

CHRIST'S PASSION; MAN'S FIRE

WILLIS 3/28/10

Mt26:36-46

I have entitled what I want to share today "Christ's Passion; Man's Fire." Today we enter what is historically known as "**The Passion Week.**" **Passion in that it focuses on some of the key events that reveal the heart of who Jesus is and the burden of what He came to do.**

- More than historic events, many of these demonstrations of passion serve as examples for us to be immersed in Holy Spirit fire.

The Passion Week has come to include The Last Supper, The Agony in the Garden, The Betrayal, The Arrest, The Scourging, The Crowning of the Thorns, The Carrying of the Cross, The Crucifixion and The Resurrection and Ascension.

- Though most are seen as expressions of suffering all are remembered as expressions of passion. If the betrayal of Jesus is remembered as The Passion of Jesus should not an offense to man be seen as an opportunity to burn with Holy Spirit fire?
- **It was Jesus who said "Needs be that offenses come."(Mt18:7) Every offense presented is an opportunity for us to fellowship in the passion or fire of Christ.**

With our emphasis on the desire of Jesus to immerse us in fire, I thought it only appropriate to look at The Passion of Christ and see how this same fire burned in Him. In calling this The Passion Week perhaps we get an enlarged definition of what passion really means.

- **When used in relationship to The Passion Week, passion has more to do with its Latin meaning of "suffering" that it's cultural meaning of intense emotion.**
- Understanding passion to be an overmastering emotion or conviction, it was indeed the fire of God working in Christ that allowed Him to suffer as He did.
- That same fire in God seeks to bring us into the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings that we might burn with the zeal Jesus burned with.

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Realizing Jesus was passionate about His sufferings and thoroughly resigned, we get another glimpse of just how deep and realistic His love for us really is. If we saw the same redemptive purpose in suffering that Jesus did, perhaps we wouldn't be so easily offended or quick to react. Instead of taking offense perhaps we would be quicker to take fire.

Though some will be permitted to enter the fellowship of Christ's sufferings in a deep or tragic way, **most of us will touch the sufferings of Christ more through the temptation to take offense, face betrayal, endure false accusation or experience broken relationship.**

- In response to accusation or opportunity to take offense we must remind ourselves the sufferings of Jesus are the passion of Christ. **Every time we face an opportunity to fellowship Christ in His sufferings we face an opportunity to be immersed in His fire.**
- Reject offense and you get immersed in fire. Face betrayal without retaliation and you get fired. As we fellowship His sufferings we get immersed in His power.
- Paul said in Phil 3:10 "That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings." **His Passion becomes our power. As we fellowship His sufferings we get immersed in Holy Spirit fire.**

The Passion Week is an interesting reality of contrasts. We read in Luke's account just prior to Christ's agony in the garden and the sweating drops of blood, the disciples are arguing over who will be greatest in the Kingdom.

- When the argument of greatness is over, they go with Jesus into the Garden. Three times Jesus asks them to watch and pray and three times they fall asleep instead. **Though three years with the fire it seems they had never experienced their own immersion in the fire.**
- Though three years with Jesus they were still stuck in the immersion of self. Think about it, while Jesus is discussing which one would betray Him, the disciples break out into a dispute as to which one is the greatest...meaning on one level they are all betraying Him.
- Though Jesus is in the midst of His Passion the disciples are void of theirs. So through betrayal, denial and loss the disciples are about to go through an immersion of fire that will transform them into passionate, fire breathing world changers.

The Passion of Jesus is demonstrated through the power of a life laid down. As the pattern Son we must see His passion is our fire. Christ laid His life down as an example for us to follow.

- Jn3:16 His life laid down was not a reluctant sacrifice. It was The Passion of Christ to lay his life down. **Jesus laid His life down as a final sacrifice that we might lay our lives down as a daily sacrifice.**
- In other words, His sacrifice was our pattern. In The Agony of the Garden we see The Passion of Jesus is released in the "Nevertheless." Three times Jesus asks if the cup can pass from Him but each time He says, "Nevertheless, not my will but your will be done."
- **The Passion of Jesus finds its point of authenticity in the "nevertheless." The fire of man finds its point of release in the "nevertheless."** The more resigned we become to the "nevertheless" the hotter we burn.

- The more resigned we become to the “nevertheless” the more we become like Jesus. You may not face the “nevertheless” at the point of martyrdom but you will face it at the point of offense.
- You most likely will never be scourged but how will you respond when falsely accused? You most likely will never be crucified but are you willing to carry your cross...daily?
- When the enemy screams in your ear “never mind, did God really say?” Can you hear the still small voice saying “nevertheless?”

So as we enter this Passion Week let me close by asking, **How passionate is you're “nevertheless?”** Is there a willingness in your worldview to know Jesus in the “fellowship of His sufferings?”

- Is there a capacity within you to see the link between the passion from His sufferings and the fire from our resignation?

Christ's Passion and Man's fire both are the result of a life laid down resigned to the “nevertheless” of God's will.