

## **MOVING BEYOND THE PAST**

### **Lesson 5: The Cross**

**Introduction:** If a person wants to move beyond the past they must truly grasp the significance of what Jesus accomplished by His death on the cross. Sometimes we all have heard the story of the crucifixion so often we fail to realize what actually took place. When the Holy Spirit reveals to us the depth of Jesus' sufferings on the cross and the spiritual significance of His death, we will experience freedom from what has occurred in our past and be able to leave a life of victory. The past will not have the influence on us like it has maybe most of our life.

#### **I. Mark's account of the cross vividly emphasizes Christ's agonizing sufferings and death. (Mark 15:1-40).**

A, The cross was Christ's response to man's need of a redeeming Savior. A Savior who can not only purchase our salvation, thus redeeming us from eternal punishment, but who can also heal us of past wounds. The sins of us, and the sins of those who sinned against us, require His death.

B. The cross was a Roman form of execution symbolizing that the one who died in such a fashion was cursed. It involved tremendous suffering that was physical, emotional, and mental.

C. It should be vividly clear that Jesus sacrificial death on the cross proves that Jesus/God understands the torment of being abused. Jesus understands about being a victim because of others.

#### **II. Jesus' sufferings expressed His love and commitment to and for all mankind, regardless of race, gender, nationality, socioeconomic status, or the type of abuse a person has experienced. (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4, John 4:9-10)**

A, Consider Jesus' sufferings. Every lash he took upon his back unequivocally declares His great love to every human being that would ever live on this planet He created. Yes, He even loves those who may have harmed you, and wants to see their redemption also. Now that may be very hard for you to receive. Don't get consumed with that thought. We will cover the concept of forgiving others at a later time.

B. Look upon Jesus who bore your sins upon the cross. The sins of hate, anger, bitterness, revenge, judgment, inner vows, false guilt and condemnation- all sin. He can take all that sin out of your life.

C. It's time to radically renounce and turn away from all known sin your life if you want to walk in freedom from the past. Receive the forgiveness God has for you. One of the greatest gifts of being a believer is God's never ending desire to

forgive and cleanse the heart of a repentant sinner. To not only cleanse their heart, but to heal their heart.

### **III. Nail your sins, your wounds, your scars to the cross. Leave them there.**

A, When the devil reminds you of the pain you experienced, or reminds you how you have made bad choices in how you dealt with the pain, leave those things at the cross. Don't carry a burden that is not yours to carry. Remember:

Matthew 11:28-30

<sup>28</sup> *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*

<sup>29</sup> *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.*

<sup>30</sup> *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

1 John 1:8-10

<sup>8</sup> *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

<sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

<sup>10</sup> *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

B. Ask God to give you the help you need to be able to forgive. Remember:

Matthew 6:14-15

<sup>14</sup> *"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

<sup>15</sup> *"But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*

## **Medical Evaluation of Crucifixion, Part One**

by Dr. C. Truman Davis

Jesus physical suffering started at Gethsemane. Though very rare, the phenomenon of Hematidrosis, or bloody sweat, is well documented. This process might well produce marked weakness and possible shock.

Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiphus, the High Priest; He is spat upon and struck in the face.

In the early morning, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, Jesus is taken to Pontius Pilate and Pilate condemns Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Preparations for the scourging were carried out when the Prisoner was stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above Jesus is whipped with a flagrum. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first the thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.

The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. The Roman soldiers throw a robe across His shoulders, place a stick in His hand, and a crown made of branches covered with long thorns is pressed into His scalp. Again there is copious bleeding, the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body.

After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, the robe is torn from His back. Already having adhered to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, its removal causes excruciating pain, and almost as though He were again being whipped the wounds once more begin to bleed.

The heavy patibulum of the cross is tied across His shoulders. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders.

Simon of Cyrene is commanded to carry the cross. Jesus follows, still bleeding and sweating the cold, clammy sweat of shock, until the 650 yard journey from the fortress Antonia to Golgotha is finally completed.

Jesus quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the

wrists and deep into the wood. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when made to support the weight of the human body. Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the wrist as part of the hand.

The left foot is now pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists excruciating pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain -- the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, as the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by his arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen.

Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain where tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins...A terrible crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level; the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissue; the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.

Finally, Jesus cries, "Father! Into thy hands I commit my spirit."

The common method of ending a crucifixion was by crurifracture, the breaking of the bones of the legs. This prevented the victim from pushing himself upward; thus the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest and rapid suffocation occurred. The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that this was unnecessary.

Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart, "And immediately there came out blood and water." That is, there was an escape of water fluid from the sac surrounding the heart, giving postmortem evidence that Jesus died not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

Even if Jesus did not die from crucifixion and "giving up His spirit", he would have been dead after His side being pierced.

