

*Morning Sermon May 3, 2015*  
*“Contemplating the Cross” Luke 23:35-43*

CONTEMPLA'TION, *n.* [L. *contemplatio.*] The act of the mind in considering with attention; meditation; study; continued attention of the mind to a particular subject.

Noah Webster's First American Dictionary

<sup>35</sup> **And the people stood looking on. (Luke 23:35 NKJ)**

*I. The people were contemplating Christ's cross –*

*What were the people doing? What were they thinking?*

*1. Stood –*

ἵστημι *histemi* {his'-tay-mee}

Meaning: 2) to stand 2a) to stand by or near 2a1) to stop, stand still, to stand immovable, stand firm 2a1a)

*2. Looking on –*

θεωρέω *theoreo* {teh-o-reh'-o}

Meaning: 1) to be a spectator, look at, behold 1a) to view attentively, take a view of, survey 1a1) to view mentally, consider 2) to see 2a) to perceive with the eyes, to enjoy the presence of one 2b) to discern, descry 2c) to ascertain, find out by seeing

*R. Kent Hughes said the people “stood mute and sympathetic”*

*R.C.H. Lenski said “this spectacle fascinated them”*

*T.C. Butler said, “they were mere onlookers, part of the audience of the theatre of death.”*

*A.T. Robertson calls them “dazed.”*

*Philip Ryken wrote “Presumably they watched the way people watch any spectacle of public suffering. Some were sympathetic, others indifferent, and still others simply curious.”*

*R.C. Sproul simply said “The people stood watching”*

*R.C. did not go beyond Scripture in his commentary!*

*H.D.M. (Henry Donald Maurice) Spence, in the Pulpit Commentary wrote a lot about what may have been in the hearts of the people as they watched Jesus' suffering -*

Ver. 35.—**And the people stood beholding.** A hush seems to have fallen over the scene. The crowd of by-standers were awed as they at first silently gazed on the dying form of the great Teacher. What memories must have surged up in the hearts of many of the gazers—memories of his parables, his mighty miracles, his words of love; memories of the raising of Lazarus, and of the day of palms! Such a silent awe-struck contemplation was dangerous, the rulers felt, so they hastened to commence their mockery—“to clear,” as Stier remarks, “the stifling air, and deafen the voice which was stirring even in themselves.” “Look now,” they would cry, “at the end of the Man who said he could do, and pretended to do, such strange, unheard-of things!” They seem soon to have induced many to join in their mocking cries and gestures, and so to break the awful silence.

*II. Their Contemplation is broken by ungodly  
commentary –*

**But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." (Luke 23:35 NKJ)**

*Sneered - ἐκμυκτηρίζω *ekmukterizo* {ek-mook-ter-id'-zo}*

**Meaning: 1) to deride by turning up the nose, to sneer at, to scoff at**

*1. Note, even the sneering of the ungodly “rulers” Sanhedrin, could not avoid glorious truth – “He saved others”*

*A. Most recently Lazarus, who they also wanted dead –*

<sup>9</sup> **Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. (John 12:9-11 NKJ)**

*B. Yet, He did SO MUCH saving of others, even the crucifiers could not avoid talking about it – “He saved others ...”*

<sup>38</sup> **"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**

<sup>39</sup> **"And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. (Act 10:38-39 NKJ)**

<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. (John 21:25 NKJ)

2. *The miracles were not enough, Jesus was correct about the hearts of these wicked men –*

<sup>19</sup> "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. (Matthew 15:19 NKJ)

3. *Cognitive dissonance –*

*"The state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change."*  
*New Oxford Dictionary*

*A good Person, the best Person is being crucified, it is in the mind of the judges "He saved others" He did what was and is good! But they have to defend their own actions in their own minds, so what is PROOF of HIS guilt? He does not save Himself, from their cruelty!*

*III. Ungodly commentary is contagious –*

<sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine,

<sup>37</sup> and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

<sup>38</sup> And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>39</sup> Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." (Luke 23:36-39 NKJ)

*Like a sick song, in a depraved musical, the Roman soldiers pick up the theme begun by the ungodly members of the Sanhedrin –*

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6 NKJ)

1. *I imagine it was not the norm for Roman soldiers to follow these Jewish leaders, but in sick sinfulness MANKIND is ONE –*

<sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

<sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." <sup>13</sup> "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; <sup>14</sup> "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> Destruction and

misery are in their ways; <sup>17</sup> And the way of peace they have not known." <sup>18</sup> "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:11-18 NKJ)

2. *The thief suffering with Christ, even joined in - :39*

3. *This was TOO SIN-FULL even for the greatest of sinners, awakened by grace ---*

*IV. In this nasty atmosphere, by God's grace, one sinner sees the truth; and is SAVED –*

<sup>40</sup> But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:40-43 NKJ)

1. *We are ALL under the SAME CONDEMNATION –*

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, (Romans 6:23 NKJ)

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (Romans 3:19 NKJ)

2. *We are "justly" under this condemnation - :41*

3. *This man did what we should ALL do in such a state, He turned to Jesus, he prayed to Jesus –*

**Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." :42**

4. *By the grace of God, and by God's Spirit He was born again, he saw the kingdom of God and Christ, which was impossible without the new birth – The thief's contemplation led to salvation, by God's Spirit he saw Christ's kingdom -*

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3 NKJ)

5. *Jesus Himself proclaims to him his certain salvation –*

." <sup>43</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43 NKJ) *Application: Look to Him, Contemplate Him, Contemplate God -*

<sup>22</sup> "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:22 NKJ) Acts 4:12; John 14:6

*Arnold A. Brevick*