

John Ch 19:17-

“At The Cross”

As we enter into the scene here in the midst of John Ch 19, it was somewhere to the tune of 2,000 yrs earlier that God had spoken to Ab and said, “*Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.*” Gen 22:2 and So we read that Ab arose early in the morning and headed out in obedience to the Lord. God had made Ab a promise that He would make of him a great nation, and that in his Seed (ultimately pointing to Christ) all the nations of the earth would be blessed. So Ab had concluded according to the book of Hebrews that if necessary God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to keep His promise. But 3 days into his journey (Isaac as good as dead as far as he was concerned) God showed Ab the place, so he took the wood, put it on Isaacs back, took the instruments of the sacrifice, the knife and the fire and headed up the Mt.

As you well know Isaac was kinda looking around and he said, “Dad,” Ab said, “What is it son?” Isaac said, “*Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*’ And Abraham said, ‘*My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.*’” Gen 22:7-8 and We read that, “*Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.*” Gen 22:9-13

Now many of you know where I’m going with this, back there in vs 8 where we read that God will provide “*for*” Himself the lamb, in the Hebrew that word “for” doesn’t exist. It was added by translators for clarification but unfortunately it simply made for confusion. Literally Ab said, “God will provide *Himself*, a lamb for a burnt offering” now the burnt offering was the sin offering. and Then we saw where directly following the preparation to offer his son, he didn’t discover a lamb caught in the thicket, but a *ram*. Why?

The *Lamb* wouldn’t be physically on the scene for a couple thousand years later, remember what J.B. said as he was ministering to the multitudes and saw Jesus coming his way? “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” John 1:29 God provided Himself in Christ, a lamb for a burnt offering, a sin offering for the sin of the world. We read in 2 Cor 5:19, “*...that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,*” and that’s the scene we enter into here in John Ch 19, where God is taking His Son, His *only* begotten Son Jesus whom He loves and is offering Him as a burnt offering for the sin of the world.

He's being led like a lamb to the slaughter, being reviled, being rejected, and yet opening not His mouth, suffering for no wrong of His own, but for you, and for me. Peter said, *"For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed."* 1 Peter 2:19-24

This is what's taking place as we enter in to John 19 Jesus is being led away, Pilate's decision has been made, though he washed his hands, his heart remained unclean and he's delivered Jesus over to be crucified.

Vs17-18

Now there's a few things we want to see here. 1st of all we take note in vs 17 of the fact that Jesus bore His cross *literally*. and He said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* Matt 16:24 That is if we desire to be where He is, to come after Him where He's going, then we have a cross to bear as well, principally, yet very personally. You may not have the physical cross to bear as did Jesus, but everything it *stands for* in your life is just as real. Well then, what does the cross stand for? Often times you'll hear of a run of bad luck, or a tragic circumstance that enters into someone's life, and the phrase is often issued, "We all have our cross to bear." But bearing the cross isn't day-to-day hardship, trials and tribulations, and bad things happening, that's life! The cross as it pertained to Christ was the object of the denial of the self-will, it speaks of the crucifying of the flesh, a willful laying down of my own life, my own wants, my own desire for the sake of another.

Of course Christ Himself was the chief example to us in all of those things, there in the Garden, in reference to the cup of the cross whereby He'd be made sin, having the wrath of God poured out upon Him, being forsaken of the Father that we might never be left, never be forsaken of God. You remember He said, *"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."* Luke 22:42 He denied His own will for the sake of others, namely you and me. Paul told the Philippians, *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,"* Phil 2:3-5 and We have another issue sort of like in Genesis there, the word "only" where it says, "look out not *only* for his own interests," isn't there in the original. It's simply, "Each one looking out, not for the things of himself, but for the things of others."

That's the mind that was in Christ Jesus, esteeming others above Himself, looking out not for the things of Himself, but willfully laying down His own wants, His own desires, His own life for others. and That's what the work of the cross speaks of to your life and mine, (outside the obvious work of redemption). So if you're never laying down your will for another, placing another's needs above your own, crucifying the flesh rather than indulging the flesh, than you're not bearing you're cross. Jesus bore His cross.

He went out to a place called the Place of the Skull, which is in Hebrew "Golgotha" in Latin its "Calvary" where they crucified Him. Now again John spares the gory details of crucifixion because in that day people were very familiar with what that meant. It would be like someone saying today that so and so was executed via lethal injection, or the electric chair, or even by hanging or the firing squad, the gas chamber or whatever. We're fairly familiar with what some of those things entail, we don't need the details, they didn't need the details. But outside of that the focus of the cross is primarily upon the spiritual as opposed to the physical.

