

The Crucifixion

[Mark 15:22-34](#)



In our study this morning and for the next several weeks, we are going to be studying the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm sure that you all are aware that the word Gospel means: "good news." But what exactly is the good news, what is the Gospel?

Where does Paul answer this question? In what text does Paul tell us what the Gospel is?

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NASB)



The Gospel is the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners. We will be looking at these for the next several weeks.

In our last study in Mark we saw Jesus on the road of suffering from the [Praetorium](#) to the cross:

And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified. (Mark 15:15 NASB)

"Having Jesus scourged"—The reality is that many people died in the scourging; they didn't even make it to the cross. It was an absolutely horrid torture. Jesus had just endured this whipping, and now, in this bloody beaten state, He is taken into the palace where He is mocked, spit upon, and beaten. From here they take Jesus out to crucify Him.

"He delivered Him to be crucified"—This was not man exerting authority over God, but God the Son giving Himself into the hands of sinful men to carry out the eternal counsels of the Godhead (cf. [Acts 4:24-28](#)).

The crucifixion process would typically begin by a preliminary scourging, such as that suffered by our Lord. Many were unconscious before this ordeal ended; some even died. If the criminal survived his scourging, he was forced to carry his own cross to the place of the crucifixion by the longest possible route. This served to humiliate the wrongdoer and to caution those who witnessed his punishment. You must remember that Jesus was already a bloody pulp by the time He reached Golgotha.

And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. (Mark 15:22 NASB)

Let's talk for a minute about Golgotha. Was it on a hill? The opening verse of the Hymn, ["The Old Rugged](#)

Cross” states:

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame; And I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.

Was Golgotha on a hill? Tradition of both hymns and paintings often depict the place of the crucifixion as on a hill top. But that would be contrary to Roman thinking. The Romans put temples, homes, places of honor on the tops of hills, not people condemned to die. There is no mention in the Gospels of Jesus being crucified on a hill. You might be thinking, “Is that a big deal?” Not really! But it is a big deal that we believe things are Biblical that are not in the Bible but are taught from tradition. Let’s make sure that the things we believe are rooted in the Scriptures.

There is much disagreement about the site of Golgotha. Scriptures indicate that it was outside the city (Hebrews 13:12) but close to it (John 19:20), probably along some public thoroughfare (Matthew 27:39) as well as being visible from afar (Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49). Two possible locations are held to be most probable:

Church of the Holy Sepulchre; a site within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, not too far from the supposed site of Jesus' tomb. This site has the support of church tradition going back to Eusebius in the fourth century. According to archeological studies in the 1960s, the location would have been well outside the city walls, which is also according to Josephus' description of the city's fortifications. Prior to the city's expansion, it was a quarry into which a number of tombs had been cut.

"Gordon's Calvary"; a prominent, rounded, grassy hill above the so-called "Grotto of Jeremiah," northeast of the modern Damascus Gate. It is sometimes called "Gordon's Calvary," after famous British General Charles George Gordon (1833-1885), an early advocate of the site. Though it has some resemblance to a skull, the "eyeholes" and rounded top are due to artificial excavations going back a couple of centuries and are not ancient.

We have to wonder why the site of Golgotha has become so important; after all the effect of the crucifixion isn’t experienced by individuals when they manage to arrive at the authentic site and avail themselves of the presence of God there, but is experienced when the truth of the Gospel is believed wherever they are. The exact location of Golgotha isn't important, but what happened there, Christ’s substitutionary death for mankind, is of vital importance.

The word “skull” is misleading and is the translation of the Greek word kranion from which we get cranium. In Hebrew and Greek the meaning of “skull” etymologically was: *“roundness and smoothness.”* What you would expect to find if you visited the site in the first century, then, would have been a bare expanse of rock which resembled the top of a person’s skull.

And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it. (Mark 15:23 NASB)

Ancient Jewish writings document that some of the women of Jerusalem, out of compassion for those being crucified, prepared a mixture of myrrh and wine. This drug would serve to dull the senses of the dying man and ease some of the pain.

