

Enduring the Cross

My topic today is “Enduring the Cross”. That title comes from Hebrews 12:2 and that is where I would like to begin with you today.

Hebrews 12:2,3

He endured the cross for the joy that was set before him. Verse 3 encourages us to consider him that endured, and I want to spend some time with you doing just that. And we should notice that the point of this consideration is so that we don’t become mentally weary and faint. What we read from the Scriptures and build into our lives about Jesus Christ should have an impact on our day-by-day living.

Before we begin to consider points from the 4 Gospels relating to Jesus enduring the cross, I want to first set down a basis for what we will be reading. Honestly, we could spend the entire time I have allotted exploring this premise, but for today I am going to ask you to accept it and explore it at some later time; just as the Jews in Berea did. They received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures to see whether those things were so.

The premise is this: One cannot overstate Jesus’ knowledge of, his understanding of, his believing in and his reliance on the written Scriptures. When you read the Gospels with spiritual perception and awareness, this point becomes clearer and clearer. Jesus built his life upon the written Word of God. I know that he had spirit upon him without measure; I know that he evidenced the enablement’s of that spirit; I know that he was the only begotten son of God. But the foundation of his life was the written Scriptures. As I said, we could spend our entire time together on this one point, but we want to get to

our topic of “Enduring the Cross” and to consider him that endured the cross.

Luke 18:31 – 34

During his ministry on earth, there came a point when Jesus began to share with his closest disciples what he knew was ahead of him. And we see that he knew this was ahead of him from what was written in the prophets. He knew these things before he endured them, before the events came to pass.

Matthew 16:21 – 23

Mark 8:31 – 33

Mark 9:30 – 32

Mark 10:32 – 34

Jesus knew, because of what was written in the prophets, in the written Scriptures, what was ahead of him, and he informed his closest followers, the 12 apostles.

John 12:23, 24, 27

His soul was troubled. These events were not something that he was looking forward to. But he knew what the Scriptures declared.

Matthew 26:31, 32

Matthew 26:53 – 56

Jesus was aware of what was going on. He knew what the Scriptures declared. Remember that he had prayed “O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me”. But he also prayed “Nevertheless, not as I will but thou”. That is why, in the epistle to the Philippians, this action is called obedience.

Philippians 2:7, 8

Jesus was obedient to the Word of God. He made the Word of God his only rule for faith and practice. It is also interesting to note that after his resurrection he was still teaching his disciples what had happened from the written Word.

Luke 24:25 – 27, 44 – 46

So obviously before his arrest, Jesus knew from the written Word what was ahead of him, and he was willingly obedient to God and His Word. But Jesus knew some other things as well and these could be included in the phrase “the joy that was set before him”.

He knew that he would be raised from the dead. We have seen this in several of the records that we have already read, but let’s look once more at Matthew.

Matthew 26:31, 32

He also knew that he would be ascending to the Father.

John 14:1 – 3, 28, 29

John 16:4 – 7, 16, 28

He knew that he was the Messiah, the Christ. He knew that what he was about to endure would bridge the chasm that existed between the natural man and God.

John 14:6

Matthew 26:26 – 28

He knew that holy spirit would be given because of what he was doing.

John 14:15 – 17, 25, 26

John 15:26

John 16:7

He knew that there would be believers, even those who had never seen him.

John 17:19 – 21

John 20:29 (after his resurrection)

He knew that he would be returning to the earth and would be involved in straightening a lot of things out.

Matthew 26:63, 64

Matthew 25:31, 32

Jesus endured the cross because he knew who he was; he knew who had sent him; he knew what he was accomplishing; and he knew what was still future. He was totally confident in his Father and in his Father's Word. Now, let's go back to our initial text that gave us the title "Enduring the Cross".

Hebrews 12:1 – 3

The great cloud of witnesses is of course the example set by the Old Testament believers listed in chapter 11. All of us have weights, burdens and cares that we have. One of the real arts of living with and for God is learning how to cast our cares upon him (I Peter 5:7). It is not just ignoring burdens and cares and pretending that they don't exist. It is learning to rely upon God. And all of us have sin, an old man nature, that seems to so easily beset us. We must learn and practice reckoning the old man nature as dead (Romans 6:11).

And we run with patience the race that is set before us. We certainly make some choices in our own lives, but we don't get to choose everything that happens to us. I know that there are things that have happened in my life that weren't exactly what I would have chosen.

There are things that I wish would have been different. Probably each of you could say the same thing. But regardless of what occurs on this course that is set before us, we run it with patience. We can and do rely on God and His Word. We look to Jesus the author and finisher of faith. He ran his course, he relied upon God and His Word and God certainly did not fail him. He won't fail us either. We build the reality of God's Word into our minds so that we do not become weary and faint.