Yes it happened to Jesus physically, but it's of benefit to you and me (primarily) eternally, spiritually. and So John doesn't go to much into it's physiological effects, his report was given so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing in Him we might have life in His name. But they crucified Him, and 2 others with Him, one on either side. Possibly cohorts of Barabbas, and being executed with common criminals was a fulfillment of prophecy though John doesn't mention it. But we read in Isa 53:12 "...*He was numbered with the transgressors,*" and so one on either side and *Jesus in the center*. I have that phrase underlined in my bible, there's just something about it that captured my attention, now the center cross would've been occupied by the chief criminal being executed that day.

But that's not the thought that arrested me, my mind drifted totally from the text with this phrase, "Jesus in the center." My mind just immediately gravitated to the thought of, "That's exactly where Jesus needs to be all the time in every arena of my life." My marriage, my family, my work ethic, my convictions, what I will do, what I won't do, the things I allow my mind to entertain, I need Jesus right in the center of it all. There may be problems on either side of me, storms all around me, but if Jesus is in the center, at the very heart of all that I am, I'll be ok no matter what happens. Jesus brings the proper perspective and balance into my life. with out Jesus in the center, I'm a mess, my life seems hectic and out of control. But when Jesus is in the center, things may still get hectic, but I know He's in control and in that I have peace. Where's Jesus in your life? On the outside edge somewhere, taking 2nd seat to a hobby, or a relationship, or your career, or some other pursuit in your life? If that's the case your priorities are out of line, put those things on either side of Jesus, give Him the center and He'll take care of your life.

Vs19-20

Remember it was the time of Passover, so there were literally millions of people, multiple languages represented, Hebrew the language of religion, Greek the language of philosophy and Latin the language of law. But the idea here is that Jesus was crucified for the world, for every tribe tongue and nation, He hung openly before the world upon the cross in open shame for you and me. with out knowing it really what Pilate did was write a gospel tract, you see when one was executed they'd place above them a sign that stated the crimes against them as an example to anyone else who was thinking of the same. and The idea behind this is that Jesus was executed for insurrection claiming to be a King as opposed to Caesar, and Pilate's thought was to humiliate the religious leaders who were so bent on having Him crucified.

I'm sure he accomplished that, but what he didn't realize is that he was writing a gospel tract by which one of those thieves would realize that Jesus was in fact the King of King's and give his heart to Christ right there hanging on the cross beside Him. We read in Luke's gospel, *"Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"* Luke 23:39-43 It would be interesting to know if it was the criminal on His right hand or on His left. But talk about amazing grace, talk about amazing faith, there's a whole other angle and study that can be given in just that, the Love of God displayed even towards those thieves. That God seen to it that they both had the opportunity to encounter Christ at the very moment He was paying for their sin. and Then the amazing faith of that thief, as he looked at that sign hanging over Christ's head, and something started churning in his heart, dots started somehow connecting. and To come to a man beaten, bloodied, battered, bruised, condemned to die, hanging on a cross and handing your eternal soul over to Him to have mercy on you on the other side.

God arranged it so that He'd have an opportunity to be forgiven, talk about meeting you where you're at, as we often say God's love not only reaches unto the uttermost, but even unto the guttermost not being willing that *any* should perish but that all should come to repentance. But Pilate puts that sign over His head, and the chief priests didn't dig that too much.

Vs21-22

It's amazing how bold he is now isn't it? and It's typical that people can be so rigid, so resolved on their convictions, but when it comes to Christ they buckle and fold. Fall prey to the pressures of man, but something about the cross brings out what's in the heart of man.

In the light of the cross here Pilate is seen in his staunch cynicism, and lack of conscience. In the light of the cross the chief priests were manifested in all their hypocrisy, and bitterness, and hatred of the Son of God. Here next we'll see the soldiers gambling, indifferent to the cross and calloused, just trying to somehow use the reality of the cross for their own personal gain. Now we also see tenderheartedness and commitment to Jesus in the ladies there, and John the disciple, but what's in the heart of man comes to light when confronted with the cross.

Vs23-24

The scripture referred to here is Ps 22:18 which is of course a Messianic Psalm which speaks very explicitly about the crucifixion hundreds of years before it was even invented as a means of execution. and So more evidence of the fact that Jesus is the Messiah in the very nature of what's happening, the scripture said that this would happen. That they'd in essence gamble on Golgotha for His clothes, for gain.

