

HE CHOSE THE NAILS...Seeing Gifts in Christ's Suffering

Session 1-He Chose to be One of Us...Romans 8:3 John 1:14

The Crown of Thorns as a gift...The pain of the thorns reminds us of the sting of death because of sin. Jesus chose to be One of us to the extreme. He was willing to endure all shame, all pain, even death on behalf of our sins.

Joel 2:12-13 call for repentance which means to turn from and in our cases to turn from sin and return to the Lord. It is to make U-turn back to a point of departure and having a change, of mind and of heart.

The Crown of Thorns is a crown of pain and suffering. The actual one which Jesus wore had been twisted by Roman soldiers. And when we look at who Jesus was, the whole incident was in a sense, twisted. The Son of God suffering for sin which he did not commit.

Ponderable: How do you respond to the thought of Thorns being a gift? How will you show your regard to Jesus, the one who bore the crown for you?

HE CHOSE THE NAILS: Session 2 He Chose to Forgive Us

Colossians 2:13-14: The Gift of Nails

Nails fix things. Nails hold things together, reconcile what has been broken.

The Nails Jesus chose brings forgiveness to all who believe in him. Between his hand and the wood was a list of all sin; yours, mine, the world's. All our weaknesses, failures, misdoings, and lusts were put to death as his hands were nailed to the cross.

The Reason was: Reconciliation-To bring us back to God. To solve the sin problem and make us clean in the eyes of God. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself(II Cor. 5:18-19). The Result is: Peace with God. We choose to receive or reject this great gift.

Ponder: How does it make you feel to consider our sins, our failures, our misdoings and lusts were nailed to the cross with Jesus? How will this affect the way you live your daily life?

HE CHOSE THE NAILS Session 3: He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence...Hebrews 10:19 The Gift of His Robe: Jesus not only gave us the robe of his garments(character), he enabled us to enter into his Father's presence.

The Most Holy Place-Ancient Israel-In the Tent of Meeting and later in the Temple. It was a most sacred place covered by a veil or curtain. Only the High Priest could enter on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)once a year. That priest had to be cleansed himself or face death in the Holy Place where God dwelt.

When Jesus died, it was as a once for all Day of Atonement took place. Matthew understood this as a ripping of the veil or curtain concealing the Holy Place.(Matt. 27:50-51) By virtue of Christ's shed blood, ones who trust in him can freely experience the presence of God. Thus Jesus has not left us with an unapproachable God.Yes, God is holy. Yes, we are sinful. But Jesus, our mediator, made a way for us to no longer be estranged from our loving Creator God.

**Ponder-How do we put on the robe of Christ's character?
What enables us to live as disciples of Christ?**

**HE CHOSE THE NAILS # 4 He Chose to Love us Forever...I
John 3:16 Romans 5:8 The Cross as a gift.**

The cross is where God forgave his children without lowering his standards. The penalty for sin was laid completely on His Son. We were made holy through Christ's sacrifice.(Hebrews 10:10)

The center beam of the cross proclaims God's holiness, the crossbeam declares his love. We, through faith in Christ, experience both God's love and God's holiness. We can engrave in our hearts this truth: Jesus is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."(John 1:29)

The blood of Christ; covers our sins but best of all it takes away our sins, once and for all time. Our mistakes become lost in his perfection. This is how God loves us.

Ponder: How do you experience the holiness and love of God? Note the nearest comparable human example of love such as God has loved us. How do you regard the thought of our sins being taken away, once and for all time?

HE CHOSE THE NAILS #5 He Chose to Give Us Victory

Romans 8:37 | Corinthians 15:57 We Bring Something to the Hill-The Gift of our Participation...The disciple John was on the Hill of the Skull(Golgotha).(John 19:25-27) What did he see? He saw Rags of death. He took the mother of Jesus to be his own. He brought a level of courage mixed with great disappointment to the cross, to the hill where his Master died. But through the Rags of death John saw the power of life a few days later.(John 20:5) He would tell you God can turn any tragedy into a triumph. We must trust, wait and watch.

We bring something to the hill. We bring bad moments, bad choices, bad habits, selfish moods, white lies, binges, bigotries; all of what is not in line with godliness. We bring all our sin to the cross, owning them and having them crucified with Christ. We also bring all our worries. Our hearts need never be troubled(John 14:1-3). We can trust him and anticipate the place he is preparing for us.

Ponder: The gift of our participation underscores how little we bring to the hill/cross. Think of how marvelous is the thought of all Jesus brought to the cross on our behalf. How will our knowing this, owning this shape the way we live out our lives here awaiting the “place” which Jesus is preparing?