



Text: Mark 15:13-26

The Plain Truth

Gladiators take it _____.

Transformation happens when:

1. Encountering Jesus moves us from _____ to _____.
2. Spiritual Gladiators move from _____ with being clean, to an _____ of getting dirty.
3. Go from a _____ follower to a _____ follower.

Gladiators

Personal Study • Week of June 12

Can you imagine on your way to worship suddenly being ordered to carry a cross for a man sentenced to die? After having traveled a great distance, Simon of Cyrene (modern-day Libya) enters the Holy City just as Roman soldiers are leading three men out to the place of crucifixion. Pushed and pressed by a mixed mob filled with both anger and grief, soldiers seize Simon “and put the cross on him” and make him walk behind Jesus, one of the men being led to Golgotha (Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26).

Read Mark 15:1-32

What Simon of Cyrene intended to do privately – worship God in the solitude of the Temple – suddenly went public as he helped carry a shameful Roman cross for the Son of God. This is exactly what Jesus calls disciples to do: “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it” (Mark 8:34-35).

1. Being identified with Jesus often means being associated with mocking and ridicule. And yet, when this happens, we shouldn’t be surprised because Jesus said, “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first” (John 15:18). According to Luke 23:34a, what attitude should we have when we suffer for Christ?

With the help of the Holy Spirit we can be patient and forgiving when people reject us for our faith in Christ. We can also be encouraged. Just as there are those who turn a deaf ear, there are others who will observe and take to heart the message of Christ – like a seed planted in fertile soil. What was your initial response to the Gospel message and what stirred you to accept it?

The apostle Paul says: “For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes – the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith” (Romans 1:16-17a). Focus on the return of Christ in His glory. Jesus said we live in “adulterous and sinful days” and we should not be ashamed of Him or one day He will be ashamed of us (Mark 8:38).

2. Simon of Cyrene carried the cross for Jesus. Are you willing to identify with the cross of Christ and bear its weight and shame? Ask the Lord to forgive you for the times you have been ashamed to go public with your faith. Ask Him to replace your fear (desire to please the crowd) with fiery faith and a desire to please our coming King.

“Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 22:12-13).

June 11 & 12, 2016