



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – December 30, 2018

To Know Christ...

The Pharisees would often condemn the innocent (Matthew 12:1-7). They thought nothing of it, it caused no alarms in their mind, and they were content right where they stood. Jesus is innocent, then, now and forever. No sin or blemish in Him, but it did not stop those passing by as Jesus was crucified from hurling abuse at Him.

In Matthew 27, verses 39-40, the ones passing by were wagging their heads, seemingly out of shame/disgust, and were hurling abuse at Jesus, saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save YOURSELF!” Jesus while cleansing the temple said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (John 2:19) Jesus was speaking of His own body and His resurrection. He knew God was going to raise Him from the dead already in John chapter two. Those who passed by while Jesus was being crucified mocked Him with His own words, then as if quoting the Devil himself (Matthew 4:3, 6) they said “If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Save YOURSELF, prove Yourself to us! They openly shamed the one who is innocent.

In Matthew 27, verses 41-43, the chief priests, scribes and elders were mocking Jesus also, saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” They conveyed in other words, if God really delights in YOU, He would save You, since You say You are the Son of God. They spoke as the self-righteous, arrogant, self-willed, and wicked souls they were ... condemning the innocent. The two robbers crucified on either side also (v44) insulted Jesus at first. The soldiers also mocked Jesus saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save YOURSELF!” (Luke 23:36-37) Those passing by, the religious leaders, the condemned criminals and the Roman soldiers all unified in one of the most wicked of ways mocking, verbally abusing and condemning Jesus the INNOCENT while paying for SIN.

Have you ever been condemned while being innocent? If we suffer for doing what is wrong, that is not the parallel here, we may have earned those types of responses because of our personal choices to walk contrary to the commands of our Lord. Those who wanted to mock Jesus had a common theme ... Save YOURSELF! Do something about it Jesus! If you are God's Son, then prove it to ME! And Jesus gave no response to their accusations, abuse, mocking and their condemning of the innocent. So how should we respond while being condemned while innocent? Just like Jesus! No response is required, no need for self-defense. They will continue mocking, saying "just tell us the truth and we'll believe you." But our accusers will not, just like they would not have believed if Jesus had delivered HIMSELF from the cross. Jesus knew God would raise Him up on the third day, God knew His Son had committed no sin of His own, He suffered for our sin, He was made to be sin for us. Death could not hold the innocent Jesus (Acts 2:24), and death will not hold us who have been freed from sin by His Blood. May we have the courage to remain silent while being innocent in a matter, even while being accused by those who pass by, mocking with shame. Jesus, by not defending Himself, gave the opportunity for one thief to reconsider, who initially insulted Him. In Luke 23:39-43, one of the criminals said, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And Jesus reassured that criminal who turned from condemning the innocent to a response of hope, that He would be with him. Even the centurion, seeing what had happened when Jesus died said, "Certainly this man was innocent!" (Luke 23:47) God always has the final say to defend the innocent.

So the next time we stand as innocent and others see us as guilty ... remember Jesus. Remember His example. He knows exactly what that experience is like, He lived it! He will point us to trust and look for the Lord to deliver in His time, not our own. Jesus' body, the temple, was raised on the third day, and anyone with a heart to truly understand will ever deny it! Jesus kept entrusting His life to His Father, in His Father's timing, because the Father judges in what is righteous, not the jaded opinions from man's flawed and inadequate vantage point. How does God respond to those who humble themselves under His mighty hand during difficulties? ... Look at 1 Peter 5:6-7.

- Carey Terry