

Luke 23:26-56

“The Passion”

March 20, 2016

There is a movie out called “Miracles from Heaven.” This movie is based upon a true story. There is a girl who is suffering from a severe stomach disorder. The girl is sent home to die by the leading specialist in this medical problem. When she goes home, the girl falls thirty foot into a hollow tree and has to be rescued. While in the tree she experiences an out of body experience and talks to God. The point of the movie is that God is active in her life doing little miracles leading up to the healing even though the family does not see it at the time and only later. It is a movie worth seeing. However the preacher and the church sometimes does not come out the hero.

So what does that have to do with our text? As I read and studied this text, I saw God at work in the little things in the story of our healing from the affects of sin that lead to the bigger story. Our God tells us to humble ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him. We see Jesus doing that on the Cross at Calvary. His sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary is the bigger story. On the Cross, He paid for our sins. On the Cross, He opened the gates of heaven to those who trust Him. The little girl wanted to go to heaven because she knew that it would end the pain she was constantly feeling. When Jesus assured her that she would be healed

completely, she chose to live. When we are healed from our sins, we too can choose to live forever in His undeserved grace and mercy.

Now let us look at the rest of the story and see Christ's undeserved grace and mercy at work. For us to understand the rest of the story, we have to place ourselves in His shoes. Jesus has been beaten severely and mocked again and again. The natural reaction is to focus upon ourselves and our pain. The natural reaction is to withdraw from the world around us. Jesus again and again shows that rather than withdraw and focus upon Himself, Jesus shows us that He cares about those around Him as He goes to the Cross and dies as payment for our sins.

I first saw this as they paraded Jesus up to the place of His death. The people are wailing and mourning His death. Jesus tells them to weep for themselves because a time is coming when they will wish they were dead especially those with babies. Jesus was referring to 70 AD when the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed it and the Temple. A selfish person would have lamented for themself.

Next I saw Jesus show mercy to the soldiers who were crucifying Him. He said; **“Father forgiven them because they do not know what they are doing.”** Then there was the thief on the Cross next to Him. They were mocking Jesus and the thief said; **“Don’t you fear God?”** when the other thief joined in the mocking. Then the thief said to Jesus; **“Remember me when You come into Your**

kingdom.” If Jesus had been selfish, He would have ignored the thief and condemned the other thief for mocking Him. Instead Jesus promised that the thief would be with Him in paradise. This gives hope to those who have sinned greatly, repented and committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This gives hope to those who repent at the last moment.

Third, Jesus called out loudly His trust in God the Father when He said; **“Father into Your hands I commit My spirit.”** In His pain and agony of body, Jesus could have condemned His Father in heaven. Instead He makes a statement of trust that the Father will receive His spirit. This is also a statement of trust that the Father will raise Him from the dead. We know that rest of the story, Jesus went to hell to proclaim His victory and rose from the dead three days later as promised. Forty days later Jesus Christ ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. His glory came after He humbled Himself for us.

Meanwhile we have to endure many things ourselves and hopefully keep our eyes upon Jesus as we wait for our time when we will go to heaven. Over the years many have told me that they are ready to go. Then they ask why God has not taken them yet. Over the years I have met many who have endured pain while they wait their time. I keep wondering what I will endure. We all have to look to Jesus and know that He loves us as He showed upon the Cross at Calvary. Likewise we have to endure those who claim that we have sinned greatly or we would not be

suffering so as happened to the parents in the movie. In our faith all sins are paid for and there is no suffering because of sin. Trust Him and endure what life brings our way! Amen .