

Good News

From Getwell

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The Truth in Love

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SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITY

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.

Worship.....10:20 a.m.

Worship.....5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

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ON THE HOME FRONT

As I pen this article the Memphis School of Preaching lectureship is progressing. The word progressing is use purposefully because it is moving forward. We need to choose our words carefully when referring to the work of the church. I am reminded in years past when spiritual retreats were in vague, W.R. Craig, a faithful gospel preacher, objected to the phrase "retreat." He pointed out that retreat means to go backward and the church needs to be moving forward not backward or retreating.

At this moment in time brother Michael Wyatt has begun planning on the 2023 Spiritual Sword Lectureship. The theme will be "The Doctrine of Christ". The dates of the lectureship will be October 15 - 19; we hope you make plans to attend.

A big thank-you goes out to Noah Wallace who assisted in getting the bulk mailing of the April issue into the hands of the U.S. Postal Service. The bulk mailing goes all fifty states and totals 178 bags of journals. We certainly appreciate Noah helping with this challenging task.

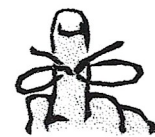
Coming up on April 12 "Miss Nell Barber" will be celebrating her 95th birthday. Miss Nell along with her late husband George or G.W. labored tirelessly at Getwell for a number of years, raising two sons and involved in every work at the congregation. They could always be counted on to shoulder any chore that needed to be done. Be sure and send Miss Nell a birthday card, her mailing address is included in this week's bulletin. Getwell has been so blessed through the years with so many talented and faithful brothers and sisters. Charlie Shappley recently made mention that is has been 30 years since his grandfather Charlie Davis has passed. Brother Davis came out of the Baptist church mainly because of the influence of a godly wife "Miss Myrtle" and godly elder W.A. Sanders. He served in any capacity needed, Bible school teacher, deacon, sound room worker and elder when he passed. On a personal note, I use to dread Saturday nights partly because of Brother Davis' one reason not related to Brother Davis was it was bath night. The second reason would be a weekly call from Brother Davis to ask if I had my Sunday school lesson ready for the next day. I have fond memories of Charlie Davis and Paul Davison who taught me that year. And yes, Saturday night is still bath night.

Nell Barber
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Until next week!

Ron Wallace

RON'S REMINDERS



The Irony of Calvary

More has been written about Jesus' life than any other man. More has been written about His death than His life, yet the material is not exhausted. Writers can find no more appealing story, and readers never tire of the theme.

A fascinating angle to explore is the irony these events portray as we contrast Jesus' moral strength and perfect character with those people and events He encountered on the day of His death.

CHRIST, JUDGE OF ALL MEN, STOOD IN FRONT OF PILATE, A JUDGE.

He who will judge the world (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10), knows what it feels like to be judged. The Prosecutor knows what it feels like to be the defendant. Pilate executed justice before he crucified Jesus. Jesus had inherent authority, while Pilate had only delegated authority (John 19:11; Romans 13:1-6). Jesus thus gave Pilate his authority and then submitted to it. Further, Jesus submitted to abused authority. He who needed only justice did not even plead for mercy.

Jesus, the Judge, promises to be fair and merciful to His followers (2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 2:17), something He did not receive at His trial. Even on earth, Jesus showed mercy to undeserving people (cf. John 8:1-11). He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful . . . enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21), to many imperfect and undeserving defendants.

Though perfect and deserving, Jesus heard no such words. He likely heard, *Illum duci ad crucem placet*. William Barclay comments, "The Roman ritual of condemnation and routine of crucifixion were fixed. They did not alter. The judge said, *Illum duci ad crucem placet*, 'The sentence is that this man should be taken to a cross.' Then he turned to the guard and said, *I, miles, expedi crucem*, 'Go, soldier, and prepare the cross.'"

Jesus knows what it feels like to have a sentence of condemnation passed down. He watched Pilate deliberate and heard him condemn. He will understand the pounding of our hearts and the sweating of our palms. He wants to take the stress out of judgment by preparing us for trial. In fact, He pleads with sinners to repent and take Him as their Advocate before they face Him as their Judge (cf. 1 John 2:1). How interesting it will be to watch Pilate come before Jesus at the judgment that really counts.

CHRIST, FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS, WALKED FRIENDLESS DOWN THE CALVARY ROAD.

Jesus was accused, condemned, whipped, mocked, crowned with thorns, and rejected—all before breakfast! By 9 a.m., the soldiers had put Jesus' clothes back on Him and led Him out of town to "The Place of the Skull."

In this parade, the prisoner, usually naked (according to Barclay), was set in the middle of a hollow square of four soldiers. The cross was laid upon his shoulders, and he was pushed along the road as he staggered to the place of crucifixion. People lined the streets and jeered the victim.

Jesus—weak from loss of blood, sleep deprivation, fluid dehydration, food impoverishment, and emotional strain—had to have Simon to carry the cross after Him (John 19:17; Luke 23:26).

At this point in the story, we might expect a hundred volunteers among those He had helped during His ministry to rush to His aid, perhaps arguing over who got the privilege of helping their Master.

