

Remnant Life Church  
March 29, 2015

**Encounters on The Way to the Cross -  
The Groups  
Luke 23:35-49**

This Palm Sunday we are looking ahead to the end of the week as Jesus is about to complete his weeklong journey culminating with the Resurrection.

He has encountered and healed a blind man and changed the very heart of a greedy rich man into one of generosity and contrition.

He came into the city a conquering king but not in the way the people or even His disciples expected.

The time of His crucifixion has come and there are four groups of people who will be impacted by not only what they see but how they respond.

1. The Scoffers

- a. **V 35** – the rulers mocking Jesus
  - i. Even in their “victory” they could not even evoke sympathy as “men of God”
  - ii. Their true natures continued to show
- b. Peter writes of this as well in **I Peter 2:23**
  - i. Jesus demonstrates the righteousness of His actions
  - ii. He did not retaliate; He made no threats
- c. Do you scoff at the things of God
  - i. Things you do not understand
  - ii. Things that make you uncomfortable
  - iii. Things that do not fit your box of reason
- d. Even with them scoffing Him He still forgave them (**23:34**)

2. The Spectators

- a. **V 48** – the ones that came just to watch; the curious
- b. Crucifixions were public events for several reasons
  - i. The guilty man was stripped naked to complete their total breakdown; physical; emotional; mental
  - ii. Public to act as a warning to others
    - 1. Often the bodies were left up for extended periods of time
    - 2. People would come by and hurl stones at the corpse
- c. The people began to drift away but they were effected by what they saw
  - i. They beat their breasts as they left
  - ii. In first century culture it was a sign of guilt and remorse

- iii. The first inklings of revelation were beginning to pierce their hearts
- d. How often are we content to just be spectators to the misery and the lost around us?
  - i. God provides us with opportunities to speak into someone's life, perform an act of kindness, or even help heal a wounded heart and we just stand by and watch
  - ii. It is easier to just be a spectator
    - 1. It requires no effort
    - 2. There is no risk
    - 3. It does not invade my world
  - iii. **READ** – Matt 25:31-48
  - iv. To simply be a spectator is to deny the call of God given to each and every Christian to help those in need – get involved

### 3. The Seekers

- a. Out of everyone that had come to the crucifixion, and conservatively it would have been several hundred, only 2 fit into this third category
- b. The first was the thief who was crucified on one side of Jesus
  - i. V 39-43 – these men were nothing extraordinary, certainly nothing like Jesus
  - ii. They were just next to be executed
  - iii. But they, like everyone else had heard of Jesus
  - iv. After the one had insulted and taunted Him the other spoke up and told him to shut up
  - v. A moment of revelation and repentance came upon this man because of His proximity to Jesus
- c. The other was the centurion (v 47)
  - i. This was a veteran in command of as many of 100 soldiers
  - ii. He would have been present probably from the beginning witnessing what had been done to Jesus
  - iii. He probably had witnessed hundreds perhaps thousands of crucifixions so he wasn't bothered by what he was watching
  - iv. But by the end he was making a different proclamation
  - v. Max Lucado, *Six Hours One Friday*

He was uneasy. He had been since noon. It wasn't the deaths that troubled him...he'd mastered the art of numbing his heart. But this crucifixion plagued him. Half the crowd taunted, half cried. The soldiers griped. As the hours wore on, the centurion found himself looking more and more at the one on the center cross. He didn't know what to do with his silence or with his kindness. Suddenly the center head ceased bobbing up and down as they did when struggling to draw a breath. It yanked itself erect. Its eyes opened in a flash of white. A roar sliced the silence. "It is finished." It wasn't a yell. It wasn't a scream. It was a roar...a lion's roar. He looked up into the face of the one near death. The King looked down at the crusty old centurion. Jesus' hands were fastened -- they couldn't reach out. His feet were nailed to timber -- they couldn't walk toward him. His head was heavy with pain, he could scarcely move it. But his eyes...they were afire.

They were unquenchable. Perhaps that's what made the centurion say what he said...for he had looked into the eyes of God.

- vi. **Mark 15:39** – *Surely, this man was the Son of God!*
- d. What does it take for us to make that same declaration over our own lives?
  - i. His statement could have endangered his career
  - ii. Not only with the Romans but the Jewish leaders as well
  - iii. He was publically declaring something that was against the law (Caesar was god)

#### 4. The Saved

- a. These were the friends and the followers of Jesus
- b. They included John, Jesus' mother Mary, Martha and Mary the sisters of Lazarus
- c. They started at a distance (**v 49**)
- d. But they must of, at some point, moved close enough for Jesus to speak to John about Mary (**John 19:26-27**)

Which of these four best describes your life this morning?

- Are you a scoffer who denies who God really is because it does not fit into your box of acceptable thinking?
- Are you a spectator who is at all the right places but never gets involved?
- Are you a seeker – someone who Jesus is drawing to Himself?
- Are you saved this morning but standing afar off when you should be walking toward Jesus?

Are you ready to take the next step closer to the cross?