**Stages of The Cross Part 1**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Luke 22:39-43**

**Sunday Morning**

**April 3, 2022**

**Luke 22:39-43**

39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

Saints, the Stations of the Cross, also known as the:

**Via Dolorosa**

**Photos of the Via Dolorosa>**

**1st Station of the Cross**

**Jesus on the Mount of Olives**

**Luke 22:39-46**

39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

Saints, Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives for His Father to take the cup from His hand that meant His death on the cross; it demonstrated the humanity of Jesus. It is not difficult to imagine how great His anticipation was concerning the events He was about to face.

There comes a time in the life of all Christians when they must also choose between God’s will and their own, and that choice, like Jesus’ choice, displays the level of commitment and obedience to God, as well as the true condition of the heart.

Saints, Jesus’s prayer was that the Father’s will be done regardless of what the future held for Him. Even nailed to the cross with His life’s breath slipping away, Jesus was still teaching us the importance of obedience to God’s Word and the importance of trusting Him in every situation.

**2nd Station of the Cross**

**Jesus is betrayed by Judas and Arrested**

**Luke 22:47-48**

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Judas not only became one of the most despised characters in history when he betrayed Jesus; he also became a haunting reminder to every Christian that there have been times they have fallen to temptation to sin.

For the Christian, stumbling in sin is like betraying the One who gave His life for us. How much greater is that betrayal when the sin is a chosen behavior, deliberately turning away from spiritual conviction?

Judas lived with Jesus and sat at His feet learning from Him for years. But because his heart was not truly transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, he fell away when tempted by Satan. As believers, we are told to “examine ourselves” to see if we are truly in the faith.

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.”

**3rd Station of the Cross**

**Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin**

**Luke 22:66-71**

66 As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68 And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.

69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." 70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

Saints, the Sanhedrin council, made up of seventy priests and scribes and one high priest, demanded that Pilate execute Jesus. This incident serves as a warning for all Christians to be careful not to exalt ourselves by self-righteously judging others.

**Luke 6:37-38**

37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

**4th Station of the Cross**

**Peter denies Jesus**

**Luke 22:54-62**

54 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed at a distance. 55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."

57 But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Saints, when Jesus was arrested, a number of those present at the time accused Peter of being one of Jesus’ followers. As previously predicted by Jesus, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times.

Peter was Jesus’ beloved and trusted disciple who witnessed many miracles firsthand, even walking on water with Jesus.

**Matthew 14:29-33**

29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Saints, even so, Peter demonstrated the weakness of humanity by denying Jesus for fear of also being arrested. Christians all over the world still face persecution and humiliation by the non-believing in society, from verbal abuse to beatings and death.

People might self-righteously judge Peter for his denial of Jesus and his fear of what the Romans would do to him if they discovered his relationship with Jesus, but how many Bible-believing Christians can say they have never remained silent about their faith in the face of discrimination, public or private? Such a silence demonstrates the imperfect frailty of humanity.

Peter’s faith was an imperfect faith, primarily because he was not indwelt by the Holy Spirit at that time. After the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost to live in the hearts of believers (Acts 2), Peter was a valiant lion of faith, never again fearing to proclaim His Lord.

**5th Station of the Cross**

**Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate**

**Luke 23:13-25**

13 Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14 said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him;

15 no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. 16 I will therefore chastise Him and release Him" 17(for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). 18 And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas"—

19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. 20 Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. 21 But they shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" 22 Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go."

23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. 25 And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Saints, by today’s legal standards, it is unlikely that Jesus would have been convicted in any court, especially since no real evidence against Him could be produced. Pontius Pilate could find no fault in anything Jesus had done and wanted to release Him, but the Sanhedrin demanded that Pilate order His execution.

The Sanhedrin, who ruled according to strict Mosaic Law and tradition, considered Jesus a major threat to their ruling authority over the Jews.

Jesus taught the people that salvation was by the grace of God and not by adherence to the many precepts set forth by the Sanhedrin, and such teaching not only undermined the authority of the religious leaders, but it also posed a serious threat to the livelihood that they enjoyed as a result of their control over the Jewish people.

Saints, even today, the message of salvation by the power and choice of God, not by our own efforts, is unpopular. Human beings in their fallen nature always want to achieve their own salvation, or at least have a part in it, so we can claim at least a part of the glory. But salvation is of the Lord, who shares His glory with no one.

**Isaiah 42:8**

“I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to graven images. 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

**6th Station of the Cross**

**Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns**

**Luke 22:63-65**

63 Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. 64 And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?" 65 And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

Saints, the healing referred to in this passage is spiritual healing, or healing from sin. Pardon of sin, and restoration to the favor of God, are frequently represented as an act of healing. Over five hundred years before Mary gave birth to Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our inequities and that by His stripes we would be healed.

**Isaiah 53:3-6**

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

**7th Station of the Cross**

**Jesus Takes up His Cross**

**John 19:17**

“And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha…”

**Garden Tomb & Golgotha Photos>**

Saints, when Jesus took up His cross, He was carrying more than wood. Unknown to the many spectators that day, Jesus was carrying the sins of mankind, facing the punishment those sins deserved, which He was about to suffer on man’s behalf. Jesus exhorts us in:

**Matthew 16:24**

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

He also reveals that this is not an option:

**Matthew 10:38**

“…and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me

Saints, taking up our cross, an instrument of death, means dying to self in order to live as completely new creations in service and obedience to Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Saints, this means surrendering to God our will, our affections, our ambitions, and our desires. We are not to seek our own happiness as the supreme object, but be willing to renounce all and lay down our lives also, if required.

**In Closing:**

Saints, the Bible does not specifically mention the Via Dolorosa. All we know from Scripture is that Jesus carried His cross from the Praetorium to the site on Mount Calvary where He was crucified. The locations of these two sites are not known for certain, but wherever they were, the route between them was truly a sorrowful way.

The scourging and physical pain the Lord Jesus suffered was minor in comparison to the pain caused by the real burden He was bearing—the burden of the sins of all believers. He bore our sins to the cross where He paid the penalty for them all.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**