



The Passion of Christ (Part II)

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By Rev. David Koch

Introduction:

I went to see the Passion of the Christ last Sunday afternoon. For those of you who have seen the movie, I'm sure there are common emotions that we have experienced. We may have feelings of sorrow, of guilt, of the hideousness of evil, the desire to help Christ through what He was experiencing.

I will not critique the film because that is not what I'm here for, but I assure you taking communion will never be the same again.

Scriptures like Isaiah 53 describe the way Jesus would be treated, and the things He would suffer. Jesus was aware of those prophecies and He knew He was the one to fulfill them. He told His disciples several times in advance of the things that were ahead for Him.

TEXT: [Luke 9:22-25](#)

And he said, **“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”** Then he said to them all: **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”**

I. Christ was passionate about His purpose for coming to earth

When Jesus was questioned before Pilate, He revealed that He was fully aware of the purpose for which He had been born.

[John 18:37](#)

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, **“You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”**

Jesus indicates here that He was passionate about His purpose. Part of that purpose was to witness or testify to the truth. He made the claim that He was the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by HIM. His purpose was literally to become the way to God.

I John 3:8 says that Jesus' purpose in coming was to destroy the devil's work.

It is very obvious that His entire life was a battle and war between good and evil from His birth to His death. Three times during the last week of His earthly life, Jesus referred to Satan as the prince of this world.

It is important for us to realize that the 12 men closest to Jesus became the instruments of Satan in his battle against Christ. Satan had two objectives for working through Jesus disciples. First he desperately wanted to convince Jesus that human beings were not worthy of all Christ had in mind to do for them. Second he hated our Savior so much that even if he was unsus-

successful in achieving his goal, he could add to the pain and shame of his journey to the cross.

As we look at the events surrounding Jesus' passion, we see several things from his disciples. We see apathy in Peter, James and John. After his last supper, He and his disciples, all except Judas, went to the garden to pray. He told 8 of them to sit down and pray, and He asked the other 3, Peter, James and John, to keep watch, and to pray. Jesus went a little further and cried out to God. He came back 3 times and each time found the disciples sleeping. This was perhaps an indication that something unusual was happening. It probably was the beginning of His Father's withdrawal and he longed for some companionship, but it was not found in His disciples.

John 12:27

“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”

Adding to Christ's suffering was the treachery of Judas. Just a few hours before Judas came with the soldiers and gave a kiss of betrayal, Jesus had bent down and washed his feet. What an act of humility and love. Jesus had washed the filth and dirt and garbage off the feet of one who would sell him to the enemy. Judas was a traitor, a double agent. How that must have hurt our Lord. He had been trusted as the treasurer of Jesus' disciples. He had been chosen by the Lord. Obviously there must have been something that Jesus saw in Judas like he saw in the other disciples.

Judas had been given authority to heal and drive out demons just like the others, but he became a willing instrument of the enemy.

At the last supper Judas sat next to Jesus on one side and John the beloved on the other side of Christ. Shortly after they started eating, Jesus identified the traitor to John alone by dipping a morsel in the dish and giving it to Judas. This was a courtesy that was normally perceived as a gesture of love reserved for someone special.

Maybe you have had a similar experience by someone you love and felt close to – someone with whom you shared joys and burdens and secrets, only for them to betray you. Don't let it interfere with God's will. Don't let it defeat your walk with God, or your Christian testimony.

Then adding also to the agony of Christ's passion was the way all the disciples fled and deserted Him when He was arrested in the garden. I suppose they were fearful for their own lives. I suppose they felt that by associating with Christ, they might be arrested next.

I have had the opportunity to be with many people as they were dying. I don't think anyone should have to die alone. Death is not to be feared by the believer; however death is part of the curse of sin and not the way God intended life for us to end. I would hope that if Jesus doesn't come back before my appointed time of death that my family and those who are close to me would be near me at that time. To sense the presence of another human while facing death is a strong human need. But Jesus saw that during the terrible hours ahead, until He would breathe His last, He would be alone, without His Father, or His disciples at His side.

Adding to Christ's grief were the denials of Peter. Peter was the disciple who had the revelation that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the Living God (Matthew 16:16). Peter fled like all the other disciples, but he stayed close enough to watch what would happen. In the crowd where Jesus was being questioned, three times Peter was identified as having been with Jesus, and each time he denied the truth. Satan had attempted to sift Peter like wheat, and Jesus told Peter ahead of time, **“I have prayed for you that your faith would not fail.”** Christ's prayers were answered. Even though Peter did what he said he would never do – deny Christ, he never forsook his faith. This also added to the agony Jesus suffered.

Then there were the enemies of Jesus that Satan used. Remember Jesus loved these people too. He was going to die for their sin. The way they mistreated him would certainly have made him think perhaps there is an easier path or easier way other than the cross.

In our text Jesus clearly knew what was in His future. He did all He could to prepare His disciples ahead of time for the way He would be treated and the things he would suffer.

II. Christ was passionate in pursuing a relationship with us

When Jesus was crucified, there were temptations for Him to resist and overcome. There was the temptation to hold sin against those who had any part in his trial or scourging, or the orders for crucifixion. He forgave the scoffers and those who taunted Him. There was the temptation to save Himself from the cross thus convincing those taunting him that He was Christ. "Save yourself and come down from the cross and we will believe," they said.

He was challenged by Satan to resist surrendering to the will of God when it came to enduring what He went through. He could have called 12 legions of angels to come and save Him from this experience. The power to escape this dark hour was available to Him, but Love held Him on the cross. He resisted the temptation.

He suffered insult, rejection, betrayal, physical abuse, verbal abuse, mental abuse, humiliation, false accusation, attacks on his character, thirst, tiredness, weakness, pain, but through it all, he loved.

Jesus was not sent by God to condemn us in our sin, but to save us from our sin. **John 3:17** – "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." The law which God gave to Moses condemned everyone because of our human nature, and the choices we make. The law points out our weakness and inability to live up to its expectations or standards.

So God sent Jesus as an example of selflessness, of love, of mercy, of grace, of humility, and it was

through His life that we have an example of how to live, to give, to love, and to react to those who abuse and mistreat us. His example also shows us how to surrender to the will of God. Jesus was dead to the passions of selfishness, and disobedience.

We are also called to be dead to the passions of self and disobedience. It is our joy to overcome just as He did. Christ, the second Adam, was given the same opportunity that the first Adam had been given. Jesus could have given in to Satan's lies and temptations, thus defeating God's plan. But He chose to resist Satan and follow God's will and path for His life, and ours.

In our text this morning, Jesus says – if anyone would come after me, HE MUST (it is not an optional thing if you are going to come after Christ and follow Him), embrace the cross.

Denial of self centeredness, of selfishness, is paramount if we are going to follow Christ. Jesus said, as well as denying self, we would need to take up our cross daily to follow Him.

If you are passionate about Christ you will be willing to lose your life for Him and your life will be saved. On the other hand if you attempt to save your life and are passionate about that, you will lose it. Jesus asks us a question that I want you to think about this morning as we conclude. What profit is there in gaining the entire world, and losing your very soul?

1 Peter 2:21 - To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.