

# POST #7 - THE FATHER'S ENDURING LOVE

## A HEART PIERCED BY THORNS

MEDITATIONS BY A DAUGHTER OF THE MOTHER OF SORROWS



### 7. *The Father's Enduring Love*

#### A. *Scripture reading:*

*John* 14:8-11; 19:1-5 –

14<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’<sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.<sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.

19<sup>1</sup> Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged.<sup>2</sup> And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak,<sup>3</sup> and they came to him and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck him repeatedly.<sup>4</sup> Once more Pilate went out and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.”<sup>5</sup> So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, “Behold, the man!”

#### B. *Meditation:*

Once again, you are in Jerusalem. Less than a week ago, you stood on the edge of the city with the Master and His disciples. Only a few hours ago, in the earliest hours of the morning, you waited in fear outside the house of the high priest. Now, you are again waiting, standing among the crowd that has gathered outside the Roman judgment hall. Already, you have heard the religious leaders demand a death sentence. You heard Pilate give the people a choice, and you heard them demand the release, not of this Man, but of Barabbas.

What are you feeling as you stand there? What are your thoughts as you stand waiting? Just be there for a moment and remember. Remember the earlier cries of *Hosanna* . . . and the tears you saw on the Master's face. Remember how only a few hours ago He turned to look at you when you were hiding in the shadows. And you stand there, waiting, alone with your thoughts, your memories, and your tumbled emotions.

A commotion draws your attention. Pilate has come out on the balcony. “Ecce homo! Behold the Man!” And then you see Him—the One whom you followed for so many months, the One whose words touched your heart, the One who looked at you with so much compassion, the One who wept for this very city. You see that He has been scourged . . . but what you look at especially is His face—bruised, covered with spittle, and streaked with blood.—You see the thorns pressing into His brow. . . . And as you stand there, gazing on that Holy Face, once again the Master turns His eyes towards you . . . and looks at you with great love.

### C. *Reflection:*

Keep in mind now that image of Jesus on the morning of His Passion. Pause for a moment and remember our Lord's words to Philip: "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father." Then, as you continue to look at Jesus—standing there, mocked, scourged, and crowned with thorns—ask Him to help you in that seeing of Him to truly see (and know!) the Father.

Consider this: When God told Adam that the ground would bring forth thorns, did He not already know that one day those very thorns would be used to form a mocking crown for His Son? And since the head of Christ is God<sup>1</sup>, does not that crown of thorns only make visible what has been being done to the Father across the centuries? Yet, in spite of all, the Father's love has never diminished. Through the Old Testament prophets, the Father pleaded with His people to return. His Father-heart cried out with yearning for His sons and daughters to turn back to His love.<sup>2</sup> Now, in these last days, He has cried out through the very life of His Son.<sup>3</sup> But over and over, down through time, even to this day, the children have shouted back the defiant reply: "We do not want this man to be our king!"<sup>4</sup>

See Jesus standing there, enduring all, and see the Father's merciful love enduring to all generations. So great is the Father's love that, in order to set free and bring back His captive children, He sacrificed *more* than everything—He sacrificed even His only begotten Son. This is to love to the uttermost. This is the love in the heart of the Father. And that is the heart which cries out to the shepherds, ". . . Bring back my sons from afar, and my daughters from the end of the earth: All who are called by my name I created for my glory; I formed them, made them."<sup>5</sup>

Look on the Son, and see the Father. And know that it is the Father who said, "I will appoint for you shepherds after my own heart."<sup>6</sup> Ask yourself if you are willing to have such a heart: a heart that loves to the uttermost no matter what it suffers from those it loves. Are you willing to give more than everything for the sake of the Father's love? Are you willing to be made willing?

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<sup>1</sup> *I Corinthians* 11:3c.

<sup>2</sup> As just one example, *Jeremiah* 31:20: "Is Ephraim not my favored son, the child in whom I delight? Even though I threaten him, I must still remember him! My heart stirs for him, I must show him compassion!—oracle of the LORD."

<sup>3</sup> See *Hebrews* 1:2a.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Luke* 19:14.

<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah* 43:6b-7.

<sup>6</sup> *Jeremiah* 3:15a