**The Women At The Cross**

(Barry Hudson)

We preachers try to so impress our hearers with life-changing truth that we sometimes overstate our case. I believe this has been done when we say Jesus died all alone on the cross. Yes, He was forsaken by those materialistic-fickle Jews, by His apostles, and even by His Father as He took our iniquities upon Himself, but Jesus was not all alone.

In that poignant scene of the cross we see the faithful women in Jesus’ life. True, three of the gospels say that these women were standing at a distance, viewing the events of the cross; but **John 19:25** says they were standing by the cross.

These women of Galilee were dear friends of Jesus. They ministered to Him of their own means (**Luke 8:3**; **Mark 15:41**). Their sympathy, love and concern for Jesus in His ministry, and now in His death, must have greatly encouraged Jesus in the midst of cruel ridicule and unbelief. Salome, the mother of James and John, was at the cross. If we had been there, we might have stayed away out of bitter resentment. In **Matthew 20:20**, she requested that Jesus give her sons chief places in the kingdom. Jesus taught her and her sons how wrong their ambitions were.

Salome – the woman Jesus refused; and yet, she was there at the cross, constantly devoted to Jesus even when she didn’t get her own way. Many give up on the Lord when they don’t get their way, but Salome teaches us to trust the Savior in spite of disappointment.

Mary Magdalene was there. She had known the misery of being possessed by seven demons, but after Jesus cast them out, Mary was a new woman. His love had rescued her and her constant love for Him never died. Even at the cross, when people said He had failed and was a blasphemer she kept on loving Him as demonstrated by her return to the tomb on the day Jesus was raised from the dead. Isn’t it wonderful that the first one to see the resurrected Christ was this devoted woman disciple? Likewise, if we remain devoted to the Lord, we shall see Him in all His glory (**2 Thessalonians 1:10**).

Then there was Mary, His mother. As she stood below the cross, it may be that she thought of the day when she stood in the temple as a young mother. She and Joseph were bringing their little boy to dedicate Him to the Lord. An old man stepped out of the crowd and prophesied that this baby would be a Leader of men, a Ruler of nations. And then he said directly to Mary, “*And a sword will pierce your own soul*.” At the cross, that prophecy was fulfilled.

The sword pierced her soul as she thought back on the last three decades. She was the first one to plant a tender kiss upon His brow, but now that brow was crowned with thorns. She had held His little hands as He took His first steps, but now those hands were spiked to a cross. She had guided those little feet in the right way, but now they were nailed to a tree.

She must have remembered how He astounded the scholars of Jerusalem with His knowledge and had said to her, “… *I must be about My Father’s business*.” This was the beginning of separation. (Parents, it hurts, doesn’t it?) Mary knew that things were going to be different in the future. She didn’t always understand, but she stored the information in her heart and pondered it. At the cross, the puzzle starts to make sense and it pierced her soul.

Openly, publicly and shamefully, Jesus was crucified. And there Mary stood, feeling the sword go through her soul. She saw Jesus struggle to catch His breath, and then He breathed no more. If we could get into this mother’s heart, and picture this scene at Calvary, especially these last moments, it would make His sacrifice more real to us.

I am impressed that Mary stood silently. If anyone would know the real truth, it would be a mother. Her silence is an eloquent testimony that Jesus is God the Son come in human flesh. She unashamedly stood by His cross and loved Him until the end. How sad when Jesus provides a son for His mother! But Mary and John belonged together because in His death they were losing more than the rest. Mary was losing a son and John was losing his Master who loved him beyond the rest. Neither Mary nor John would ever have Him again as they had once known Him in tender and loving association. Jesus understood their mutual love for Him and, while dying, gave them each other.

Let us never underestimate the importance of these women. Others fled, but these devoted disciples risked everything to comfort Jesus in His sorrow. It could not have been easy to witness the agony, shame and indignity of His death, but they firmly stood there. It is one thing to stand by Jesus in His hour of joy and victory, in the day of His power when He cured diseases, cast out demons, and raised the dead. It is, however, another thing to stand by Him at the cross, when heaven seemed closed to His cries and the devil seemed so victorious. But these women stood fast. Nothing could overpower their love and sympathy for the Savior. May we ever be as devoted and unwavering in our commitment to the Lord as these women were.