

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Reading:

John 19: 25-27: ²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Reflection:

The life of Jesus is speckled with acts of a selfless kindness. He was a son who has always been able to captivate an audience and who even from a very young age was wise beyond his years, having deep and insightful conversations with the teachers in the synagogue at the tender age of 12. Oh how I remember that day as if it was yesterday. He gave his father and me quite a fright. Raising such a man was a blessing and in many instances, it came with a lot of pain and challenge.

Thinking back to hearing to one of the first miracles he ever performed I was surprised and perplexed that the son that I had carried and raised had the ability to perform such great works. Turning water into wine? I did not believe it was possible and I brushed it aside as common town gossip, but the stories kept coming of bigger, greater miracles! Raising the dead and curing leprosy? He would tell me that all of this was true but that did not make them any easier to believe.

The love and compassion that he had even for the lowliest in society is something I have never seen in all my years on this earth, nor do I expect to see it in any of the years to come. To think that I was chosen by God to bring forth HIS son into the earth is a concept I have not truly or fully grasped but the pain and the anguish I feel watching MY SON hanging on this cross is a pain I would not wish on even my worst enemy.

I tried to warn him about the consequence of his words and actions but he constantly looked at me with those kind, warm eyes and gently reminded me that His purpose on this earth was much greater and that he came forth as a vessel for the redemption of the world.

During the duration of his teachings when he refused to see or even speak to me or any of his brothers because he was interacting with the crowds of people that had gathered to meet him I felt the pain of rejection. I remember distinctly the heat of the day the first time it happened and the size of the crowd. Oh and what a crowd had gathered. All the jostling and pushing, I remember it like it was yesterday. I had sent Thomas in to call him for me and the response I heard was one I will never forget all of my days. How could he ask who I am? Me? Who raised him? Me, who fed and clothed him? His brothers who he ran around with all those years? To ask who we were? To be demoted to another face in the crowd? I'll never understand

In that moment I felt pain but the duration of the trial and the execution have caused a greater pain than I thought I could ever feel, and it makes me question what the angel Gabriel meant when he said I am "highly-favoured." The circumstance I find myself in do not feel like favour, and if this is the favour of God, I wish it be removed from me. This cannot be described better than through the word punishment, only that word describes the pain I feel watching my son hang on that cross.

I guess I will never fully understand Gods plan for me, or the faith that my son has for the will of his heavenly Father but I will rest in the knowledge that this is nothing but the will of God. Even at his death, my son has showed compassion towards me, giving me another son to love and care for. The way he lived his life was nothing short of a true indication of the love of God.

Many of us today may find ourselves in a situation similar situation to that of Mary. We read the scriptures and we read of God's love for his people. We also read of the miracles that Jesus performed but we may not fully grasp how a man who was hated by so many was still able to show unbounding love or how a man who was always on the receiving end of so many insults was capable of what can only be described as a superhuman level of compassion.

Our scripture reading and reflection illustrate that even up to the very end, Jesus did his best to take care of all of those he loved. Even though he knew he would be raised from the dead, he was so in tune with our human nature, and that he ensured that his mother's primary needs were taken care of.

Mary and his brothers may not have been aware of the true meaning of the words spoken in the passage found in Mark 3:31-35, when he refused to see them when he was preaching. At best, they may have been perplexed, and Mary distraught, to hear him say the words "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" His love and compassion shine through when he goes onto to tell all those who are with him that "Whoever does God's will is my brother, sister and mother." Mary may have been too hurt and anguished to hear this further teaching but we must guard against letting our pain cloud our view of the love of God. Even in moments when we may feel rejected, or unwanted, God's plan for our life is much bigger. He has a much bigger hope and vision for what he wants us to achieve in life, we must always be willing to open up our hearts and listen.

These acts by Jesus throughout his life and teaching show us and remind us that even though, like Mary, we may hold our biological family close to our hearts, but as Christians and children of God, our Family extends beyond a bloodline. Jesus' act of giving a son to Mary even whilst on the brink of death illustrates to us that we should be willing and able to take one another in and love one another as we would love our own families, no matter how difficult the situation may seem.

May we live by His example – an example he carried throughout his life and up to the very end.

Prayer:

Dear Lord,

We pray that we may be able to approach each interaction that we have with our family in Christ with love and compassion. We pray that you may open our hearts and minds to your word and your purpose for us on this earth and to allow ourselves to be the vessels through which you extend your love into the world. In the name of Christ Jesus, we pray.

Amen