The Talmud mentions this custom in Sanh. 43a: *“When one is led out to execution, he is given a goblet of wine containing a grain of frankincense, in order to benumb his senses, for it is written, Give strong drink*

unto him that is ready to perish and wine unto bitter in soul.”

Many commentators see this as what is happening here; Jewish women offering an anesthetic to Jesus. I don't think this is what is happening here for three reasons:

1. Notice in the text it says, “*They tried to give him wine mixed with myrrh.*” If you go back in the text you see that the antecedent of “they” is the Roman soldiers ([Mark 15:16](#)).
2. If this was a custom, Jesus would have known about it and would not have needed to taste it:

they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. (Matthew 27:34 NASB)

3. The inspired writer, Luke, tells us that the soldiers offered Jesus sour wine to mock Him:

And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, (Luke 23:36 NASB)

For these reasons it seems better to take the mixed wine as being part of the soldiers' mockery of Jesus rather than something which they're passing on to the victim to ease His pain. Even so, when Jesus realizes what the substance is, He refuses to drink it.

THE CRUCIFIXION

And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. (Mark 15:24 NASB)

Mark captured this truth in the simple words, “***They crucified Him....***” It's interesting to note that Mark does not labor over the physical suffering of the cross. But the first readers would have been very familiar with what that meant. We, on the other hand, are not, so I would like to read you a [medical description](#) of the suffering of the cross:

Simon is ordered to place the crossbeam on the ground, and Jesus is quickly thrown backwards with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives the heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The crossbeam is then lifted in place at the top of the vertical beam... The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails and the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves.

As he pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet. At this point, another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward...Air can be

drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one small breath. Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen...

*Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart... It is now almost over—the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level—the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues—the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air... The body of Jesus is now in extremis, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues... His mission of atonement has been completed. Finally He can allow His body to die. (C. Truman Davis, “The Crucifixion of Jesus. The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View,” *Arizona Medicine* 22, no. 3 March 1965: 186-87 as quoted in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary Vol. 8*, ed. by Frank Gaebelien ([1984] pp. 779-80.)*

A healthy man could live for several days on such a cross before he expired from hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and madness. It was a slow agonizing death, usually as a result of asphyxiation. If the soldiers wanted to speed the process up, they broke the victim's legs to prevent ease of breathing.

A young crucified man whose body was discovered near Jerusalem at Ras el-Masaref was found to have been nailed by his arms and had a nail driven through his feet. A ledge of wood called the saddle projected beneath the body which helped to partly support the weight so that the nails did not tear the hands free.

Klauaner, the Jewish writer, writing of crucifixion says, “*Crucifixion is the most terrible and cruel death which man has ever devised for taking vengeance on his fellow-men.*” [Cicero](#) (106-43 B.C.), a Roman author, said about crucifixion: “*Even the mere word, cross, must remain far not only from the lips of the citizens of Rome, but also from their thoughts, their eyes, their ears.*” He elsewhere conveys his opinion that crucifixion was the grossest, cruelest, or most hideous manner of execution. One of the privileges of being a Roman citizen was that you were exempted from the cruelty of crucifixion. They reserved it only for non-Roman citizens. Tacitus called it, “*A torture only fit for slaves.*”

Crucifixion originated in Persia; and its origin came from the fact that the earth was considered to be sacred to [Ormuzd](#) the god, and the criminal was lifted up from it that he might not defile the earth, which was the god’s property. From Persia crucifixion passed to Carthage in North Africa; and it was then from Carthage that Rome learned it, although the Romans kept it exclusively for rebels, runaway slaves, and the lowest type of criminal.

The cross is an instrument of death. We could liken it to any of the instruments of death used throughout the centuries. Whether you speak of the heavy axe of the executioner, the hangman’s noose, the guillotine, the gas chamber, or the electric chair, you are speaking of only one thing—of death by execution.

