



# A Walk with the Pastor to Calvary

## *21 Days of Meditations*

By Reverend Dr. Lester W. Taylor, Jr.

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### FRIDAY, APRIL 3—I CAN'T LOOK AT HIM

In 1955, a 14-year-old boy named Emmett Till from Chicago was visiting family in Mississippi. He made the deadly mistake of whistling and flirting with a white woman. Later that night, Emmett was taken against his will and brutally murdered by white men in the deep, segregated south. His body was later found in a river. When funeral arrangements were made, his mother, Mamie Till demanded an open-casket funeral because she wanted the world to see what they did to her son. His face was so damaged by the brutality, his body so mutilated by the abuse until he was hardly recognizable as a boy. Thousands were shocked at the horrific visual of this young boy's brutalized body until they turned their heads in horror.

When Jesus was arrested, he faced a night of horror and brutality, a night that would leave him virtually unrecognizable as a man. His suffering would be unimaginable. There would be a brutal whipping leaving his flesh ripped apart. There would also be a crown of plaited thorns pressed into his head causing blood to flow until it matted. Huge spikes would be driven through his wrists and feet, causing shooting pain to permeate his body. His face would also become disfigured by the brutality of the arresting soldiers.

The prophet Isaiah gave an accurate prophecy concerning the suffering of the servant. These are his words. "See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him – so marred was his appearance, beyond any human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals, so he shall startle many nations." (52:13-15) Isaiah described just how disfigured and distorted the human frame Jesus would be as a result of his suffering. This is a far cry from the beautiful pictures we see of Jesus hanging on the cross with rosy red cheeks and barely a drop of blood coming from his hands and feet. No, the image is altogether different and altogether difficult to imagine, nonetheless, look at.

But that was the price paid for our salvation. Like Emmett Till (and I am not suggesting that Emmett Till was equal to the son of God), the suffering associated with his death was astounding. People turned away their faces from Him. The brutality and defacing was staggering and breathtaking. He was hardly distinguishable as a man because he bore our afflictions and carried our diseases. The prophet continues by saying, "It was the will of God to crush Him with pain. His life was made an offering for sin." (53:10) Sin is ugly; therefore, the price that Jesus paid for our sin was also ugly. That is why salvation is not cheap, though it is free.

Last year during the Holy Week Revival, Dr. James Hall, Senior Pastor of the Triumph Baptist Church of Philadelphia gave an illustration one night at the conclusion of one of his riveting sermons. A young man had fallen in a hole and was in need of rescuing. Two men walked by and saw him in the hole, but did not help him escape. Another man came by, took a look at the man, took off his jacket and shirt, and began to climb down into the hole with the trapped man. The man confused by this gesture questioned the actions of the one who climbed into the hole with him, to which the man replied, "Sir, I've been in this hole before and I know the way out!"

My friends, Jesus' suffering was his way of getting down in the hole of sin with us, taking all that punishment that comes with sin for us, and conquering sin, death, hell and the grave just to show us how to get out of that hole! This entire scenario was a "He-Our" arrangement. While we see his suffering and even shiver at the gravity of his suffering, we must remember that He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed. He became sin so that we could become righteous.

Today as we look at Calvary, taste his suffering. Embrace the severity of his pain and remember, He did it all just for us!

#### Let Us Pray:

Father, we cannot begin to fathom the suffering Jesus Christ endured to secure our salvation. It is beyond our ability to really grasp the depth of His pain. However, we do thank you for loving us so much that you would lay upon Him our sins. Because of Jesus, our sin debt is paid in full and we are grateful. Thank you Jesus, for dying on the cross for my sin. I confess you as my Savior and Lord, Amen!

**Scriptural References:** Isaiah 52-53; Matt. 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19



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### SATURDAY, APRIL 4—THE PERFECT SACRIFICE!

In the observance of Holy Week and all that it entails, it is easy to identify with certain events that occurred during the week. The cleansing of the Temple, the Last Supper and the crucifixion are all no-brainers. They are identifiable events that are discussed in details by the gospel writers. Primarily, the Apostle Paul references these events. Peter, James and Jude either directly or indirectly allude to the story of the life of Christ, his suffering and finally his death.

However, we get stumped somewhere between Calvary and Easter Sunday morning. What happened during the interval? What was going on during those eerily silent moments? I believe this is where the Hebrew writer becomes extremely important to our thinking. The book of Hebrews is a masterful work that compares Jesus Christ to all of the Old Testament standards and concludes that He is far superior or better than whatever is mentioned. In addition, one major contribution the Hebrew writer makes is that some insights are given pertaining to what happened to Jesus after the crucifixion and before the resurrection/ascension.

Hebrews 10 speaks of the “once for all.” The key thought is that whatever Jesus did on the cross of Calvary had an eternal impact. He did it once for all. In other words, there is no need for do-overs. Jesus does not have to die multiple deaths. His shed blood was offered for our sin once for all. Verse 10 says, “And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

The writer continues by stating, “Every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sin. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sin, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since then has been waiting until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet. For by one single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies, ...”I will remember their sin and lawless deeds no more. Finally, where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.” (Vv. 10-18)

The blood that Jesus shed on Calvary has a once for all effect. Sometime between Calvary and Easter Sunday morning, Jesus took his own blood up to the Holy of Holies (9:23-29) and by His own sacrifice removed sin once for all. This means that the work of salvation is completed. It also means that His blood still has power! Furthermore, we can be assured that our salvation is full and complete, not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done for us. Jesus being the perfect high priest, upon offering himself as the prime sacrifice for sin, did something that no earthly priest has ever been able to do; He sat down! Now, please understand that one does not sit down unless the work is finished! I am grateful to report that the work is finished!

Finally, since the blood still works and his sacrifice is still good, then that means the sinner only has to be saved one time! To keep getting saved multiple times is to ignore the scripture and reject the power of his once for all sacrifice. It is equivalent to demanding that Jesus die again and again. Salvation is a one-time deal! No do-overs. We are signed, sealed and delivered by His blood! Equally true is the fact that every sin, past, present, and this covers future once for all sacrifice. It is all under the blood. However, in order to remain in fellowship (not relationship) with God, believers must confess their sin continuously, knowing that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

#### Let Us Pray:

Dear Lord, we are so grateful for Jesus the Christ who offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. It is good to know that we have a Savior who died once for all and that nothing can revoke or reverse the impact of his death on the cross of Calvary. Thank you that through His shed blood, we are redeemed, forgiven, and saved eternally, and it is through Christ our Lord’s name that we pray, Amen!

**Scriptural References:** Hebrews 9, 10; 1 John 1:9, 2:1-2



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