

*“Lessons from the Road of Sorrow”*  
*Luke 23:26-34*

Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus. <sup>27</sup> And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. <sup>28</sup> But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, `Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" <sup>30</sup> "Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" <sup>31</sup> "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" <sup>32</sup> There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. <sup>33</sup> And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. (Luke 23:26-34 NKJ)

We come today in Luke to that portion in Christ’s life which is known in Latin as the *Via Dolorosa*, the “Road of Sorrows.”

What makes this road particularly difficult for our Lord is that He has already suffered.

Before He received any beating, from any soldier we know in Gethsemane He was in such agony He had sweat great drops of blood.

**<sup>44</sup> And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:44 NKJ)**

It is hard to know or keep track of how many times He was beaten and mocked, part of the difficulty I am sure they thought of the who hit you game was that many soldiers were hitting Jesus!

John tells us Pilate scourged Him and the soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head –

**NKJ John 19:1 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.**

**<sup>2</sup> And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.**

**<sup>3</sup> Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands. (John 19:1-3 NKJ)**

This is a separate beating from earlier ones and scourging was done with a whip which contained bone and metal, it was a horrible thing by itself –

Eusebius tells us about those who were scourged that they “were torn by scourges down to deep seated veins and arteries, so that the hidden contents of the recesses of their bodies, their entrails and organs, were exposed to sight” (*Ecclesiastical History*, IV, XV, 3–5).

This was likely the case with Jesus -

*I. Feel the weight of the cross, and accept it –*

**<sup>26</sup> Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus. (Luke 23:26 NKJ)**

*Why was Simon compelled to carry Jesus’ cross? The consensus of the commentators is –*

- 1. The soldiers were afraid Jesus might die before being crucified, He had already been horribly beaten – there was not likely any MERCY in this, they did not want Him to miss the worst of the PAIN -*

**<sup>NKJ</sup> Isaiah 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; (Isaiah 52:14 NKJ)**

**... His appearance will be so disfigured that he won't look like any other man. His looks will be so disfigured that he will hardly look like a human. (Isaiah 52:14 GWN) Good Word Translation**

- 2. Many see Simon’s carrying of the cross as a picture of discipleship / God providentially allowed this situation, to bolster Christ’s teaching –*

<sup>23</sup> **Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Luke 9:23 NKJ)**

<sup>27</sup> **"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:27 NKJ)**

<sup>21</sup> Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. (Mark 15:21 NKJ)

<sup>13</sup> Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. (Romans 16:13 NKJ)

NKJ **Acts 13:1** Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, **Lucius of Cyrene**, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (Act 13:1 NKJ)

3. *Others see the cross, as caused by our sin, which it was and is, Simon's feeling its weight physically, is something we all must FEEL spiritually –*

<sup>21</sup> **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2Corinthians 5:21 NKJ)**

*The idea, the question is, 'Why shouldn't Simon carry it?' 'Why should NOT you or I carry it? Every human being in the world, deserved to carry that cross MORE THAN JESUS DID!*

*II. Fear the warnings of the cross, and heed them –*

<sup>27</sup> **And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. <sup>28</sup> But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, `Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" <sup>30</sup> "Then they will begin `to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" <sup>31</sup> "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:27-31 NKJ)**

*Why sorrow? Why weeping? Not for Jesus!*

<sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrew 12:2 NKJ)

*He told them to weep for their own coming calamity! 70 AD Jerusalem would be destroyed! The women would suffer horribly! Babies die of starvation /dehydration 1st*

Over a million people were slaughtered by the Romans.<sup>1</sup>

*Yet these words point to an even greater calamity –*

*Remember Christ said –*

**"For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:27-31 NKJ)**

**Green wood** does not burn easily, Christ was *Green Wood*, because of **NO SIN!**

*DRY Wood burns quite well and will in Hell! The Book of Revelation applies similar language to the End Times and Christ's Second Coming -*

<sup>12</sup> **I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. <sup>13</sup> And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"**

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<sup>1</sup> Sproul, R. C. (1999). *A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke* (p. 408). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

(Revelation 6:12-17 NKJ)

### III. *Hear Christ's Words from the cross, and rejoice in them –*

<sup>32</sup> **There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death.**

<sup>33</sup> **And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. (Luke 23:32-34 NKJ)**

*My favorite commentator on Luke's Gospel, R. Kent Hughes, limits Jesus' "Father forgive them ... to the two Roman soldiers -*

*He writes -*

But then came a startling surprise! Jesus, gazing upon the blood-spattered soldiers, said, " 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots" (v. 34). Two things here require careful notice. First, the "them" in "forgive them" was for the Roman soldiers alone, who in all truthfulness did not know what they were doing. As David Gooding has remarked, "False sentiment must not lead us to extend the scope of the prayer beyond his intention." Secondly, Jesus did not forgive the soldiers for their sins or sinful condition. He extended specific forgiveness for a specific sin. Nevertheless, the amazing initial (and enduring) reflex of Jesus' crucified heart was to forgive. This is amazing, astounding grace!

*Please note "Jesus, gazing upon..." are only R. Kent Hughes' words, that part is not in Scripture! There is nothing in Scripture telling us certainly that Jesus was only speaking about any particular individuals when He asked His Father to forgive! I am not agreeing or disagreeing with R. Kent Hughes about the direction of those particular words from the cross!*

1. *Yet, the forgiveness won on the CROSS definitely has a wider / broader reach than just those two men!*
  - A. *It reaches back to David, in regard to sin committed with Bathsheba, the murder of Uriah, sins committed by someone who had great knowledge of God and who had benefitted from God's goodness, he (David) was one who*

knew what we was doing when he sinned. If he did not why did he murder in an attempt to hide it (from men)?

Yet, he (David) was forgiven –

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Psalm 32:1 <A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.> Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. <sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1-2 NKJ)**

<sup>11</sup> **For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it *is* great. (Psalm 25:11 NKJ)**

*B. It did reach down to Paul – Paul had as much knowledge of God and Christ, as did the religious leaders among the Jews, who led the “crucify Him” chants ... Yet he could say at the end of his life -*

<sup>15</sup> **This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. (1Timothy 1:15 NKJ)**

*C. And Paul had a call, to spread, teach, preach that forgiveness to all -*

<sup>7</sup> **In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7 NKJ)**

<sup>32</sup> **And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 NKJ)**

<sup>13</sup> **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14 NKJ)**

<sup>12</sup> **Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. (Colossians 3:12-13 NKJ)**

*D. Of course the Apostle John, the Beloved Disciple agrees with Paul –*

<sup>8</sup> **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1John 1:8-9 NKJ)**

*Be careful about limiting who God can reach with His grace and forgiveness. If the "them" in Luke 23:34 was the soldiers alone –Father forgive "them" or limited to only forgiveness for only one sin ... what does that say about the efficacy of Christ's cross in general? Other Scripture speaks to this – what is the purpose of talking about the LIMITS of forgiveness?*

<sup>5</sup> **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (Revelation 1:5 NKJ)**

*Arnold A. Brevick*