

Were we there?

I invite readers to go back sixty-one generations to that first Good Friday. We often censure those responsible for crucifying Christ, but can we claim innocence? You and I need to ask if we were there when they crucified our Lord?"

Yes, we were there! Our sins of thought, word, deed, pride, selfishness, unbelief, were among the nails, the spearhead and the crown of thorns. The Christian gospel is one of personal pronouns. It is good to say that Christ died for the sins of the whole world. But it is far more wonderful to be able to say, He died for me, He is my personal Savior.

Let us seek to understand the great dilemma faced by God in regard to forgiveness. I am a sinner by nature and choice. God loves me, yet hates my sin, and His holiness demands that my sin be judged. If God permitted sin to remain unpunished, He would cease to be God. Even the mercy and love of God cannot be exercised at the expense of his holiness and justice.

How can God forgive my sin and at the same time punish it? As Dr. Scott Peck points out, "The only ultimate way to conquer evil is to let it be smothered within a willing, loving human being." Yes, a willing, sinless sacrifice is required. But, where can such be found?

The solution? "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin, Christ only could unlock the gate of heaven, and let us in." The cross of Christ declares to all the world that forgiveness is not easy or cheap. The Son of God was willing to face and taste hell for the sin of Adam's race. The one who forgives is the one who suffers, providing pardon at the price of His own pain. He draws the guilt of humanity into His own heart and allows that guilt to break it. He was wounded that we might be healed; put to death that we might live. At any moment he could have called 10,000 angels to deliver Him (Matthew 26:53). Not the nails, but his wondrous love kept our Lord on the cross. He bore the judgment we deserve in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve.

Surely this calls for a positive response on our part. Let us come to Christ in repentance and faith and then out of gratitude and love, seek to live for the one who gave his all for us. In forgiving us, our Lord welcomes us into the family of God bestowing both pardon for sin and the power to live a new life by His grace. When I begin to understand what my sin cost God, I should never again wish to return to those sins from which I have been set free.

"Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."