

Against the World
Matthew 27:41-43

Jesus was mocked. That is not a surprise to us. It was part of the path that Jesus had to walk. The ones that did the mocking had to of hurt though. The very ones who should understand who Jesus was and why he had come were doing the mocking. The religious leaders, the ones charged with faithful spiritual leadership over the people, were leading them astray with their actions. This was not a shock to Jesus, but it had to of hurt him. The very ones that He was dying to save were the ones orchestrating His death. I have had animals get tangled in fencing. They are hurt and scared. As I have gone to free them, they have lunged at me assuming I am just adding to their pain when I am actually working towards their freedom. Jesus was laboring towards the freedom of mankind from the deathly affects of sin. The world reacted and would not accept the help. They killed Him rather than accept what He had to offer. We know that through His death, Jesus conquered death for all time. The world was rejecting the very thing that would offer salvation to it! Let's not forget how quick we are to reject the very help we need. God calls us to be humble and to rely on Him and the rest of the body. We must also remember that the world is hostile to the gospel. If we are going to follow God faithfully and fulfill the Great Commission, the world will set itself against us.

Misunderstanding Grace and Favor
Matthew 27:41-43

I have worked bi-vocationally as a minister a few times in my life. I have always loved the reaction of a co-worker when they found out I was also a minister. Some suddenly acted different. Usually at some point someone would ask me to say a prayer for him or her because, "You have a direct line with the man upstairs." I assured them I had no better access than anyone who had a relationship with God. They would assure me they believed in God, but they knew I was much closer to Him because I was a minister. When possible I always tried to explain the difference between believing in God and having a relationship with Him. My appeal to God carried no more weight than any other Christians appeal to God. So many misunderstand the favor of God assuming that it means special privileges or wish granting. As Jesus was mocked and ridiculed they misunderstood God's grace. They were convinced that God would get His son out of any sticky situation. Jesus could not be the real deal because the Messiah would never endure such tragedy. God's grace did not rescue Jesus, but it did give Him the strength to endure the cross. I am guilty of praying and asking God to remove a trial, when I really need to be looking to Him for strength to live through it! God is more interested in your holiness than your comfort or happiness. Ask God today to help you understand Him more and how He is leading you through this day!

When God Disappoints Us

Matthew 27:45-46

Let's be real honest for a moment. There have been times in our lives when God has disappointed us in the moment. The dream job did not come through. We did not win the big game. The girl/guy that we were sure was right for us moved on to someone else. The house that was perfect for our family was already under contract. We pray, we look around us, and we are convinced we know what is right and best. Our prayers are turned specifically for what our heart desires in that moment. There are times in life when the sky goes dark and it seems that God has forgotten us. I had served faithfully as a volunteer at a church plant. When a position on staff was available I was convinced I was the perfect fit. In the end they hired a different volunteer and I was devastated. Jesus cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" We have all asked that question. In the moment we cannot see what is around the next corner or ten years down the road. Jesus knew why His Father had withheld His hand of protection during this time, but it didn't make it any easier. When God chooses to withhold His hand from a situation in our lives we have to trust that it is for a reason. There is something better ahead or maybe God is using that situation to grow and prepare us for what is next. We don't know because all we see is the moment. Pray and ask God to help you trust His hand of leading and to deal with disappointment in an honest and open way so that it does not hinder your walk with Him.

A Way Was Made

Matthew 27:51

After centuries of struggling to please God and failing, of trying to follow the rules and failing, of watching religious elite get to go to the holiest of places suddenly every thing changes. An earthquake happened and everything was both literally and figuratively shaken. The veil that was the divider between God and man had been torn in two. We tend to resist change. We like things a certain way. We are comfortable with the routine. This change is described as sudden. There had been plenty of warning about the change coming. They had been looking for the change for centuries. The change snuck up on them because they were looking for the wrong thing in the wrong place. They were looking for a king and they found a servant. They were looking for a military leader and they found a discipler. They were looking for someone who would take them back to remembered days of glory, but instead they found someone taking them forward in a completely different way. Jesus changed everything suddenly for the way people could relate to God. Jesus still changes things suddenly in our lives. It may not be what we expected, what we were looking for, or even what we want, but ask God to give you the favor and understanding to see the new paths of righteousness He is opening for you in the process.