

The Cross and crown of thorns

(Picture of wall hanging)

Mark 15:16-20

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Interesting passage isn't it.

Descriptive, articulate, and we get the picture. We understand the situation even in such an economy of words.

We are given a location. The palace

We are given the people who are involved, the soldiers and Jesus

We are given the actions, the placing of the crown of thorns.

We are given the words, hail king of the Jews.

We really get the picture the words have described.

If a picture paints a thousand words then we have a full album here.

(Picture of the crown of thorns)

I'm not sure we can ever fully comprehend the scene. Sometimes we see a picture but don't get the whole story. We get the story, we are impacted but something's we will never fully comprehend.

How did Jesus feel?

How smug did the soldiers feel?

How dumb will they feel when they see Jesus on Judgment day?

How did Jesus not react?

But notice even that last line gives you a picture,

Then they led him out to crucify him.

Let's just stop here. Get that image in our minds.

Then they led him out to crucify him.

He knows what's going on here, he knows what is ahead.

He knows because he isn't limited by our concepts of past, present and future - he knows it all.

He knows the pain he will experience because he created the potential for pain.

He knows too the purpose and consequences of enduring that pain.

Let's be realistic - he knows.

Let's go from that image to the next. The death scene of the The crucifixion.

Luke 23: 44-49

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat

their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Again the imagery in the economy of words is amazing.

We get the time: from noon till 3

We get the atmosphere, darkness, no sun

We get this weird comment about the temple curtain. (No longer is the holiest part of the temple a secret anymore access to God is open for all- sorry not enough time to unpack this further)

We get Jesus words of committal to God. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

We get the death moment

We get the first reaction from the person in closest proximity - the centurion, Surely this was a righteous man."

We get the audiences reaction. When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away

We get the picture of finality of the friends and family.

. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

But what does the image do for us?

It conjures a memory that Jesus died for us, Jesus died in our place. His death's purpose was for our salvation.

We come to church on this day to remember that stuff, the stuff that makes us Christian, I'd like to give a tool for that remembering.

Take one of these shall crosses home.

Wear it throughout the day.

Each time you notice it, consciously remember Jesus death. It will help the remembrance process and keep us focused on what Jesus did on this day for us so long ago.