I'm going to step on some toes here, but the cross was never meant to be utilized as a way to get nice clothes, new cars, bigger homes, and lots of cash. Yet the prosperity doctrine teaches just that, does God want to take care of your life? Sure, but to view the cross as a means to greater material gain and create a doctrine accordingly, to me doesn't differ a whole lot more than what these soldiers are doing here. Utilizing what's happening on the cross, as Jesus Christ is paying the debt for our sin, as a means of material gain, it's not right. Just name it and claim it, toss the dice of faith and you can be made rich. and Again it's not that the Lord doesn't want to bless your socks off, but that's not what's at the heart of the cross, nor should that be the focus. Paul didn't come striding into town teaching people how to believe for millions of dollars.

He told the Corinthians, "*To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.*" 1 Cor 4:11 Because His focus wasn't on the material things of this world, personal profit via the cross, but rather the eternal things of the Kingdom of God. That's why He said, "I'm determined to know *nothing* among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" it's the love of Christ that constrained him, not the lucrative opportunities that could be capitalized on through the cross, that's what these soldiers did.

Of course the seamless tunic reminds us of the high priest's robe of Ex 28, not only was Jesus the spotless Lamb of God, but He's also our faithful high priest.

Vs25-27

So far we've seen the embodiment of self-denial at the cross in the person of Jesus Christ We've seen salvation at the cross with the believing thief, we've seen prophecy fulfilled at the cross, we've seen how the heart of man is revealed in the light of the cross. Now what are we seeing? How that families are formed, at the cross. Now according to Matt 13:55-56 Jesus had brothers and sisters (humanly speaking) yet he commends the care of His mother into the hands of John, His cousin.

Why? Ps 69:8 says, *“I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children;”* and as you study the gospel accounts you realize that Jesus’ brother’s and sisters didn’t believe in Him yet. So He establishes the bonds of the family unit for His mother with one who did.

It’s so true that often times when there are people in your family who don’t believe in Christ that you’ll find the body of Christ being forged into your family more than those who are physically related. But to those who are related the same thing applies, your family can only be truly forged and held together at the foot of the cross. So often we buy into the philosophy, “We need a vacation in order to get away and just bond.” Or, “Monday night monopoly, that’ll do it!” But in the words of Jon Courson, “Gang, I’m an idiot if I take my kids to basketball games, go on family vacations, and read every parenting book available, but don’t take them to the one place where bonding and binding truly take place. If you continue to listen to what people are telling Christians and the world alike—that the key for families is to be vulnerable and transparent as the interact emotionally—you’ll find it’s vanity. It’s empty.

You see Satan will let you do all kinds of good things if he can keep you away from the Cross of Calvary—for it’s there alone, through prayer and humility, through remembering what Jesus did on our behalf, that true bonding begins.” Families are forged, and held together at the cross. and I love that even in this moment Jesus is thinking of others.

Vs28

A reminder of His humanity? No doubt, but I think it goes a bit further. Isa 55:1 says, *“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters;”* Jesus said, *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.”* John 7:37 We read in Rev 21:6 *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.”* and As you well know the one who thirsts is the one who’s separated from God, Jesus endured our penalty there on the cross and when you piece together the other accounts you realize that this statement was issued after the 3 hours of darkness after which Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* Mark 15:34 Then comes this statement, “I thirst!” Jesus took our place, suffering in our stead, being forsaken of God so that God would never leave nor forsake us. Yes this is a reminder to us of His humanity, but it’s so much more. He thirsted so that we would never have to.

Vs29-30

No one took His life He willingly gave it, and though He was made sin, He Himself was without sin, so in essence He couldn’t die until He willingly dismissed His Spirit. and After it was finished that’s exactly what He did. After what was finished? Everything, everything that pointed to, and foreshadowed the cross was fulfilled. What was foreshadowed in every animal sacrifice was fulfilled, the end of the law had been reached, finished, every prophecy leading to, that was all about the cross was complete. But foremost and primarily the purchase price of our salvation was paid in full, the cost of our redemption, propitiation was complete.

