

CRIES FROM THE CROSS

A Journey into the heart of Jesus.

3. A Cry of Compassion

"Woman, here is your son... Here is your mother"- Jn. 19:26-27

Jesus, hanging on the cross, thought of others. First about a repentant thief, now His mother. Before the Father's presence was obscured and the darkness spread throughout the land, Jesus made provision for His mother. **He remained a faithful firstborn Son until the end.** We can assume that Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, had long since died. The last time he is mentioned is when Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. After that Joseph was not mentioned in the scripture. As an eldest Son in a single parent home, Jesus must provide for her. As Jesus began speaking these words, the soldiers were casting lots for His undergarment. They said to one another, 'let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be' (Jn.19:24). **Charles Swindoll points out that "there seems to be a connection between what the soldiers were doing and the words of Jesus"**. We see John returned to stand at the foot of the cross to watch His master suffered and die. Though in unutterable pain, Jesus turned to him and His own mother. She would have to adopt John as if he were her very own. As best he could John would fill the aching void Jesus' death would bring. Three most important persons in the scene, Jesus, Mary and John the disciple whom Jesus loved most. Let us see what we can from all three.

I. A Mother's love: for a moment let's put ourselves in the shoes of Mary, chosen to bear the Son of God. Like her Son, Mary was not unacquainted with grief. At the beginning we are told, "And the angel came in unto her, and said, "blessed art thou among women". (Luk.1:29). This was but the beginning of many troubles. After Jesus was born, she and Joseph took the baby Jesus into the temple, and the aged Simeon predicted that a sword would pass through her own heart (Lk.2:35). Of course at that time, she would have not anticipated what all this would mean. She could have not predicted the birth in the manger, the years of conflict, and then the death that would tear he apart. Simeon was, so right if she was to have a son, she was also to have a sword. **Great privileges bring great sorrows.**

1. **The first time the sword** pierced her was when innocent babies was massacred near Bethlehem because of Herod's fear of Messiah (Mt.2:16-18).
2. **Secondly, the sword struck again** when she and her family listen to the whispers that implied that her son was conceived in shame.
3. **Thirdly,** Mary knew her Son's perfections but now had to endure the misunderstandings, mocking and scorn heaped upon Him. She knew that her Son was accomplishing a heavenly mission.
4. **Finally now at the cross,** the sword divided Mary's heart, piercing he to the depths. When at last the soldier pierced the side of her Son, it felt as if the sword had already sliced the heart of this mother.

She who had planted kisses on the brow of that little child now saw that the brow crowned with thorns. She who had held those little hands as he learnt to walk now saw those hands pierced with nails. She who had cradled Him in her arms now saw Him struggling alone on the garbage dump of Jerusalem. ***She who loved Him at birth came to love Him even more in death.*** As A.W. Pink put it, “never such bliss at a human birth, never such sorrow at an Inhuman death.” If Christ was the Man of Sorrows, was she not the woman of sorrows? “*There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother.*” When He said, dear woman, here is your son, and nodded toward John, she understood that He was preparing her for His death. ***The earthly ties were over, and new heavenly relationship was about to begin. He would no longer be her Son but her saviour.*** Mary suffers unbroken silence. She stands by the cross; she does not swoon, she does not crouch, she does not run; she stands and sees it all. She could have simply pled for mercy. But she will not interfere with mystery of the divine will. She too needed forgiveness her own Son was now purchasing. ***Yes, the sword had struck its most sensitive target.***

- A Son's Example:** Here we see the perfect Man setting an example for children to honour their parents. He fulfilled the OT commandment which He had given to Moses on the Mount Sinai (Ex.20:12). As well Paul also explain the same in NT (Eph.6:1-3). The scripture reminds us thar “despise not thy mother when she is old” (Prov.23:22). John referred to Mary as the mother of Jesus, but Jesus Himself never used the word, perhaps to help us remember that she was the only human vessel through whom he came into the world. Jesus did not commit His mother to His half-brothers because they are not in the region of Judea and, the other reason could be, they are not saved by the time Jesus was Crucified. How are you treating your parents? Are you truly honouring them? Fail not to provide provision, care, love and spend enough time for them, do not think It's enough sending some money every month. Both God's love and justice were put on display for all to see, yet at this moment Jesus did not overlook His earthly family obligations. ***These are sacred duties. Even the spiritual relationships must not ignore a responsibility of nature. Honour they father and mother.***
- A Disciple's Responsibility:** Jesus warned the disciples of their cowardice, but they did not digest it. Especially Peter. When Jesus was taken into custody, we read, “***then all the disciples left Him and fled***” (Mt.26:56). We would think that their love for Him would have weathered any storm including death. Peter thought so. But at the crunch time they ran because they were offended at Him, just as He predicted. Many people have deep convictions but not deep enough to suffer their cause. Their momentary trail of fear passed away and they gathered back and strengthened by the power of His resurrection and became a mighty witness for His death and Resurrection. ***What a hope we have when we come to the cross?*** John learned that, when he comes to the cross, he was given a new responsibility. No one can come to the cross without seeing it as a place of selfless devotion. We come to the cross to die to our own plans and ambitions and accept the mantle given to us by the one who hung there for us.

Living near the Cross: *if we had been there, how close would we have stood toward the cross? Near by or at a comfortable distance?* Would we have been intimidated by the mob, or would we have gladly let the angry rebel rousers know that we were followers of the Man hanging on the middle cross? Would stand nearby even if the cross cost us as much as it cost Christ?

At the cross, we, like Mother Mary, learn how to suffer the cross along with our Lord. To know what it to be “having the share of His suffering”, better to look at Mary bearing the piercing of the sword yet submitting fully to the divine sovereign will of God silently and willingly. When God the Father offer His only begotten Son on the Cross, she too had a part in the pain of witnessing a cruel death of her eldest Son on the cross. Are we ready to suffer for Christ and for the sake of our faith?

At the cross, we, like John, are asked to take Christ’s place in the world. When Christ prayed the night before, He said, “as you sent Me in to the world, so have I sent them in to the world” (Jn.17:18). Earlier, He taught His disciples, “if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life he cannot be my disciple.” Whoever who doesn’t not bear his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple” (Lk.14:26-27).

At the cross, we, like Salome, the mother of John and James was standing at the cross that day (Jn.19:25 ref. as Mary’s sister). She was the one who asked that, her sons, have the privilege of ruling in the coming kingdom. That day she learnt that there can be no selfishness at the foot of the cross.

At the cross, we, like Soldiers, some even today gamble their lives away in the shadow of the cross. They know of Jesus; some have been thought about Him and in fine homes or evangelical churches. But it is not proximity to the cross that makes us believers. Sometimes those who have been closest to Christ have rejected Him with the most ardent determination. Let us take our place with those who bow humbly to accept the responsibility that the cross places on each of us. “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified unto me and I to the world” (Gal.6:14).

Conclusion: we are no exception to the same experience as Mary, if you embrace the Cross, you invite the Sword you cannot separate both in a believer’s life. You and I are the chosen vessels like Mary, to take our share in the sufferings of the Saviour. Let our convictions be so genuine and deep enough to suffer for Christ at any cost. No human failure fall and limitations can separate us from the compassionate love of the cross, yes, you can come to the foot of the cross like John and Peter to be restored. Beloved, are you in guilt of your failure and recurring fall in temptation? You can have reception at the cross again. are like that soldier, having been closest to Christ yet so far way to salvation? Look at the cross as the centurion did and be saved. Jesus did not overlook His earthly family obligations. So let us not neglect These are sacred duties.