But in our culture the cross is a religious symbol. Around the necks of hundreds of thousands in our society today are crosses of gold and silver. Many of them are beautifully decorated with precious stones—sapphires, rubies and diamonds. The people who wear them, in the majority, blissfully go on their way without even the vaguest understanding of the meaning of the true cross. The cross has merely become another item of jewelry. Yet, there were no jewels in the cross that executed our Lord Jesus. Our culture

has lost its understanding of the cross. What does the cross mean to you? Do you understand the *reason* for the cross and its *necessity* for the salvation of sinners? It is only in the cross of Jesus Christ that sinners can find refuge from the judgment of God.

There was no other way for the salvation of sinners; not by religious observance, not by moral living, not by professions, not by penance. The only way for the salvation of sinners was by Jesus Christ bearing His cross to Calvary to die as an atoning sacrifice.

All of our guilt before God as sinners was transferred to Jesus so that He might bear the judgment of God for us. Just as the high priest would lay his hands upon a lamb to transfer his guilt and the guilt of the people to the lamb before it was sacrificed as an atonement for sin, even so Jesus Christ received the transfer of our guilt as He atoned for our sin:

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

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24 NASB)

Please notice ***“He bore our sins”*** this is substitution, He died for us. In God the Father's eyes, as Jesus became our substitute, He was ***“smitten of God and afflicted,”*** so that Isaiah could prophecy concerning Him:

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4 NASB)

All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. (Isaiah 53:6 NASB)

But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. (Isaiah 53:10 NASB)

Once our iniquity had fallen upon Jesus Christ, the justice of God demanded that He bear the full weight of divine judgment against sinners. The language of the whole Bible in regard to sacrifices and particularly in regard to Christ's death is that it is substitutionary. The animals that were offered sacrificially upon the altar in ancient Israel's temple had no sin of their own. They were substitutes that pointed to the only sufficient Substitute, Jesus Christ. It was necessary for a sacrifice to bear the judgment of God's justice so that He might be just in giving life to the sinner. Paul puts it this way:

being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:24-26 NASB)

The amazing message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that it was my sins and your sins that brought our

great Substitute to the cross. There the justice of God was settled for eternity! We cannot add one drop to our salvation. We cannot make any contribution to our redemption through the efforts of our hands. The full measure of God's demand for justice was met in Jesus Christ at the cross. Apart from His substitutionary work on the cross, we must face all of the wrath and judgment of God toward sinners.

Our only hope before a just God, whose character of justice would be the same even if He had never created man or angels, is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was crucified, a double transaction of righteousness occurred through our Substitute. The righteous judgment of God was satisfied through the bloody death of Christ. Now all the guilt that you have before God has been washed away in His death. God's demand for judgment was met in the Person of His Son. But you still need to be clothed in righteousness to stand before God. You cannot meet Him clothed by your own feeble efforts of righteousness. So Jesus Christ has become the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes ([Rom 10:4](#)). His righteousness has been imputed to those who are in Christ. He obeyed the Law on our behalf so that all of the righteousness that He accrued by His perfect, sufficient obedience, has now been placed to our accounts. We have a right standing with God, because we stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ! No wonder Paul could write:

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." (1 Corinthians 1:30-31 NASB)

Because of “the Cross of Christ,” our lives can have hope. Because of “the Cross of Christ,” we can experience forgiveness. Because of “the Cross of Christ,” our lives can find real meaning. Because of “the Cross of Christ,” we can be made whole. In “the Cross” there is healing. In “the Cross” there is deliverance. In “the Cross” there is power. What does “the Cross” mean to you? How does your gratitude for what Christ has done for you impact your daily living?

There is so much theology, so much that daily it touches our lives in the three words that Mark uses, ***“They crucified Him.”***

And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. (Mark 15:24 NASB)

Jesus’ possessions would probably consist of the sandals, the girdle, the turban, the inner robe and the outer robe. This passage is worded to bring to mind the prophecy of Psalm 22, which it fulfills:

For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. (Psalms 22:16-18 NASB)

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest proofs that this book was written by God. There are over 300 prophecies that were literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. What are the chances that so many prophecies could all come true in the life of one man? Peter Stoner in his book, *Science Speaks*, says, “... *the probability that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled just eight of the prophecies is 1 in 10¹⁷. That's 1 with 17 zeros after it.*”

In order to comprehend this, imagine taking 10¹⁷ silver dollars and laying them on the face of the state of Texas. They will cover the entire state two feet deep. Then mark one of the silver dollars and somehow stir

the whole pile thoroughly, all over the state. Put on a blindfold, travel as far as you wish, and on the first try, pick up the marked silver dollar. The chance of that happening is the same as the chance of eight messianic prophecies coming true in any one man.

