

What That Old Rugged Cross Means To Me

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What That Old Rugged Cross's Meaning To Me

Luke 23:39-43 KJV

(39) And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

(40) But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

(41) And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

(42) And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

(43) And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

It seems many people have a cross, of some kind. Some wear it around their neck, while others may have one in a ring, or hung on their wall. Some even put them on their websites or on the bumpers of their cars.

There are many different beliefs and opinions about what that cross means to someone and what it signifies. To me, the cross starts with His arrest and goes up past His death.

Jesus was scourged with a cat-o-nine tails. It contained rocks and metal pieces in the ends so that each time He was "whipped", a piece of His flesh came off. This was a typical Roman punishment, killing many who were scourged.

When I see a cross, I see the lashing take place. I see what He went through to pay my debt. I see Him looking at me and saying, "I take this for you because I love you that much."

As my sins nail him to the cross, I can see Him still looking at me. With a pained smile, I can hear Him say, "This burden is too great for you, let me take it from you."

As He hangs there on that tree, His lifeblood ebbing from His body, I can hear Him say, "Father, forgive him, he doesn't know what he's done."

He came to pay the price for every sin. Not just mine, but everyone's. In the war over our souls, His love for us was great enough that He came down from paradise and willingly allowed Himself to be mutilated. He willingly laid Himself on that splintery cross and allowed us to drive huge nails into His hands and feet. He allowed us to pierce His side with a spear.

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All it would have taken was a simple word and all His pain and agony would have ended. A legion of angels would have come and rescued Him, but His love was great enough to withstand this brutal punishment.

I look at the cross and I see the instrument of His death. I am reminded that my sins nailed Him there. I am reminded that I am the thief on the cross. He knows he is getting exactly what he deserves. Not just physically, but spiritually, as well. He knows he is doomed. At this moment, he sees Jesus for who He is.

The thief's dying words, "Just remember me," touched the heart of Jesus. Jesus was so filled with love, He ignored His own pain and suffering to comfort and forgive a sinner. Even in death, He saw the heart of the sinner. Seeing the repentance, Jesus forgave him.

I have seen people talk about the cross with an almost worshipful sense of being. That Old Rugged Cross is not something I cherish, for it is the instrument that hung my savior. I look upon that tree and I see my sins, paid in full, hung there.

In His love,
Christopher Dale