

The Road to The Cross (Part 3)

Sunday, March 15, 2020

So far, we have seen that The Road to The Cross...

1. **Is Paved with Challenging Truth...** From Matthew 21 we learned that Jesus challenged us...
 - a. To be SINCERE, SOLD OUT, and SANCTIFIED and
 - b. To PRODUCE FRUIT
2. **Purchased the FREEDOM of our FORGIVENESS...**
 - a. Forgiveness from God
 - i. God wants us to ask
 - ii. God does not withhold
 - b. Forgiveness for Other
 - i. God asks us to forgive
 - ii. God does not want us to withhold

Today I would like for us to explore another part of The Road To The Cross; one that relates very well our own lives right now as this week we saw the effects of our nation attempting to deal with the impact of the continued spread of the Corona Virus and the announcement by The World Health Organization that it is now a global pandemic

We have all tried to process the reactions that have been erupting nonstop this week. The hoarding of toilet paper and supplies, endless emails from companies telling us what they are doing, government announcements, school closures, church closures, events cancelled, travel bans, new regulations, stores struggling to keep their shelves stocked as people prepare for the worst, fear, panic, and even hysteria.

As Jesus came closer to the cross, he shared with his disciples what would soon take place. In the gospel of Matthew, we read that on at least 4 separate occasions Jesus told them about his impending suffering and death.

Matthew 16:21-24 (NIV)

Jesus Predicts His Death

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Matthew 17:22-23 (NIV)

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

22 When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. **23** They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.” And the disciples were filled with grief.

Matthew 20:17-19 (NIV)

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

17 Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, **18** “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death **19** and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”

Matthew 26:1-2 (NIV)

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

As one might expect they didn't handle this news well. For the most part their responses were filled with fear rather than faith. Later on, their fear would reach its height as all of them ran for their lives when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:31 (NIV)

³¹ Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

I'm Sure I wouldn't have reacted any different than the disciples, but how can we fulfill Jesus words in Matthew 16 to take up our cross and follow him

The Road to The Cross is TRAVELLED WITH FAITH NOT FEAR

Faith trusts that God is in Control, fear believes that everything is out of control

1 Chronicles 29:12 (NIV)

12 ...you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

Faith knows that a God has a plan, fear assumes we must come up with our own plan

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB)

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Faith looks to God for direction, fear looks to the world for direction

Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Faith keeps its eyes on God, fear keeps its eyes on the situation

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Faith rests in the fact that there is a bigger picture, fear only sees the immediate

Philippians 1:12 (NIV)

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.

Faith knows this life is not all there is, fear believes death is the end

*I care not today what the morrow may bring,
If shadow or sunshine or rain,
The Lord I know ruleth o'er everything,
And all of my worries are vain.*

Refrain:

*Living by faith in Jesus above,
Trusting, confiding in His great love;
From all harm safe in His sheltering arm,
I'm living by faith and feel no alarm.*

*Though tempests may blow and the storm clouds arise,
Obscuring the brightness of life,
I'm never alarmed at the overcast skies—
The Master looks on at the strife.*

*I know that He safely will carry me through,
No matter what evils betide;
Why should I then care though the tempest may blow,
If Jesus walks close to my side.*

*Our Lord will return for His loved ones someday,
Our troubles will then all be o'er;
The Master so gently will lead us away,
Beyond that blest heavenly shore.*

Faith believes for the best, fear expects the worst

2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)

7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Faith sees the possibilities, fear sees only the problems

Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)

6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Faith believes the promises of God, fear believes the bad report

Romans 8:31-39 (NIV)

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Faith responds in peace, fear reacts in anxious dread

Colossians 3:15 (NIV)

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Faith keeps moving forward, fear freezes us in place or causes us to run wild without purpose

Acts 1:10-14 (NIV)

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.

14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

WHAT FAITH DOES NOT DO

- Faith doesn't purposely ignore reality
- Faith doesn't pretend there is no danger
- Faith does not foolishly believe that no harm will ever come to those who believe
- Faith doesn't presumptuously put itself in harm's way
- Faith doesn't tempt God

What an opportunity to live out our faith, to be living witnesses to those things we are always declaring are true about our faith, to trust God with all our hearts, to lead others to the hope that we have, to care for the hurting and confused.

Romans 4:20-21 (NIV)

20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

How will you travel this Road with more faith and less fear?

Isaiah 8:11-13 (NIV)

¹¹ This is what the Lord says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people: ¹² "Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. ¹³The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread.