

## "Enduring the Cross"

The day Jesus went to the cross must have been the hardest day of His life. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to consider how Jesus endured the cross.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Tough times come to us all, and doing the will of God can sometimes be most difficult. Jesus certainly endured the harshest suffering at the cross. God's word teaches us how to live in good times and bad. It gives us hope and promise that helps us sustain our faith when the dark days come. This is why we need the Lord's wisdom to help us. This is why we go to God's word. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

I've often wondered how Jesus was able to bear all the struggle, humiliation, pain, and shame of his last hours before his death. Jesus had amazing patience, that is the "ability to endure under pressure." He was aware of His suffering and death, that it would happen at Jerusalem. He knew at Gethsemane of all the things that would take place hours later. He knew that Judas would betray Him; He knew Peter would deny him three times; He knew His disciples would scatter; He knew He would face a mockery, trials, beatings, blasphemies, scourging, crucifixion, and death. He heard the crowd call for Barrabas to be released and the cry "away with Him!" He saw Pilate wash his hands and declare Himself innocent. Jesus felt the crown of thorns upon his head, the whip on His body, the weight of the cross upon his bloodied back, the nails through His hands and feet, and the torment of the crowds at his crucifixion.

Jesus could have stopped it at any time, but He never did! He willingly suffered the worst men could do to Him and didn't even complain about it. I marvel at His love, His strength, and His willingness to do the will of His Father for you and me.

Now we offer this study, "Kneel at the Cross," free. If you'd like one of our books or a CD of this message and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew 26:51 to 54, and explore our need to be with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our reading today comes from the gospel of Matthew chapter 26 verses 51 to 54. Jesus has just finished praying at the garden of Gethsemane and the people had come to arrest Him.

"And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?"

Jesus knew that it must happen. Let's pray together. Father we're grateful that Jesus was willing to die in our stead and to do Your will. Father help us always to do Your will out of love because You have done so much for us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 26:52 to 54, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? "How then will the Scriptures be

fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" Jesus said His suffering and crucifixion must happen. The Old Testament Scriptures prophesied it.

And Jesus Himself prophesied His suffering and death. For Jesus the cross was necessary. Matthew 16:21 to 23 says, From that time Jesus Christ began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." The death of Jesus was God's will! God intended for it to happen. Peter told the Jews in Acts 2 and verse 23 that Jesus was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, (then He said) you nailed to a cross (that is Jesus) by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

When I consider all that Jesus willingly suffered and endured, I marvel from a human standpoint how He managed to remain faithful through His suffering in the trials and on the cross. Never once did He give up or give in. What were these inner sources of Jesus' strength? Where did he get the courage and the fortitude? Where did His power to endure come from? How did He have the self-discipline to do what He must and remain on the cross? Now if we can understand his sources of power and if those sources are available to us, perhaps we can win the battle of faithfulness in our own struggles.

In this brief period, I want to suggest to you three non-miraculous resources that Jesus had and that you and I can have. First, He drew assurance from the fact that He was not alone. The Lord Jesus said in John 16:32, "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." Throughout His suffering Jesus was doing the will of the Father, and the Father was with Him. He could say in John 8:29, "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." Now the Lord Jesus faithfully did the Father's will even in bearing the guilt and punishment for the sins of the world.

Peter describes what Jesus did on the cross and how we should act when we suffer unjustly. 1 Peter 2:21 to 24 says, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Jesus did not spew out hateful words or threaten those who reviled and abused Him. Now this goes against the angry human response of wanting to strike back and curse them. Rather than getting even, Jesus endured by continually "entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."

Jesus began and ended His time of suffering and the cross with prayers. He handed His troubles over to the Father. And when he was sorrowed and troubled to the point of death at Gethsemane, Jesus prayed in Luke 22:42, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." Oh, He wept loudly and He prayed fervently and ultimately determined to do the will of God. Pray when you face trouble.

As they were crucifying Him with nails through His hands and feet, Jesus was praying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". The verb here suggests that He said this more than once. He was thinking about those who were ignorantly causing His suffering and death, both the Jews who insisted and the Romans who acted. Now this prayer is answered by offering His blood, which was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Then, about the ninth hour close to His death, the Lord cried out in Matthew 27:46, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Well, this was indeed a cry of pain and suffering. The sun had darkened. Now I don't believe it was an accident that Jesus said this at this point. Jesus actually was quoting David in Psalm 22 and verse 1. Psalm 22 is the most Messianic of all the psalms. And I would urge you to read the whole psalm. David at the end of this psalm in verses 25 to 31 praises the Lord and declares His righteousness. Jesus could see the will of God being done in the cross.

