

## ***Characters of the Cross***

*“And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things” (Luke 23:49).*

On that gloriously good news Friday when Christ Jesus paid our sin debt in full through His sacrificial death, there are many characters seen in Scripture around the cross of Christ. You have Simon of Cyrene, the repentant thief, John the Beloved, Mary the mother of Jesus, the many women who faithfully followed Jesus, the Roman centurion, and Joseph of Arimathea, just to mention a few. Everyone was there for a reason, and if looked at carefully, we may be able to see glimpses of ourselves as they stood in the shadow of Jesus’ cross. And so what can we glean from a quick glance at these characters as we gaze more deeply at the main character of the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ?

- **The Cross calls for Sacrifice like the Savior!**

Simon of Cyrene was asked to assist Jesus in carrying His cross. What a picture of our calling in Christ this is... To deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).

- **The Cross calls for Repentance towards the Redeemer!**

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). These were the words of the dying thief as he was crucified next to our Lord. It’s never too late to see Jesus for who He really is and to call out for His saving grace. Learn a lesson from the repentant thief and cry out to Jesus in repentance!

- **The Cross calls for belief in the face of divine reality!**

“Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54). This was the humble statement that the Roman centurion who oversaw the crucifixion of Jesus proclaimed. After experiencing the complete darkness that came over the land and the earthquake that occurred while Jesus was on the cross, the centurion couldn’t deny the reality that this really was the Christ, the Son of the Living God!

- **The Cross calls for Loyalty to the Lord of lords!**

The women who followed Jesus during His ministry were faithful to the end. As often stated, “They were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb.” These women were loyal to their Lord, despite the persecution from the Jewish leaders and fear of the Roman soldiers; they made sure to stand near the cross of Jesus.

- **The Cross calls for weeping for the night, but certainty that joy will come with the morning!**

Mary’s tears wouldn’t last forever...The Sun of Righteousness would soon rise with healing in its wings (Malachi 4:2). The grief would soon be wiped away with the assurance of her Son’s glorified resurrection! Because of Jesus, our darkest day will now always be lit up by the new morning mercies of the gospel! The finished work of the cross tells us that there will always be hope, joy, and a future with the rising of the Bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16).

Boast in the Cross of Christ! Happy Passion Week!

Respect the Blood,  
Dalton Mathis