Jesus Christ had poured out His blood, poured out His life, that we might find life at the cross. At the cross we find forgiveness of sin because the work of redemption is finished. You're not more saved through baptism, you don't finish His work through a dress code, or a hairstyle, repetitive prayers or anything else, Jesus finished the work and there's nothing that can be done to somehow improve upon it. He didn't say, "It's almost finished, all that's left is for you to get baptized!" and then bow His head and give up His Spirit, the work of redemption is complete, *Tetelestai*, when the priest would examine a sacrifice and find it perfect that's the word they'd use, *Tetelestai*, perfect, can't be improved upon. When an artist would render the last stroke on his painting that's what he'd say, "*Tetelestai*" it's finished completely. When a writer finished a manuscript, "*Tetelestai*." When a transaction was made and a debt was paid in full that's what the document would be stamped, "*Tetelestai*" paid in full.

When Jesus gave Himself on the cross, He met the righteous demands of a holy law; and paid our debt in full. Every other cult, or "ism" in this world seeks to focus on what you need to do to be made right with God. Only biblical Christianity says, "It's not about what you *do*, it's about what He's *done*." *Tetelestai*, it is finished, everlasting life is yours freely by grace through faith, not of our works lest anyone should boast. God forbid that any of us should boast except in the cross of Jesus Christ

Vs31-37

Couple of things quickly, vs 31 shows us that it's possible that Jesus was actually crucified on a Thursday contrary to the popular persuasion of Friday. The Sabbath they were preparing for was a ceremonial Sabbath due to the Feast; the Law said that the 1st and last day of the feast was to be a holy convocation in which they were to do no work, in other words a ceremonial honorary Sabbath. So in that case 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth becomes real easy crucified on Thursday, that night, Friday night (the ceremonial Sabbath) and Saturday night (the Sabbath) in the tomb, Sunday morning the resurrection.

Had the soldier went ahead and swung the sledgehammer or whatever and broke His legs; we'd have to look for another Messiah. But God was orchestrating the whole thing. The Law stated that the Passover Lamb was to have none of its bones broke, God knows the heart of man. "Well, this lamb is hobbled, no good to me anymore, let's offer it as a sacrifice to God." That's no sacrifice, it's a cast off and God's not interested in our cast offs. If it's not good enough for you, don't give it to God, just put it in the trash. God deserves our very best, the 1st fruits, not the cast offs, the Lamb was to be perfect, and Jesus was offered up to God as the Perfect sacrificial Lamb to take away the sin of the World.

But the soldier did pierce His side, and the verification that He was dead is evidenced in the blood and water that came forth from His ruptured, or broken heart. and Of course we could see salvation and sanctification right there, the blood is our salvation, the water is sanctification. Be it by the Living waters of the Holy Spirit, or the washing of the water of God's Word, either way you choose to see it, it's there. But practically it shows us again that Jesus wasn't some spirit being that didn't leave footprints when He walked. He was flesh, bone, and blood just like you and me. and John is telling us this so that we might believe, Jesus lived, died on the cross, and resurrected the 3rd day, He took our place, died our death, that we might have His life. and Again portions of Ps 22 are in view here in the fulfillment of Script, Ps 34:20, and Zech 12:10.

Vs38-42

Of course He'd only need to borrow it for a few days. But we see here where Joseph of Arimathea came out of the closet at the foot of the cross. There are many secret followers of Jesus, for fear of their buddies at work, or classmates, but truly seeing what Jesus endured for him imparted to him the strength to be unashamed, and unafraid. Nicodemus came out of the dark, and into the light at the foot of the cross, he started out with confusion at night, but ended up with open confession in broad daylight. and It all takes place at the cross, salvation, self-denial, forgiveness flows, families are forged, confusion and timidity turns to clarity, confession, and strength. Sure when these guys touched His dead body they'd defiled themselves ceremonially, couldn't partake of the Passover, but they didn't care, they'd found it's fulfillment, the Lamb of God Who'd taken away the sin of the world, at the cross.

Perhaps, there's confusion in your life, a thirst that goes beyond the things of this world, you feel like you're in the dark when it comes to (really) the purpose of this life. You'll find your answers at the foot of the cross, Jesus poured out His life, so that you could have everlasting life. and Forgiveness can be yours, you can be washed in the cleansing flow of the blood of Jesus Christ today, you can leave this place a new creation, old things passing away, all things being made new. But only in Christ, if Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart, just open it up and invite Him in, He'll forgive you of your sin and give you a clean slate today, everlasting life is but a prayer away, the water of life is yours to partake of freely, its not about what you need to do, it's about what He's already done, the work is finished, just receive it.