Put up with whatever. Go back to the cross as many times as necessary. Fight sin with everything. Stop being a cry-baby. Repeat as needed...**

Prayer:

- **Father Give me a willing heart just like Jesus...**