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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 8



HOW TO FACE YOUR GOLGOTHA

Read Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46

Allen Webster

Jesus faced the greatest test of faith in His life. He did not look forward to the events that would culminate in His own funeral.

He knew exactly what was coming. Betrayal. Shame. Torture. Trauma. Thirst. Loneliness. Death. How could He look at that and not flinch?

How do we handle the great challenges to our faith—our “Golgothas”? What happens when:

- The doctor says, “Three months, tops.”
- The dean says, “I’m sorry, but you can’t graduate till you take this course over.”
- The law intern hears, “I’m sorry, since you didn’t pass the bar we can’t use you.”
- The trooper reports, “You’ll have to wait till bail is set to get him out.”
- The funeral home phones, “When could we work out a time for you to view the body?”
- Your unwed daughter says, “My baby’s due in seven months.”

- Your boss says, “I’m sorry, but business has been off, and we have to downsize somewhere.”
- Your wife says, “I just don’t love you any more”?

Where do we turn when there’s nowhere to turn? Where do we put our feet when the rug has been jerked from under us?

Jesus left us an example the night He faced Golgotha (cf. 1 Peter 2:21–22).

JESUS SOUGHT A PLACE TO BE ALONE

Jesus was in great demand. It seemed He could never shake the crowd, for there were many coming and going. On some occasions He could not find “time to eat” (Mark 6:31). He never complained and always offered a hand to the helpless.

Still, on this night, the Great Physician’s office was closed. Publicans and sinners would have to come back tomorrow. He stepped out of the limelight and

into the moonlight to address the deep concerns in His own heart. He got out of eyesight of the multitudes and earshot of His disciples so He could get in touch with His Father.

He went deep into the bowels of Gethsemane to gather His thoughts, wrestle with God's purpose for His life, and summon strength to face the inevitable.

What is the message for today's sufferers? Take some time away from doctor's offices, business meetings, and family gatherings. Find a place to sort things out in your own mind. Spend some time in separation, meditation, and contemplation.

The first thing God told a depressed Elijah to do was to eat a good meal and get some sleep (1 Kings 19:5–8). Often, things do not look as daunting after a good night's sleep as they did after a long day's turmoil. We can handle things better if our minds and bodies are well rested.

Jesus emphasized rest—both spiritual (mental) and physical. He invited sinners to come to Him and rest (Matthew 11:28), and insisted that the harried band, “come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31). One day He will come back and grant us eternal rest (2 Thessalonians 1:7; Hebrews 4:9; Revelation 14:13).

Lesson #1: Facing Golgotha? Spend some time in Gethsemane.

JESUS SOUGHT THE COMPANY OF CLOSE FRIENDS

Friends were important to Jesus. It is interesting that twelve of the sixteen times the word *friend* is used in the New Testament, Jesus either said it or it was used in His presence. He is the “friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24), and the “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Luke 7:34).

We are not surprised to find that though Jesus sought solitude this dark night, He did not go far from His friends. He took the Eleven to the Garden and invited three close friends—Peter, James, John—into the Garden.

Jesus prayed alone, but He alternated between His Father and His friends. He wanted Peter, James, and John to stay

awake and pray with Him. No doubt part of His reason was for their benefit, protection, and training, but it is safe to say that even the Son of God wanted friends around when the night was dark.

God did not create us to be soloists either. Solomon taught his readers to pay attention to friendships, for one day they will be needed: “Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, nor go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away” (Proverbs 27:10).

Good friends make us better (Proverbs 27:17). A wise man does not keep his problems bottled up; he asks counsel of other wise men: “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established” (Proverbs 15:22).

Our friends may be unable to offer a perfect solution or even to give suitable words of comfort—Jesus' friends let Him down that night—but speaking our mind is often a relief. “A joy shared is doubled; a burden shared is halved.”

Lesson #2: Don't try to climb Golgotha by yourself.

JESUS SOUGHT COMFORT FROM HIS FATHER IN PRAYER

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed as no man had ever prayed.