And remember, that's just for eight of the 300 that have been fulfilled. And that's why one researcher writes, *"God designed fulfilled prophecy to be an open demonstration of the divine origin of the Scriptures."*

Mark goes on in our text to say:

And it was the third hour when they crucified Him. (Mark 15:25 NASB)

The third hour would be roughly nine o'clock in the morning, reckoning twelve hours in the day from dawn, but time was not accurately calculated, and he probably meant "about three hours had passed since dawn and it was mid-morning." More important to him was probably the significance of the number **three**. It was the "third" hour, the set and complete period determined by God. Three is the number of divine perfection. The Trinity consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The sixth hour and the ninth hour, also prominent, further stress the same idea rising in multiples of three, while the three sets of three confirm the completeness of what was accomplished here.

And the inscription of the charge against Him read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Mark 15:26 NASB)

This superscription, written in black letters on a board smeared with white gypsum, named the criminal and what he was accused of, and would have been carried in front of Him on the way to the cross, and, in accordance with Roman custom, was now displayed for all to see.

Matthew and John add His name, Jesus, and John adds that the sign stated that He was from Nazareth. John tells us that it was written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The three languages express to us that His death was not just for the Jews who spoke Hebrew. His death was God's provision of salvation for all types of men. The Latin language was the tongue of Rome, while the Greek language was the tongue of the old Greek empire and the rest of the civilized world. Jesus did not just die for Israel, but for the world! John expressed this beautifully in:

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."¹⁰ "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10 NASB)

While the Jews thought that they were the only people of God, Pilate delivered a message that they needed to see. God's interest is not just in one race of people on the earth. He is the God of the world. He has taken on the salvation of sinners from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation through the atoning death of His Son.

And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. (Mark 15:27 NASB)

The robbers may well have been two insurrectionists who had committed murder along with Barabbas. Luke tells us the whole story about these two robbers. Matthew and Mark, both tell us that at the beginning both mocked and ridiculed the Lord Jesus.

All the Gospels, including John, stress that Jesus was in the middle between two robbers. It identified Him as one of them. Now notice the next verse:

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with transgressors."
(Mark 15:28 NASB)

Notice that it is in brackets. The NIV and several other translations do not have this verse. The early manuscripts do not contain this verse. This verse is probably an addition by a copyist. It may not be inspired, but it is certainly true because verse 27 is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. I'm sure Mark had Isaiah in mind as he penned this, because he relies heavily on Isaiah:

Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12 NASB)

Again we see prophecy fulfilled in the death of Christ.

And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,³⁰ save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" (Mark 15:29-30 NASB)

The crosses would be in a public place by the roadside so that those who passed by would see them clearly and take warning. The fact that a mere passerby could say such a thing shows how widely the notion had spread that Jesus had said, "I will destroy the temple and build it in three days." Jesus never said this, what He said was:

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
(John 2:19 NASB)

He wasn't speaking of the temple in Jerusalem, but of His body. He was predicting His resurrection.

As if it isn't enough to suffer the agony of the cross, there is this constant barrage of mocking and challenging Him to come down off the cross:

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking Him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself." (Mark 15:31 NASB)

This refers to the Sanhedrin; these were the leaders of God's people, the men who were charged with the oversight and spiritual welfare of the nation of Israel. How "out of character" they were, railing at Jesus, mocking Him, and daring Him to come down. Nearly always, at executions, the clergy is present, but with a view to ministering to the one being put to death. Not so here. They were adding to His suffering, not seeking to minister to Him.

Ironically their mocking was true, He'd saved others, but He could not save Himself from the cross because of His great love for mankind. If He'd taken the option of self-deliverance, mankind would never have had the opportunity to be reconciled back into a full relationship with God.

