

## INTRODUCTION:

1. 2 Corinthians 5:14: “For the love of Christ compels us...”
2. The love of Christ, seen especially in the sufferings He endured for us, should be a great compelling force in our lives.
3. To better appreciate what He endured, I want to read to you an account of His sufferings, from Gethsemane to Calvary.
4. This is a compilation of the accounts found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
5. I want to read this, and then pick out four things in particular for us to meditate on.

# The Sufferings of Jesus (From Gethsemane to Calvary)

*by Bryan Gibson*

Troubled and deeply distressed in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made this request of His disciples, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me” (Mark 14:33-34; Matthew 26:37-38).

Jesus then went about a stone’s throw away from them, fell on His face and prayed, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” Jesus was in such agony that His sweat became as great drops of blood. He began to pray even more earnestly, praying a second time to His Father, and then a third time. After each prayer, He returned to His disciples, only to find them asleep—not watching, as He had requested (Matthew 26:36-45; Luke 22:39-44).

While Jesus was still speaking with His disciples in the Garden, a great multitude with swords and clubs came to arrest Him. Leading the mob was one of the chosen twelve, Judas Iscariot. Judas approached Jesus, greeted Him, and then kissed Him, having already given the mob a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him” (Matthew 26:47-50).

After Jesus was arrested, all His disciples forsook Him and fled (Matthew 26:56).

Bound by soldiers, Jesus was led first to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest. During this appearance before Annas, an officer slapped Jesus with the palm of his hand (John 18:12-13, 22).

Still bound, Jesus was then sent to Caiaphas, where the whole council was present. False testimony was sought against Jesus. They spat in His face and beat Him. They blindfolded Him, slapped Him, and then mocked Him by saying, “Prophecy to us Christ. Who struck you?” They spoke many other blasphemous things against Him (John 18:24; Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:65).

Meanwhile, Peter, who had followed Jesus to see what would happen to Him, was asked three different times if he knew Jesus, or had been with Him. Peter denied knowing Jesus all

three times. After the third denial Jesus turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:54-61; Matthew 26:58).

As soon as it was day, Jesus was brought before the council again. When Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of God, they said, "What further testimony do we need? He is deserving of death" (Luke 22:66-71; Matthew 26:66).

Jesus was then brought before Pilate, the Roman governor over Judea. The Jews, prohibited from putting anyone to death, were hoping for a death sentence from Pilate (John 18:28-31; Luke 23:1-5; Matthew 27:1-2).

When Pilate found no fault in Jesus, he sent Him to appear before Herod. During this appearance, the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Jesus. Herod's soldiers treated Him with contempt, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe and mocked Him (Luke 23:6-12).

Jesus was then sent back to Pilate for a second time. It was customary for the Romans, during the Passover, to release one prisoner, whomever the Jews might desire. Pilate gave the Jews a choice: Jesus, or Barabbas, a man who had been charged with rebellion and murder. The people said, "Release unto us Barabbas." When Pilate then asked what should be done with Jesus, the people shouted, "Crucify Him" (Matthew 27:15-23; Luke 23:13-21).

Pilate then sent Jesus away to be scourged (John 19:1). The scourge was a whip with a handle and several lashes. Bits of metal and bone were often embedded in the lashes. This instrument of torture was applied to the back of the victim—in this case, the back of Jesus.

After the scourging, Pilate's soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and placed it on Jesus' head. They stripped Him and put a purple robe on Him. They placed a reed in His right hand for a scepter and then mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." These same soldiers spat on Jesus, took the reed out of His hand, and struck Him on the head with it (John 19:2-3; Matthew 27:28-30).

Still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Jesus was brought before the people again. When Pilate told the people that he could find no fault with Jesus, they shouted him down. They continued to demand with loud voices that Jesus be crucified. So Pilate, wanting to please the crowd, released Barabbas and delivered Jesus to be crucified (John 19:5-7; Luke 23:23-25; Mark 15:15).

Jesus started out bearing His own cross to Calvary, but soon a Cyrenian named Simon was compelled to carry it the rest of the way. As Jesus was being led through the streets to Calvary, two thieves were also led with Him. These two criminals would be crucified with Jesus, one on His right hand and the other on His left (Luke 23:26, 32-33; John 19:17; Matthew 27:32).