He wrestled with severe mental anguish (Matthew 26:37–38). Mark says He was “troubled” (*ekthambeo*, “astonish utterly; affright”) and “deeply distressed” (*ademoneo*, “in distress of mind”) (Mark 14:33).

If you had visited that spot at daybreak, you could have found a damp place where His sweat dripped during those prayers. Many believe He prayed until His capillaries burst into His sweat glands and literally sweated blood¹ (Luke 22:44–45). If so, when you found the dampened earth, it would have been tinged red.

Think of the power of prayer. When God's child lifts his tear-stained face to heaven and says, “Father,” the God of the universe turns His head and bends His ear to listen. Imagine! What a joy to know that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). He knows (Matthew 6:8); He cares (1 Peter 5:7).

Lesson #3: Don't try to climb Golgotha on your feet. Use your knees.

Endnotes

¹A rare medical condition called bloody sweat or hematidrosis. The blood loss was minimal, but the high stress level is tremendous.





Don't Fence Me In?

The poet Coleridge was visited by a man who had a theory about raising children. He stated, "I believe children should be given a free rein to think and act and thus learn at an early age to make their own decisions. This is the only way they can grow into their full potential."

Coleridge made no comment but simply led the man to his garden. "Come see my flower garden," he said. The opinionated visitor took one look at the overgrown garden and remarked, "Why, that's nothing but a yard full of weeds."

The wise poet declared, "It used to be filled with roses, but this year I thought I'd let the garden grow as it willed without tending to it. This is the result."

Children, like gardens, will not automatically flourish. They need daily attention and care.

—Crossroads, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 23

Child psychologists discovered an interesting truth. Contemporary thought assumed that fences on playgrounds made the children feel restricted in their recreation. A consensus was reached to remove the fences so children wouldn't feel confined.

The opposite effect occurred. Researchers found that children became more inhibited with their activities. They tended to huddle toward the middle of the playground and exhibited signs of insecurity. When the fences were replaced, the children played with greater enthusiasm and freedom.

We all need boundaries—something to define the limits of safety and security.

—Hank Tate

"Do not withhold correction from a child"

PROVERBS 23:13



Parental Guidance

Peter Pan came back to the silver screen through the imaginative perspective of Steven Spielberg's *Hook*.

When Peter Pan originally opened as a play in London, author Sir J. M. Barrie found himself on the hot seat with parents. The script called for Peter to tell the Darling children they could fly if they believed strongly enough. Some children believed it and hurt themselves by leaping from high places in their attempts to fly.

Barrie placed a cautionary line in the scene and Peter's new discussion with the children included the now-famous element that they could fly after they had been sprinkled with pixie dust.

Today's children are no less confused about reality than those who tried to fly. Let's give them plenty of parental guidance—and some black and white moral guidelines.

—Today in the Word, November 1991

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Twenty-One Per Hour

Researchers in San Diego monitored ninety-five hours of weekday afternoon and Saturday morning television targeted at children.

The two-month study revealed that children are exposed to twenty-one commercials an hour.

Advertisers have secularized the concept of persistent and repetitive instruction as given in Deuteronomy 6:4–9. They are teaching our children to buy when they sit in the house and when they walk by the way and when they lie down and when they rise up.

Are we being as diligent and persistent with spiritual truth? Children do not need twenty-one sermons an hour, but they could stand a few more commercials about God from their parents. —*Houston Chronicle*

The Safest Place

Automobiles account for 20 percent of all fatal accidents, while 17 percent of fatalities occur at home. Fourteen percent happen to pedestrians on streets and sidewalks. Travel by air, rail, or water causes 16 percent of the deaths. Yet of all reported deaths, only .001 percent occur in worship services. See you Sunday!

It is a terrible thing to be grateful and have no one to thank, to be awed and have no one to worship.

—Yancey, *OpenWindows*, Vol. 5, no. 4.

For what it is worth, remember: Amateurs built the ark; professionals built the *Titanic*.

