

## Devotions with Matt

**April 2, 2020**

This devotion was written by a group of fellow students and me a few years back as we reflected on the 7 Statements of Christ on the Cross. May they be an encouragement to you as we approach Good Friday.

### **FORGIVENESS**

#### *Prayer of Preparation*

*Heavenly Father,*

*I offer you my life today. Help me to slow down and listen to You. Please speak into my very being whatever you want me to hear today and transform me more into your likeness from our time spent together. Help me to be obedient to follow through with whatever you ask of me.*

*Amen.*

#### **Statement from the Cross #1**

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34

#### **Thoughts of a Fellow Sojourner**

Sin repels and pushes away. Forgiveness attracts and gathers. Sin destroys. It is a disease that brings death to all. Forgiveness heals and brings new life; eternal life. When Jesus said from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" he was stating the only cure for our disease of sin. It is the antithesis of sin and what reconciles back to him the things that he loves the most: us.

Sin is what caused Jesus to die alone. The soldiers mocked Jesus while he was hanging on the cross, suffering. There was no compassion in them, no love, no mercy for the One who claimed to be God. There was a crowd standing at a distance from the cross. Some in the crowd came to see if Jesus would save himself from death. Others were more sympathetic toward him, but confused as to why the Messiah had to die. They all stood at a distance and watched as Jesus slowly died. They were either too afraid or too helpless to do anything to help him. One of the criminals jeered and challenged Jesus to save himself. Everyone was at a distance from Jesus due to their sin and Jesus died alone.

After Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem just a week earlier we see the very reason he went to the cross. He looked over the ones who had shunned him and pushed him away and he says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing." In their sin they rebuffed, shunned and pushed away all attempts by God to reconcile them back to him. But God did not give up. He goes all the way to the cross so that sin is conquered and reconciliation with God is made possible.

Forgiveness is the reason Jesus came and the reason Jesus died. He did not simply die to wash away sin, but rather he died to reconcile the whole world back to him through forgiveness. Each one of us must make a decision in our own hearts about Jesus. Do we accept his forgiveness and be reconciled to the God who loves



us enough to die for us? Or, do we stay in our sin and continue to push him away? Forgiveness attracts and gathers. Sin repels and pushes away. Which do you choose today?

**Moment of Reflection**

**Take some time in silence for reflection and listen to what God wants to speak into you today.**

In Christ,

Fellow Sojourners