Yet no one stepped forward. Simon of Cyrene, evidently a stranger, was compelled to bear the cross after Christ. Jesus, always a friend to the friendless (Luke 7:34), walked alone to Golgotha. His disciples had fled into the night (Matthew 26:56), and His acquaintances kept their distance in the morning.

CHRIST, WHOSE YOKE IS EASY, STRUGGLED BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS.

A Roman cross weighed about three hundred pounds, so prisoners were only made to carry the horizontal beam (*patibulum*). (The vertical *stipes* was kept on the site at Golgotha).

In His weakened condition, even this weight of perhaps a hundred pounds was too much for Jesus. It is interesting that Jesus struggled with that burden. He who made the world (John 1:10) and holds it together by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3) struggled to carry a tiny part of it. He whose curse withered a live fig tree (Matthew 21:19), withered beneath Calvary's dead tree. This points to His humanity—He set aside divine strength to die as a man.

Consider the struggle beneath this weight in the light of His famous invitation to sinners: "Come unto Me, all you

who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you ... and you will find for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

When Jesus saw us straining under the "patibulum" of sin, He offered to take it from our shoulders and put it on His own. In fact, He did exactly that as He walked in this shameful parade down death row. He carried His cross that we might be relieved of our burden. He was made sin for us "that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The burden lifter became the burden bearer (1 Corinthians 5:7).

CHRIST, WHO BROUGHT JOY TO THE WORLD, WAS FOLLOWED BY WEeping WOMEN.

Jesus is pictured as a happy person who generally "rejoiced in the spirit" (Luke 10:21). He took children in His arms (Mark 9:36) and feasted with both poor and rich (Mark 2:16; Luke 7:36-50).

He brightened whatever corner of Palestine He visited. Parents were thrilled to have Him hold their babies (Matthew 19:13). Hopeless sinners left Him thinking that tomorrow was a new day (Mark 12:37). The lame walked away from Him (Matthew 11:5), the deaf got to hear His sermons (Mark 7:31-37), the blind saw His face (Mark 10:47-52), the sick got out of bed to wait on Him (Matthew 8:14-15), and grieving parents had dead children restored to them (Mark 5:41-42; Luke 7:22).

An embarrassed woman had her dignity restored (John 8); a short, hated tax collector had the King stay at his house (Luke 19); and cast-out lepers no longer needed to keep their distance when touched by His hands (Matthew 8:3). Think of all the happiness Jesus brought!

Now contrast these scenes with the one on the Via Dolorosa,¹ the first and worst "trail of tears." Tenderhearted women cried in the cross's wake (Luke 23:26-31). They were bewildered, heartbroken, drenched in sorrow. They loved Jesus so much that they could not leave Him, although each glance at His mutilated body cut them in the quick of their hearts.

Jesus did not tell them to "quit crying" (as many men would have), but, remarkably, told them to weep – only not for him, but for themselves. Why? Because in AD 70, Rome would terrorize their nation. His thoughts are more with their pain yet forty years away than with His own at the present. Do not miss the irony in the fact that He who came to planet earth to bring happiness left it "acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

CHRIST, THE GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS, TRAILED BEHIND AN ACCUSING PLACARD.

Jesus' favorite greeting was, "Be of good cheer" (Matthew 9:2; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33). Wherever He went, the gospel (good news) spread. He spoke more encouraging words, with more positive results, than anyone before or since.

It is interesting, then, to consider what was not said the day He died. Of all the words that could have been used of the Word (John 1:14), no formal, flowery, funeral speech was made; no careful obituary was penned; no long write-up was published and circulated; and no memorable saying was etched into His tomb marker.

The only words used—"THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Mark 15:26)—were those scratched by some soldier on a rough board and nailed over His head.

CHRIST, THE HOLY SON OF GOD, RUBBED ELBOWS WITH TWO THIEVES.

Crucifying Jesus between two known criminals was deliberately staged to humiliate the Lord. He who was better than angels (Hebrews 1:4) and as holy as God (John 10:30; Mark 1:24; Acts 2:27) was put between two men judged unfit to live among fellow humans. He who never once sinned (Hebrews 4:15) was joined to men who sinned so often, and to such a degree, that their fellow sinners executed them.

He who never once said a common curse or cross word died with His ears full of the profane curses of one who prostituted his God-given tongue with both (Luke 23:39). He whose saliva had been used to heal (Mark 7:33; 8:23), died with the dried spit of His enemies on His face (Matthew 26:67; 27:30). He who gave away everything He ever had died between men who took what did not belong to them (Mark 15:27).

He who was "holy, harmless, undefiled" had those who were corrupt, dangerous, and tainted as His closest companions in His most passionate moments. He who was "separate from sinners" and who has "become higher than the heavens" died with those who were of the scum of the earth (phrases taken from Hebrews 7:26). What a contradiction that the holy Son of God should die with the corrupt sons of men.

What a trip it was for Jesus from Pilate's courtroom to God's throne room via a gate marked death!

Endnotes

1 "The sorrowful way" refers to the road between Pilate's headquarters and Calvary.