

The Wednesday Word, October 2, 2024: Did Jesus Die Well? Part 1

The more majestic Jesus appears to us, the more confidence we will have in Him in both life and death. Never was Christ more majestic than when He conquered death at Calvary. It was there, at the cross, He did away with sin, destroyed demonic authorities and brought about the 'death of death' itself. As William Romaine observed, "Death stung himself to death when he stung Christ."

To grasp the awesome nature of the cross we must remember that Jesus and death were unrelated. Jesus had life in Himself; He was not merely the giver of life but was life itself! (John 14:6). Death was for sinners, but Christ was sinless. There was, consequently, no reason for Him to die! He had neither broken the Law nor disobeyed the Father thus death had no claim over Him.

No power on earth could kill Him. He was not exaggerating when, speaking of His life, He said, "No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:18). His death, then, was an intense manifestation of His royal power for He willed it, choosing the very moment when He would dismiss His spirit. What immense sovereignty Christ demonstrated in and by dying!

But consider this, when Jesus hung on the cross, the One who is 'the Life' actually tasted death (Hebrews 2:9). Many a person has died without tasting death. For some, death comes in an instant, but Christ's death was slow and painful. There, at the cross, He was, as it were, roasted alive in the fires of wrath. He fully tasted the consequence of our sin.

But, it was not the physical pain that made the cross so awful, it was our sin. Jesus alone knew the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He had an acute abhorrence of sin, yet He willingly bore ours in order to redeem and purchase a people for the glory of God.

Throughout the ages, many of God's people have derived wonderful help and comfort from meditating upon how their Savior faced death at the cross. The cross was Christ's deathbed, and it instantly confronts us with an extraordinary picture of faith. Remember how, as Christ died, He quoted scriptures and prayed? In Hebrew culture it was customary to audibly repeat the first line of a Psalm so that others around could either repeat the Psalm or meditate upon it. Jesus in this manner repeated the first line of Psalm 22 (*My God my God why hast thou forsaken me*) then "occupied His thoughts with speaking to Himself and to God in the words of this Psalm" (See John Stevenson: *Christ on The Cross*). Yet, some say that Jesus didn't appear to have had much faith since He thought that the Father had forsaken Him. Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. Christ had not lost His faith in God; rather He called out to Him! This is not the action of someone who has suddenly realized that God is not there, but is the act of one who, by faith, embraces the reality of the God who always is. Nevertheless, as our substitute, at that point in time, there was a judicial forsakenness. There, when He hung on the cross as our representative, our sins came between Him and the Father. Jesus bore the very forsakenness due to us. He was forsaken in our place and in our stead. Does this have any bearing on how believers will die? Indeed, it does! It means that God will not and cannot forsake us since Christ was forsaken in our place!

Christ has endured our separation from God. Believe this and you will have a good death. Notice also, that as well as having the Scriptures on His lips and prayer in His heart, Christ died with full confidence in God saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit!" He gladly and joyfully delivered Himself into the safety of His Father's hands. That's confidence and faith!

And that's the Gospel Truth!

'Til He Comes!