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Pray for Salvation?

Preachers sometimes invite listeners to pray something such as, “God, I am sorry I have sinned. Please forgive me and let Jesus come into my heart. Thank you for forgiving me and giving me eternal life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.” The preacher then says, “Since you have asked Christ into your life, you are now His child, and your sins are forgiven.” The problem, however, is that the promise of forgiveness is from a man, not God. God has never promised to respond to the sinner’s prayer.

Prayer is a privilege for God’s people. James said, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). Peter quoted Psalm 34:15–16, saying, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (1 Peter 3:12). Solomon warned, “One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Proverbs 28:9). The psalmist spoke of the dilemma of the sinner: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Psalm 66:18).

But what about the prayers of the publican and the Pharisee? While the Pharisee prayed “with himself,” the publican, “standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”

Jesus concluded, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18: 11, 13–14).

This does not set the pattern for sinners coming to Christ, however, because both the Pharisee and the publican were already in a covenant relationship with God

as part of His chosen people, the Jews. Both, despite their sins, had the right to pray to God.

What about Joel’s prophecy? He said, “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls” (Joel 2:32).

To “call on the name of the Lord” means to make an appeal through obedience. Saul of Tarsus spent three days in prayer and fasting, but he did not receive salvation from the Lord until he called on the Lord through obedience.

Ananias told him, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). In his baptism, he called on the name of the Lord, and his sins were washed away. He would not have been saved if he had merely prayed the sinner’s prayer and had refused to obey the Lord’s command.

Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14). This is not a blanket promise to any person, but to those who follow Him and have the right to ask things in His name, by His authority. This promise is to the children of God. In the very next verse, He puts it simply: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

The multitudes cried out at Pentecost, “What shall we do?” Peter did not respond, “Pray the sinner’s prayer,” but “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37–38). We will be saved if we do what the believers of Pentecost did. —*Bob Prichard*





What Do You Expect Out of Your Children?

School children were used for an experiment in education.

The children in three groups were equally average students. Controllers of the study made a significant change, though. They placed the three groups with three different teachers and told each teacher the status of the students.

One teacher was told her group consisted of exceptional students. Another

teacher was given average students and the third acquired slow children.

Throughout the school year each of the teachers subconsciously treated their students as they had been classified.

At the end of the year when the students were tested, the results were startling. Although they began as equals, at the end of the year each group scored as they had been classified and treated.

The exceptional students tested above average, the average scored in the middle, and the slow students ended up with below-average grades.

In essence, each student lived up to the expectations and treatment of the teachers.

What we receive from others and from life will generally be no more than what we expect or give. —Robert Logan, *Seeking, Finding, and Developing Leaders*

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 23:8

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "The Church of the Bible" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
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Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 23:6 Wisdom Speaks: 1. Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24); 2. wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:1); 3. this world (1 Corinthians 1:20); 4. Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:22); 5. God (1 Corinthians 1:30); 6. pray (James 1:5); 7. this world (1 Corinthians 2:6); 8. thoughts, thoughts (Isaiah 55:9); 9. consent (Proverbs 1:10); 10. remove (Proverbs 5:8); 11. wise, father's (Proverbs 13:1); 12. mischief (Proverbs 10:23); 13. cheek (Matthew 5:39); 14. foolishness (Proverbs 12:23); 15. true; honest; just; pure; lovely; good report (virtue; praise) (Philippians 4:8).

V. 23:7 Concerning New Testament Christianity: 1. She was found with child of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18); 2. No. The shepherds did (Luke 2:16); the wise men came when they were in a house, evidently later (Matthew 2:11); 3. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13–16); 4. Love God, love neighbor (Matthew 22:36–40); 5. Yes (John 14:15); 6. His church (Matthew 16:18); 7. No. Jesus had to drink the cup (Matthew 26:39); 8. Send the Spirit to guide them (John 16:13); 9. Repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38); 10. Jesus (Colossians 1:18); 11. No (1 Corinthians 1:10; cf. John 17:20–21); 12. Yes (Matthew 24:5–12; 1 Timothy 4:1); 13. Jesus (John 14:13); 14. Jesus (Colossians 3:17); 15. Remembrance of Jesus (Luke 22:19); 16. Jesus' body (Luke 22:19); 17. Jesus' blood (Luke 22:20); 18. Solely by New Testament (Colossians 3:17; Revelation 22:18–19); 19. Yes (1 Timothy 2:4). 20. thief (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Noah and the Flood

Directions: Read Genesis 6:1–9:29. Find your answers in the verses listed. Questions are taken from the King James Version.