When they reached the site of the crucifixion, Jesus was secured to the cross by nails driven through His hands (John 20:25, 27).

While Jesus was on the cross, those passing by blasphemed Him with statements like these:

"You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself" (Matthew 27:39-40).

“If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:40).

“He saved others, Himself He cannot save” (Matthew 27:42).

“If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” (Matthew 27:42).

“He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Matthew 27:43).

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him (Matthew 27:44). (Although one did later have a change of heart).

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Some thought He was calling for Elijah (Matthew 27:46-47).

About this same time Jesus also cried out, “I thirst.” Someone put a sponge on the end of a stalk of hyssop and dipped it in sour wine and then lifted it to the lips of Jesus. Others said, “Leave Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him” (John 19:28-29; Matthew 27:48-49).

Jesus again cried out with a loud voice and said, “It is finished.” He then said, “Father, into your hands I commit My spirit.” Having said this, Jesus bowed His head and died (John 19:30; Luke 23:46).

I. Now, let’s look at four things in particular we should meditate on.

A. The greatest friend even known to man was betrayed by his own friends.

1. Judas had spent approximately three years with the Lord, and yet he gave him the most unholy kiss ever given. It’s an act associated with friendship, but Judas used it to betray Jesus to the authorities.
2. But Judas wasn’t the only friend to betray Jesus that night. “Stay here and watch with me,” Jesus said, but in their sorrow they fell asleep.
3. When Christ was arrested, yes, there was that brief moment of courage on Peter’s part, but the 11 apostles forsook Him and fled.
4. It appears that both Peter and John quickly regrouped and followed Jesus to the house of the high priest, but once there, Peter denied Jesus three times.
5. And what about the mob howling for his crucifixion? We don’t have any specific information on their makeup, but it may very well have included people who welcomed Him with Hosannas just five days earlier.
6. Again, the greatest friend even known to man was hurt by his own friends.

- B. One “who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26) was treated like a common criminal.
1. Jesus said, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me?”
  2. For someone who was kind, gentle, and willing to surrender, they sure sent a large contingent of soldiers to arrest Him.
  3. Through that night and the next morning, they repeatedly labeled Him an evildoer, despite the lack of evidence against Him.
  4. And when He was put to death, they placed Him between two thieves like just another criminal receiving His just reward.
- C. Jesus was abused, both physically and mentally. Do you remember the details from the account we read earlier?
1. “Prophecy to us, Christ. Who struck You?” What a cruel game to play!
  2. The same people who mocked Him this way, also spat on Him and beat Him.
  3. Herod’s troops dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and mocked Him.
  4. Roman soldiers put a purple robe on Him, wove a crown of thorns for Him, and placed a reed in His hand for a scepter. They then mocked Him by saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And if that wasn’t enough, they spat on Him, and then took the reed and struck Him on His thorn-crowned head.
  5. And as we noted earlier, the taunts continued even as He hung on the cross.
  6. And let’s make sure we don’t forget the scourging, a form of punishment that was often enough by itself to bring death to its victim. Think about, too, that after this, His cross was laid on the same back which had earlier received this scourging. We don’t know how far He carried it before Simon of Cyrene took over, but every step must have been agonizing.
  7. Of course, at Golgotha, He experienced one of the most cruel deaths ever devised. Nailed by his hands and feet to a wooden cross, Jesus endured six hours of torture before it was finished and He yielded His spirit to God.

- D. As much as we need to as best we can, identify with the great suffering He endured, we need to also rejoice with Him.
1. We can't stop at Calvary. Three days later the tomb was found empty, and almost six weeks later, Jesus ascended to heaven where He was proclaimed to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, where He was given the name which is above every name.
  2. In His death, He paid the price for our redemption; and in His resurrection and exaltation, He gave us the assurance of victory.
  3. Do you remember the verse we started with? "For the love of Christ compels us..." Compels us to do what? "He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."
  4. It is only when His love compels us to do that that we can share in this great victory.