

Overview

The journey to the cross began in the garden. It was in the garden where Jesus caught a glimpse of the agony which awaited Him. It was in the garden where Jesus asked His disciples to stay awake and pray with Him. He went back and forth between praying by Himself and with His disciples throughout the night. There is no record of God responding to His prayers. It is almost as if Jesus is starting to experience the separation from God in the garden. The path that is before Him is one He must go alone. Taking on the sins of the world meant that for the first time in eternity He would be separated from God. Never before in all the gospels do you see Jesus' humanity fully displayed as you do here. He wants God to answer His prayers along with seeking the support of His friends. Seeking God and support from friends should sound familiar to all of us.

If the Son of God ever asked you to stay up and pray with Him you know that something big is about to happen. When Jesus was at His greatest hour of need those closest to Him were asleep. Do you ever feel alone in your circumstances? He prayed three times for another way and three times He received no response. His hour had finally come. Jesus was arrested and His disciples ran. For all of us the situation is different, but the scenario sounds eerily similar. We cry out to God and are greeted with silence or we don't get the response we want. We look to those around us and wonder if anyone really understands what we are feeling. Has anyone else felt this pain, emptiness, or depth of sadness? Can anyone relate? We cry out about cancer, divorce, death of a love one, etc...., and we wonder where God is at.

As we read through the gospels we see Jesus go through a mock trial and then the cross. His body was already laid bare from the flogging. The Romans had perfected crucifixion so the victims would experience the greatest amount of pain for the longest amount of time. With every breath Jesus took He would have to press down on His nail pierced feet. The raw wounds on His back would rub on the cross with each breath. One last time He pressed down and with one last breath He gave up His spirit. Why did He do this? Hebrews 12:2 says it was for the Joy set before Him. Jesus, the creator of the universe, had everything. The only thing He didn't have before the cross that He would have after the cross is you. There were two other men on crosses that day. One on each side of Jesus. One man came to his senses and asked Jesus to remember him. The other used his last breath to deny his creator. Which side of Jesus are you on? All of humanity is either on one side or the other.

If the story ended here there wouldn't be much of a point. Throughout all history men have martyred themselves for great causes. Jesus is the only one who came back to life. Easter is our time to celebrate. Where were Jesus' disciples on the first resurrection morning? John 20:19 states they were all together behind a locked door in fear of the Jewish leaders. These men have been running since the garden. What are you running from today? Is there something in your life you don't want to face? It is the power of the resurrection that turned these men from hiding cowards to founding fathers of the Christian Faith. Romans 8:11 says that same power is in you. Do you live like you have resurrection power?

Bible Study: John 20:1-23

1. From the garden to the cross to the resurrection we can find ourselves somewhere in the story. Maybe you are crying out wondering where God is at this Easter morning. Maybe you are feeling lonely and longing for the support of those around you. Maybe you are still running. Take some time to reflect on the story of Jesus from the garden to the empty tomb. Where are you?
2. In what ways does the resurrection impact your faith?