Just before He died, the Lord Jesus declares in Luke 23:46, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit." Jesus died committing His spirit to the Father! He remained the Father's Son and fully committed to His will. When we suffer, we can do the same thing. 1 Peter 4 and verse 19 says, "Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

Now the second way, that Jesus was able to endure because of His consuming passion for His mission. Jesus came into this world to save men from their sins. And He said in Luke 19 verse 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Later the Lord said in Matthew 20 verses 27 and 8, "whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Paul said in 1 Timothy 1 and verse 15, that "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

While He was on the cross, Jesus showed His love for people. Jesus prayed that the Father would forgive those who were crucifying Him. The Lord Jesus was also gracious to the thief on the cross. The thief said "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And the Lord responded in Luke 23:43, "Today I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." Now while innocently hanging on the cross, Jesus cared enough about this true sinner to promise to see Him in Paradise. Jesus came to save.

Today under the new covenant, Jesus saves sinners when they respond to the gospel message in love, faith, repentance and baptism. Peter said to guilty souls at Pentecost in Acts 2:38, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Don't seek to be saved like the thief on the cross. The old covenant has passed; our salvation is in the blood of Christ shed in the new covenant. And so respond to the gospel.

I wonder sometimes, if Jesus on the cross could see the multitudes of people who would follow Him. Jesus died for people in every generation. Hebrews 12:1 and 2 says, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And I've often thought what joy was set before Him? Well the joy of people who would come to know and love Him! The joy of sinners repenting and serving Him! The joy of heaven with His loved ones! And we too can keep the joy of heaven in our hearts to strengthen us and keep us faithful!

Third, Jesus demonstrated His undying, unfailing, and stubborn love for His Father and for us. John 13:1 says, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Jesus never quit loving the Father who sent Him to the cross. Nor did Jesus stop loving the people whose sins He bore!

It almost seemed Jesus challenged the Jews to do your worst to me, and I will still love you. To His disciples He could say, "Scatter, deny me, or betray me, and I will still love you!" Jesus loved the very people who crucified Him and hurled abuse at him. He prayed for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost about His death and resurrection, the people were pierced to the heart; yet the Lord in His love still offered them forgiveness of sins! 1 Corinthians 13:7 and 8 says, love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." I tell you the love of Jesus never failed. He never gave up on us. Love means doing what is best for others at all costs—and that's what Jesus did for you and me.

Jesus took you from where you were in sin and by His blood brought you near to God. Ephesians 2:1 through 5 says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Then He says among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." Jesus loved you enough to bring you out of death to life, out of sin to righteousness, and out of wrath to the blessing of eternal life. No one has ever done so much for you.

Even to this day, Jesus is interceding for you with the Father. As Christians, yes, we still sin. We wished we didn't, but we still fall short. We still need the blood of Christ to cleanse us. 1 John 1:8 to 9 says to Christians who have already obeyed the gospel in faith and baptism, that "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, (then) He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You as a Christian may have wandered away. Did you know that you can come home? The Lord Jesus still loves you and He'll forgive you and He'll cleanse you, if you'll come back to Him. Don't wait! Don't put off coming back home. Come home to the Lord today! And do what is right. Love Him and serve Him. And don't let anything else keep you from coming back to Him. Put away those sins and love the Lord with all your heart. Let's pray together. Oh, Father help us to always to devote ourselves to You from start to finish. Father help us to never give up on You just as You've not given up on us. Help us to love You and serve You. And Father for those who've never come to You may this be the day that they come. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

The suffering of innocent Jesus bearing our sins reaches into our hearts. He endured suffering, because He loved us to the depth of His being. He loved us when we were helpless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies. He endured suffering for the people who didn't know or care, because He wanted them to be saved and know the truth. He endured suffering to bring us to God (1 Peter 3 verse 18). He endured suffering to transform our lives, so that we might leave sin and embrace righteousness.

Well, how do you respond to the cross? Does it matter? Does the love of Christ mean anything to you? It should matter. Our response to His love is to love Him. 1 John 4:19, "We love, because He first loved us." Love for Him will motivate us to leave what harms for what blesses, to leave sin for righteousness. 2 Cor. 5:14 and 15 says, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." To live for the Lord means we die to self. Paul said in Gal. 2 and verse 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Won't you become a Christian? Love and believe in the Lord Jesus. Repent, and turn away from sins that destroy. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized (that is immersed in water) in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you do, God will forgive you and make you His child!

We hope that today's study about the sacrifice of Christ has stirred you to consider the price that was paid for your soul. Now we're offering this free little book, Kneel At The Cross, and if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can also download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We've helped many. And we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So we ask that you keep searching God's Word with us and be sure and tell your friends about this program. Let them know that you're watching and encourage them to watch. And as always we can say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.