1. God became angry with sinful men and gave them _____ years to live.
2. Noah found _____ in the eyes of the Lord.
3. Noah's three sons were: _____.
4. God told Noah to build the ark out of _____ wood.
5. God told Noah to put _____ on the inside and outside of the ark.
6. The size of the ark (in cubits): _____ long, _____ wide; _____ high (a cubit is about 18 inches).
7. How many windows were in the ark? _____
8. How many stories were in the ark? _____
9. How many of each kind of animal did Noah take into the ark? _____ unclean animals; _____ clean animals.
10. How many days and nights did God cause it to rain? _____
11. How old was Noah when he entered the ark? _____
12. How many men and women were in the ark? _____
13. Who shut the door of the ark? _____
14. The ark landed on which mountain? _____
15. What did the dove bring back to Noah? _____
16. How long were Noah and his family in the ark? _____
17. What did Noah do immediately after leaving the ark? _____
18. What sign did God give to Noah as a covenant that He would never again destroy the world by a flood? _____
19. Who was the first man to get drunk in the Bible? _____

STILL WORTH A LOT

A well-known speaker started off a seminar by holding up currency. In the room of 200, he asked, who would like this a twenty dollar bill? Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this."

He crumpled it. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" The same hands were up.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" He dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" he asked. Still the hands stayed up.

"My friends, we have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth twenty dollars.

"Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by bad decisions and unfortunate circumstances that come our way. We feel like we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value: dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to those who love you.

"The worth of our lives comes not in what we do or who we know, but by who we are. You are special—don't ever forget it!"

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"

GENESIS 1:27



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



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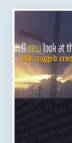
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VOLUME 23:8

All materials are completely FREE of charge (including shipping in the U.S. or Canada).



THE RICHEST MAN IN IDAHO

During the waning years of the depression in a small southeastern Idaho community, I used to stop by Mr. Miller's roadside stand for farm-fresh produce as the season made it available.

Since food and money were scarce, bartering was used extensively. One day Mr. Miller was bagging some early potatoes for me. I noticed a small boy, delicate, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. I could not help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller and the boy next to me.

"Hello, Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admiring' them peas . . . Sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, sir. Jus' admiring' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?"

"No, sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'ern with."

"Well, what have you to trade?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it."

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmm, only thing is this one is blue, and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one at home?"

"Not 'zackley . . . almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home and next trip let me look at that red marble."

"Sure will. Thanks, Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller came over and with a smile said, "There are two other boys like him in our community; all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all, and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one."

I left the stand, smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Utah but never forgot this man, the boys, or their bartering.

Several years went by, but just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community. While I was there, I learned that Mr. Miller had died.

They were having his viewing that evening, and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them.

At the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform, and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits, and white shirts—very professional looking.

They approached Mrs. Miller who was standing, smiling and composed, by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her, and moved on to the casket.

Her misty light blue eyes followed them as one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary, awkwardly wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and mentioned the story she had told me about the marbles.

Eyes glistening she led me to the casket. "Those three young men that just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size they came to pay their debt.

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho."

With gentleness she lifted her husband's lifeless fingers. Resting underneath were three magnificently shiny red marbles. If true wealth is measured, not by what you made but by what you left behind, then he could have been the richest man in Idaho.

*"Distribute to the poor,
and you will have
treasure in heaven"*

LUKE 18:22



Thoughts *from the* HEART



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