

EXPERIENCING the POWER of “ONE ACCORD”

“...they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:24, 31-33 (KJV)



This Week’s Thought – March 27, 2016 Resurrection Day!

“I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.” Isaiah 50:6 (NIV)

The sufferings of Jesus cannot be totally comprehended, but one thing is clear: Jesus experienced voluntary suffering for all mankind! He offered Himself as a sacrifice on behalf of the human race, and it was a volitional act on His part. He willfully submitted to the will of His heavenly Father, which meant suffering. His heartache and mistreatment were the will of His heavenly Father. (Mark 8:31-33)

This principle is hard to process for those who want to enjoy problem-free living. The way of the cross is not always a smooth road, for it is marked with its own bumps along the way.

Jesus suffered for the sake of others, and He calls His followers to be willing to do the same. The Bible says, *“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him...”* (Philippians 1:29) Suffering leads you to your Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Jesus offered Himself to His tormentors as His adversaries plotted and schemed to bring Him down. They wanted to put Jesus on display as a mad man. If He were truly God, they reasoned, He would not allow this injustice to occur. However, the Creator allowed His creation to beat and bludgeon His only Son. Christ’s back was bruised and beaten for our sake. His ribs were whipped with sharp bits of rock that dug into His flesh indiscriminately.

These mob-motivated men inflicted inhumane lashes across His body; facial hair was torn from His flesh. He did not hide his face or scowl back. Rather, with a gaze up to heaven, as if to say, *“Father this is for your glory,”* He displayed a grim face of grace. This face of forgiveness was baptized in the spit of sinful man. They desecrated His friendly face with determined drool. The frenzy of the crowd took over with verbal lashes. These ungrateful sinners beat Him down emotionally and mentally, as well as physically.

It was a horrific sight, similar to a one man concentration camp, but Jesus submitted to this suffering only because He first submitted to God. Ironically, those committing these hideous crimes were the very ones who could benefit from its results. They could have embraced His atonement for sin and received His resurrected life.

Jesus carried this burden on our behalf, and that of all mankind. It was not an exercise in how much pain could be endured by one person. It was pure love, as Jesus loved you all the way to the cross. *“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”* (John 15:13) Without the love of God, the events at the cross would not have happened. The dreadful day’s activities would have culminated in the death of just another good man. Death would have been the end.

But Jesus conquered death, sin, and Satan so that you and I could do the same! His pain was our gain. He bore the cross so we could bear our cross. The way of the cross is the path to redemption. He bought you and me from the servitude of sin. No longer are you bound up in yourself and others, for He has set you free. He has set us free! We are exonerated by faith because He endured the cross, despised its shame, and is now interceding on our behalf at the right hand of His heavenly Father. (Hebrews 12:2)

This is cause for celebration. God really does use all things for His good on behalf of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28) Therefore, allow gratitude to well up and burst forth from your heart. You can because of the great love of God exhibited in the sufferings of Christ Jesus. He suffered for you. Can you do any less? You serve a suffering Savior. You worship a suffering Savior who rose from the dead so He could save you from the uttermost punishment. He lives!

Words from the Master during your time of reflection this week: *“Learn to live above your circumstances. This requires focused time with Me, the One who overcame the world. Trouble and distress are woven into the very fabric of this perishing world. Only My Life in you can empower you to face this endless flow of problems with good cheer. As you sit quietly in My Presence, I shine Peace into your troubled mind and heart. Little by little, you are freed from earthly shackles and lifted up above your circumstances. Rest in My Presence, receiving Joy that no one can take away from you.”* (John 16:33; Psalm 42:5; John 16:22)

“And then God answered: “Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what’s coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn’t lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It’s on its way. It will come right on time.” Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)

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Yours in Christ, Pastor King