## **Medical Evaluation of Jesus Crucifixion, Part Two** by David Terasaka, M.D.

The procedure of crucifixion may be summarized as follows. The patibulum was put on the ground and the victim laid upon it. Nails, about 7 inches long and with a diameter of 1 cm (roughly 3/8 of an inch) were driven in the wrists. The points would go into the vicinity of the median nerve, causing shocks of pain to radiate through the arms. It was possible to place the nails between the bones so that no fractures (or broken bones) occurred. Studies have shown that nails were probably driven through the small bones of the wrist, since nails in the palms of the hand would not support the weight of a body. In ancient terminology, the wrist was considered to be part of the hand. (Davis) Standing at the crucifixion sites would be upright posts, called stipes, standing about 7 feet high (Edwards). In the center of the stipes was a crude seat, called a sedile or sedulum, which served as support for the victim. The patibulum was then lifted on to the stipes. The feet were then nailed to the stipes. To allow for this, the knees had to be bent and rotated laterally, being left in a very uncomfortable position. The titulus was hung above the victim's head.

There were several different types of crosses used during crucifixion. In Jesus' time, it was most likely that the cross used was a T shaped (or tau cross,), not the popular Latin, or t shaped cross which is accepted today (Lumpkin).

Having suffered from the beatings and flogging, Jesus suffered from severe hypovolemia from the loss of blood. The verses above describe His dehydrated state and loss of His strength.

When the cross was erected upright, there was tremendous strain put on the wrists, arms and shoulders, resulting in a dislocation of the shoulder and elbow joints (Metherall). The arms, being held up and outward, held the rib cage in a fixed end inspiratory position which made it extremely difficult to exhale, and impossible to take a full breath. The victim would only be able to take very shallow breaths. (This may explain why Jesus made very short statements while on the cross). As time passed, the muscles, from the loss of blood, lack of oxygen and the fixed position of the body, would undergo severe cramps and spasmodic contractions.

With the sin of the world upon Him, Jesus suffered spiritual death (separation from the Father). Isaiah 59:2 says that sins cause a separation from God, and that He hides His face from you so that He does not hear. The Father must turn away from His Beloved Son on the cross. For the first time, Jesus does not address God as His Father (Courson).

1. Shallowness of breathing causes small areas of lung collapse.
2. Decreased oxygen and increased carbon dioxide causes acidic conditions in the tissues.
3. Fluid builds up in the lungs. Makes situation in step 2 worse.
4. Heart is stressed and eventually fails.

The slow process of suffering and resulting death during a crucifixion may be summarized as follows:

*"...it appears likely that the mechanism of death in crucifixion was suffocation. The chain of events which ultimately led to suffocation are as follows: With the weight of the body being supported by the sedulum, the arms were pulled upward. This caused the intercostal and pectoral muscles to be stretched. Furthermore, movement of these muscles was opposed by the weight of the body. With the muscles of respiration thus stretched, the respiratory bellows became relatively fixed. As dyspnea developed and pain in the wrists and arms increased, the victim was forced to raise the body off the sedulum, thereby transferring the weight of the body to the feet. Respirations became easier, but with the weight of the body being exerted on the feet, pain in the feet and legs mounted. When the pain became unbearable, the victim again slumped down on the sedulum with the weight of the body pulling on the wrists and again stretching the intercostal muscles. Thus, the victim alternated between lifting his body off the sedulum in order to breathe and slumping down on the sedulum to relieve pain in the feet. Eventuall , he became exhausted or lapsed into unconsciousness so that he could no longer lift his body off the sedulum. In this position, with the respiratory muscles essentially paralyzed, the victim suffocated and died. (DePasquale and Burch)*

Due to the shallow breathing, the victim's lungs begin to collapse in small areas causing hypoxia and hypercarbia. A respiratory acidosis, with lack of compensation by the kidneys due to the loss of blood from the numerous beatings, resulted in an increased strain on the heart, which beats faster to compensate. Fluid builds up in the lungs. . Under the stress of hypoxia and acidosis the heart eventually fails. There are several different theories on the actual cause of death. One theory states that there was a filling of the pericardium with fluid, which put a fatal strain on the ability of the heart to pump blood (Lumpkin). Another theory states that Jesus died of cardiac rupture" (Bergsma). Another says the cause of Jesus' death *"may have been multifactorial and related primarily to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion asphyxia and perhaps acute heart failure"* (Edwards). A fatal cardiac arrhythmia may have caused the final terminal event (Johnson, Edwards).

The average time of suffering before death by crucifixion is stated to be about 2-4 days (Tenney). There are even reported cases where the victims lived for 9 days (Lipsius). Jesus died a relatively quick physical death. In fact, Pilate was surprised that He had died so soon (Mark 15:44). While many of the physical signs preceding death were present, Jesus did not die from physical causes.

Jesus **gave up His life of His own accord**. All of the final statements that Jesus makes on the cross leave one with the impression that Jesus chose His time to die. His last statement, *"Into your hands I commit my Spirit"* shows that Jesus' death occurred by giving Himself up. John's gospel records Jesus' death in this way: *"With that He bowed His head and gave up His spirit"* (John 19:30b). Matthew writes: *"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit"* (Matthew 27:50).

Earlier in Jesus' ministry, Jesus made it clear that only He has the power to lay down His life (John 10:17-18). He proved His power over death by His resurrection. Jesus gave up His life of His own accord.