"Let this Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" And those who were crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him. (Mark 15:32 NASB)

In three days time His power would be demonstrated, and they would still not believe.

And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. (Mark 15:33 NASB)

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak of a period of darkness as Jesus hung on the cross, which occurred between the sixth and ninth hours.

I believe that this darkness should be taken not only as literal but also as spiritual; a time when the judgment of God, the Day of the Lord, was being poured out upon Jesus on the cross, when God the Father withdrew in His entirety from the Son that He experiences the full weight of what it means to experience separation from God and the judgment of the sins of mankind.

The **"Day of the Lord"** can be used to refer to many different concepts but it primarily has the wrath of God intricately bound up with whatever event it's referring to. The "Day of the Lord" in the Scripture was referred to occasionally as a day of darkness ([Is 13:10-11](#), [Amos 5:18-20](#), [Zeph 1:14-16](#), [Joel 2:31](#)), a day when God's judgment was poured out upon men in the form of His wrath.

The physical sufferings which He'd already endured paled into insignificance before what was to take place between the sixth and ninth hours when He would experience what every man and woman on this earth has deserved:

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Mark 15:34 NASB)

This is the only time throughout His entire life when Jesus speaks directly to the Father, but addresses Him impersonally as "God."

Here was God the Son, the Word made Flesh. He was one with God. There had never been a time in all of history, there had never been one instant, not one billionth of a second when the Father and the Son had ever been separated. From before the foundation of the world, Jesus had enjoyed perfect and unbroken communion with His Father. But now, because He had taken our place on the cross, and had borne in His body the sin of all mankind, the Father, too holy to look upon sin, had turned the countenance of His glory away from His Son. Jesus experienced spiritual death; He was separated from the Father. Jesus died physically and spiritually for us.

His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death(s), Because

He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. (Isaiah 53:9 NASB)

Here Isaiah uses the intensive plural of “deaths.” We have spiritual life because Jesus endured a spiritual death, a separation from the Father as the sins of the human race were poured out upon Christ.

On the cross we see not only the measure of the love of God, but also of divine judgment. For any who would think that God might wink at sin, let him consider the price that was paid, and by God Himself in the person of the Son. If God did not hesitate to punish His own Son with such severity, what kind of punishment do you and I deserve?

How could Jesus do this? How could He endure all this physical pain and spiritual pain in being separated from His Father? The writer of Hebrews tells us:

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB)

The author says, ***“let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...”*** This is addressed to believers, and is a call to **discipleship**. The Biblical standard for discipleship for holy living is a race; ***“Run the race.”*** The Greek word translated race is agon from which we get our word agony, it means: ***“a contest, conflict, or fight.”*** The Christian life is not a thing of passive luxury, but is demanding, sometimes grueling and agonizing, and requires our utmost in self-discipline, determination, and perseverance.

There is always a temptation to give up when things get difficult. What they needed was **endurance**; this is from the Greek word hupomone, which means: ***“to remain under pressure or trials”***; it means continuing even when everything inside you wants to quit. How do we do this?

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus”—this is a present tense; we are to always be looking unto Jesus. Jesus lived His life in total dependence upon the Father. The whole life of Jesus was characterized by unbroken and unquestioning faith in His Father, and never more so than at the cross.

“Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame”—The word “for” is anti, which sometimes has a meaning like: ***“for the sake of.”*** So with this understanding of the term, the meaning is that Jesus went to the cross because of the joy it would bring. He looked right through the cross to the coming joy, the joy of bringing salvation to those He loves, and the joy of exaltation.

So as we run this race of life, we are to be continually looking to Jesus as our example and our strength. We are to live in **total dependence upon Him**. The author is concerned that his readers might give up so he tells them to:

For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:3 NASB)

When you want to quit, “consider Him.” This is from the Greek word analogizomai, which means: “to consider by way of comparison.” Nothing is more natural for a person than to overestimate the severity of

his trials. Compare your suffering for His sake with His suffering for you, and you will be ashamed of yourself for ever complaining. Look at all He went through for you and be encouraged in what you're going through.

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