



The Power of the Cross



"Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day;
Christ on the road to Calvary;
tried by sinful men, torn and beaten, then
nailed to a cross of wood.

"Oh, to see the pain written on Your face,
bearing the awesome weight of sin;
every bitter thought, every evil deed
crowning Your bloodstained brow.

"Now the daylight flees; now the ground beneath
quakes as its Maker bows His head.
Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life;
'Finished!' the victory cry!

"Oh, to see my name written in the wounds,
for through Your suffering I am free.
Death is crushed to death, life is mine to live,
won through Your selfless love!

"This the power of the cross; Son of God slain for us.
What a love, what a cost! We stand forgiven at the cross!"

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." -
2 Corinthians 5:21

"He was crucified because of weakness, but He lives because of the power of God." - 2
Corinthians 13:4

"Because I live, you will live also." - John 14:19b

There are many older hymns that speak of the crucifixion of Christ, but this more recent one written by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend is a hymn we need to learn. What makes any Christian song meaningful is a Scriptural text that is deep enough to meditate upon. Words are powerful, and music is meant to convey those ideas in such a way that we can see in our mind's eye what the writer is presenting to us, and take the message to heart. I believe the Gettys and those who work with them have mastered that art for us, to the glory of God.

You need to read all four Gospel accounts to get the whole picture of what took place on what we call "Good Friday." Begin by reading Matthew 26:47-56 about the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, then add the accounts in Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53 and John 18:2-12. Continue in each book to read about Jesus on trial before Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin, along with Peter's three denials of Christ and the remorse of Judas Iscariot that led to his suicide. Then comes the Roman trials before Pilate and Herod, who sent Jesus back to Pilate. Although he found no fault in Him, Pilate gave in to the Jewish leaders who demanded His crucifixion for claiming to be God.

Matthew and Mark relate how the Roman soldiers mocked this "King" by stripping Jesus, dressing Him in a scarlet robe, and pressing a crown of thorns upon His head. They placed a reed in His right hand and knelt down before Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on Him and began to beat Him on the head with the reed, then took off the scarlet robe and put Jesus' own garments back on, leading Him away to His death.

All four writers record the journey to Calvary and detail the 6 hours Christ hung on the cross, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. John tells us that Pilate had an inscription hung on His cross that read, "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews." The chief priests highly objected, but Pilate stood firm, saying, "What I have written I have written."

John also writes about the soldiers casting lots for Jesus's garments, and the touching moment when He asked John to care for His mother, Mary. When Jesus said, 'It is finished!', He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (John 19:30). The entire work of redemption for which Jesus had come was complete, and "paid in full." He gave up His own spirit, for no one took His life - Christ voluntarily and willingly gave it up. His lifeless body was taken by Joseph of Arimathea to be buried in his own tomb, and John adds that Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes. These two men bound Jesus's body in linen wrappings with the spices, as was the burial custom of the Jews.

We will close today's message with words written in 1946 by Ira Stanphil, inviting all to accept this amazing offer of salvation:

"The Cross upon which Jesus died is a shelter in which we abide; and its grace so free is sufficient for me, and deep is its fountain, as wide as the sea.

"There's room at the Cross for you. There's room at the Cross for you. Though millions have come, there's still room for one. Yes, there's room at the Cross for you."