

He chose the Cross for you \* Good Friday  
April 7, 2023 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

You know what I'm going to say right?

He chose the Cross for you.

As I read through the Gospel of Mark this year, it struck me again and again that there were so many times when Jesus could have said 'you know what? Forget it. If you guys aren't going to believe in Me, I'm not going to lay down my life for you.'

Mark 4, Jesus calms the storm and yet the disciples fail to believe.

Mark 7, Jesus turns some bread and fish into a feast for thousands and still they fail to believe.

Mark 8, 9 and 10 – each time, Jesus announces that He is going to go to the Cross, He is going to be betrayed into the hands of evil men, suffer and die and rise again. And yet each time, all the disciples can think about is who's going to be greatest in God's kingdom.

People don't usually die for the sake of those who don't deserve it or at least show potential. It's a wonder Jesus didn't just turn around and say 'I'm going to Hawaii.'

But He didn't. Each time His disciples got it wrong, He renewed His conviction and took another step towards His impending death in Jerusalem.

Why?

Certainly it's true that Jesus was doing this to accomplish His Father's will. In the Garden, Jesus prayed three times 'Not my will but yours be done.' Jesus clearly went to the Cross because He wanted to see the will of God fulfilled.

But what was the will of God? What did Jesus say in Mark 10? He came to be the ransom for sin. He came to deliver sinful humanity generally and He came to deliver each of US specifically.

Jesus knew that each and every one of us was held captive to sin, enslaved by our own evil thoughts and desires. We were helpless and alone, unable to do anything about the sin that oppressed us. And Jesus wasn't satisfied to leave us like that.

He chose the cross for you.

He loaded up upon His back every sin, every shameful and rebellious thing that you have ever done and will ever do and carried it to the Cross to pay its price. As Colossians 2:14 says, 'He took them away, nailing them to the cross.' He disarmed the power and authorities that held power over us and triumphed over them on the Cross.

As Galatians 2:20 says:

He loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20 NIV). He loves YOU and gave Himself for YOU.

Let's think about what that means for us. If He chose the Cross for me, to forgive my sin and give me life, what does it mean for the way I think and act?

Two ideas come to mind.

1. The fact that Jesus chose the Cross for me demonstrates His commitment to me.

1. The fact that Jesus chose the Cross for me demonstrates that He is utterly, entirely committed to me. And to you. And to you. If Jesus was thinking only of Himself, He would have taken one look at those nails and said 'No way. No way are you putting those things anywhere near me.'

But He knew He needed to endure them for me. He knew that He needed to 1. die so I could be forgiven and He knew that 2 He needed to triumph over death through resurrection to break the chains death had on us. He let them nail Him to that Cross because He knew that it was the only way that we could be saved.

Which means that He is utterly committed to you. Do you think He would have died for you if He wasn't? He IS and that means that you can trust Him with everything here and now. If He was willing to DIE for you when you were estranged from Him, why would He be any less committed to you now that you are a child of God and a brother or sister to Him? Romans 5:10 says exactly that:

10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Rom 5:10 NIV).

Romans 8:31-32 adds to that:

31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32 NIV).

Jesus chose to die on the Cross for you; there is no circumstance in which He will abandon you now.

Jesus' decision to die in my place demonstrates His commitment to me; it also calls me to be committed to Him. The fact that Jesus chose the Cross for me calls me to be committed to Him.

That's why you've heard me say 'there is no such thing as a casual Christian.' Jesus said it very clearly in Mark 8:34 – 'if anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.' Sometimes we act as though Jesus didn't really mean what He said. (But I'll let you in on a little secret: He meant it when He said it).

Which means that either 'Jesus gave His life so that you might live and now you live for Him' or you're not really following Jesus. Either you've grasped the fullness of God's love and given your life in response or you've missed the point and you're living for yourself.

There's a passage in 2 Corinthians 5 that puts it well:

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2Co 5:14-15 NIV).

If Jesus denied Himself, took up His cross and died for me, then I, having experienced His life-giving forgiveness, should deny myself, take up my cross and follow *Him*. I should make living for Him the central goal of my life. I should be just as committed to Him as He is to me.

The Cross shows us Jesus' commitment to us and calls us to be committed to Him.

It's funny how things work out. I had thought through this message (probably a couple of months ago) and then discovered that Max Lucado had actually written a book called 'He chose the nails.'<sup>i</sup> I thought 'I should pick it up and see what he says ☺ Maybe borrow some ideas.' He takes things in a slightly different direction but I do like the way that he writes. So I'm going to borrow his style as I close this message.

Come with me to Calvary. See the Son of God fixed to the Cross. See the nails holding His hands in place, the centurion guards the routes of escape.

But notice, it not is the nails keeping Him on the Cross. His are the hands which created the metal the nails are made of. They could melt at a word from the Master.

It's not the guard that's keeping Him there either. He could whisper a word and an army of angels would help Him to escape.

No, it is Jesus' own will that is keeping Him there. He knows our thoughts. He knows our faults. He knows how helpless we are before God without Him. And so He bears up under the weight of our sin and God's wrath and opens wide the gates into God's presence for us.

He is committed to you. Let that drive you closer to Him.

For He chose the cross for you.

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<sup>i</sup> Max Lucado. *He Chose the Nails* (reflecting on pp. 144-145). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.