


Passion of Christ Study

Part Four

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INTRODUCTION



In the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, we see the portrayal of three of the disciples of Jesus; Peter, the disciple who denied and abandoned Jesus; Judas, who betrayed Jesus; and John, who followed Him all the way to the cross. Of the twelve hand-picked disciples of the Lord, only John, believed to be one of the youngest of the disciples, is mentioned in Scripture as being present at the Lord's death. What can we learn from this faithful follower of the Lord? What was it about his relationship with Jesus that caused such dedication? The answer is found in the Gospel of John, the gospel of love.

PART 4

LOVE

John 17:19-20, 26 and John 15:12-14

“This is My commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that is to lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you” (John 15:12-14 NASB).

The disciple John is credited with writing four books in the New Testament. One of the themes that unify these writings is the topic of love.

In chapters 13 through 21 of the Gospel of John we find a description of the passion of Christ. If you have not read these chapters, I strongly urge you to do so. Let's focus on a portion of chapter 17.

In this chapter, John records the prayer that Jesus prayed just before going to the cross. Not many of the prayers of Christ are so clearly recorded, so this portion of Scripture is worth reviewing. It is also one of my favorite passages. Here we find what was on the heart of the Lord only hours before His death. This is what He was thinking about, not Himself, but the disciples and all of us.

“For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their words; ...and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them and, I in them” (John 17: 19-20, 26 NASB).

John heard these words when Jesus prayed and he knew that everything Jesus was about to face was for this one purpose, that the love God the Father had for Jesus could be extended to him. He knew what Jesus faced in those dark hours was for his sake.

In the movie, we see flashback scenes that include what is known as the last supper. We see the Lord take a piece of bread and offer it to His disciples as His body, broken for them. We see Him take a cup and offer it to them as His blood poured out for them. In the film, we see these images as they pass through John's mind. He knows that the suffering he is watching was done for one reason--love.

And that same love has been extended to you and me. This prayer includes all of us who have come to faith in Christ through the words of His disciples recorded in the Bible. That is why the cross of Jesus can be personally applied to each of our lives. He died for us, each one of us, because He loved us. And the greatest expression of that love was His death on the cross.

John was witness to that expression of love. He went every step with Jesus. He watched every drop of blood fall from His body. He heard every word, listened to His last breath. John knew the full depth of the love Jesus had for each of us. My prayer is that as you watched the movie *The Passion of the Christ* you have come to understand its depths as well.

So, what is our response to this great love? We love Jesus, but He asked more of us. He asked that we love each other. He said we should lay down our lives for each other. When others treat us badly, what should be our response? Jesus gave us one command, love each other. That means I have to sometimes put aside my plans and expectations in favor of others. Sometimes I have to give up my way of doing things in order to allow others to have their way. I lay down that little part of my life. And sometimes that is very hard. But compared to what He did for me, it is a small thing He has asked.

REMEMBER IT

Review the passage of scripture and answer these questions:

1. In John 17 we find a prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples and also for those who would _____ in Him through their _____.
2. Jesus wanted the love that the Father had for Him to be ____ us.
3. Jesus commanded us to _____ one another.
4. Jesus said the greatest expression of love was to _____
_____ _____ for your friends.

APPLY IT

How do you define love? Do you love only those who love you? Do you love others because of what they do for you? Jesus loved us unconditionally; He loved us when we did nothing for Him. Have you received His love unconditionally? Have you ever loved anyone unconditionally? You can not love others until you have received His love yourself. Purpose today to love others with the love Jesus has shown you. Remember the passion of the Lord and that He died for all, even those we find hard to love.

EXPRESS IT

Lord, thank You for showing me what true love is all about. I understand that You gave up Your life, that You poured out Your blood because You loved me. Help me to understand that love more fully and to express that love to others.