

The Resurrection
Part 1

Near the Cross

3/28/2010 – Palm Sunday

“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” John 19:25

Near the Cross by Fanny Crosby

Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain
Free to all, a healing stream
Flows from Calvary's mountain.

Refrain

In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.

What does it really mean to be near the cross when Jesus was crucified? Maybe we cannot stand near the actual cross but we can take up a special relationship to Jesus Christ. This morning we are going to consider these four people who stood near the cross, when Jesus was crucified, and try to understand what it meant to them to be near the cross.

**Why stay near the Cross?
The Cross is the place of:**

I. Redemption

Redeem appears 141 in the Bible and means to:

- buy back,
- free from what distress or harm

- free from captivity by payment of ransom
- atone for

What exactly did Christ and His work on the Cross redeem?

1. Mankind

Mary Magdalene

“After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;” Luke 8:2

Mary Magdalene was a woman whom Jesus had cast out seven demons. She had been in bondage to Satan for a long time. These seven demons made her do terrible things. Satan was at work in her life to destroy, cause havoc, wreck her physically, emotionally and spiritually. Mary was in a hopeless and helpless situation.

Like Mary, we were in bondage to Satan, sin and the curse and there was no way for us to free ourselves. This bondage had an iron-fisted hold on each of us.

2. Israel

“O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.” Psalm 130:7

“And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself...” 1 Chron. 7:21

3. The creation

“that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” Rom 8:21

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.” Job 19:25

II. Forgiveness

Salome, the mother of James and John

“Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom. You don't know what you are asking, Jesus said to them. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” Matthew 20:20-22

To me, Salome represents all of our personal pride and selfishness, which is exactly what will keep us out of Heaven.

Sometimes we can be so selfish in our desires. Salome's request for her two sons was a selfish, earthly, proud request. She did not realize the price that her two sons would have to pay.

Remember James, he was martyred and John was exiled before they went home to glory. Salome was greatly rebuked standing at the cross, realizing what it cost Jesus, the Son of God, to give up. Jesus gave up the glory of heaven and became a servant for us by giving his life for us.

As we contemplate the cross we stand forgiven of our selfish desires. Jesus says to us, “Are you willing to drink this cup?” We say, “Oh no, Lord, we just want the answer to our prayers!” Jesus continues, “Are you willing to suffer for me?” We respond, “Oh no, Lord, I just want the blessing, not the suffering!” Salome says to each one of us this morning, “The cross is a place of forgiveness”. When we contemplate what Jesus did for us and gave up for us, what he endured for us and what suffered for us, the cross can be a place of forgiveness in the light of our own selfish desires and ambitions.

III. Responsibility

John, the Beloved Disciple

“When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” John 19: 26-27

For John, to be at the cross was to stand at a place of responsibility. What we need to first understand is that John stood at the cross restored. He, along with the other disciples, had forsaken Jesus and fled for their lives at the garden of Gethsemane. But, John came back to the cross. He was restored and forgiven.

App. Christians may stray and deny our Lord, but we can still come back to the cross. It doesn't matter what we've done. The cross is the place to go for forgiveness, deliverance and restoration.

For John to stand at the cross was probably not the safest place to stand or the easiest place to stand. It would have taken courage and love for John to come back to the cross. But remember what did John write years later in 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

All believers are taking His place here on earth. John 20:21 tells us that, “As my Father has sent me, even so, send I you.” You and I represent Jesus to others. To acknowledge the cross, is to acknowledge a place of responsibility. If you and I have come to the cross, we have a huge responsibility to love the Lord Jesus (because he has loved us on the cross), to love others (just like John loved Jesus' mother), and to love others the same way Jesus loved us. The cross is indeed a place of responsibility.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ my God.

All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Where the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

IV. Reward

Mary, the mother of Jesus

“Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” Luke 2:34-35

How did Mary suffer?

- She suffered physically when she brought the Saviour into the world.
- She suffered shame and reproach and gossip when found to be with child before the marriage was consummated with Joseph. She fled to Egypt to save her child, but countless innocent children died because of her child. How do you think she felt about that? She would have suffered emotionally.
- There was a growing separation between her and Jesus when Jesus declared to her one day, “Don't you know that I must be about my fathers buisness?”

Yes, a sword shall pierce your side. She felt the climax of Simeon's prophecy at the cross, when her son died, and she suffered because of:

- 1) the way he died (on a cross, numbered with the transgressors) and
- 2) where he died (openly, publicly, shamefully). And Mary stood there feeling the pain of the sword go through her soul.

But Jesus saw her and had compassion for her and assured her of His love for her. What was He doing? He was establishing a new relationship with her.

“I am going back to heaven. Because of this you and I must have a whole new relationship. But in order to give you peace in your heart, in order to heal up your broken heart where the wound has pierced so deeply, I'm giving you John.”

For Mary, to stand at the cross was to stand at a place of reward. Ultimately, God rewards those who suffer or have suffered for his sake. Jesus knows our trials and our needs.

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:” 2 Tim 2:12

Jesus

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2

Even Jesus would receive a reward. He would become the Savior of all of creation. Everything that sin had touched and destroyed, the cross and the blood of Christ could and would restore. There is nothing that the Cross cannot fix.