

Daily Devotional, June 16, 2021 The Greatest act of Heroism

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:17 (NIV)

There are countless stories of heroism and acts of bravery from early history up to today. Most all of them have elements of fear, bravery, the right timing and action. Some of the stories have an ending that show the ultimate sacrifice someone made on another person’s behalf. When that sacrifice is made, that final act shows the length to which that individual was willing to go for the cause or those he or she was fighting for.

These same elements can be seen in the atoning death of Christ, but on a much larger scale. It is incredible to think that He laid Himself down for a people who continually rejected Him and His message. Christ had a divine appointment – He was about His Fathers’ business up to the day of His crucifixion. Jesus repeatedly told His disciples about His death before it happened and their reactions ranged from disbelief and confusion, to Peter even saying it wouldn’t happen. The rebuke Jesus gives Peter in Matthew 16:23 reflects the gravity and seriousness that Jesus saw in His mission, Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” (NIV)

Jesus bravely set His course for Jerusalem to do what no man could do for Himself; atone for their own sin. The element of fear shows itself in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Matthew 26:38 we see our Lord say “*My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow, to the point of death.*” Jesus being fully God and fully man was enduring a grueling bout of stress and anxiety. It led to Him sweating blood, a condition called hematidrosis, where the body actually has capillaries burst near the skin in a shock like reaction that mixes blood with sweat. Some prisoners today awaiting execution endure this same condition. Think of that, common prisoners today can have the same affliction that our Savior endured in the garden while His humanity was struggling to contain His Deity. Christ, despite all that He knew was coming His way, forged ahead to keep His divine appointment with death and then resurrection.

The sacrifice that Christ carried out was baffling to his disciples and to many of those who had welcomed Him just a few days earlier crying “Hosanna!” Many of those same people cried for Barabbas to be released and not Jesus, as they expected a militarized, political Messiah to boot Rome out of Jerusalem. They were blind to the fact that Christ was offering to remove them from condemnation and to usher them into the Kingdom of God as His people. Not only did He offer that gift then, but He still offers it to us as a free gift today. Let us not be so blind, but to raise our Hosannas in thanks for the greatest gift ever.

Prayer: Eternal God of grace and compassion, I am overwhelmed that you came to earth to give your life so I could live. I give you my prayer of thankfulness for salvation from sin, and death, and hell. I praise you for coming to save our world. You, Lord God, are my strength and my song. You have given me victory from the chains that once held me down. Salvation and glory and honor belong to you. Amen.