



A Walk To The Cross

SNOW, MY FOOTSTEPS and EASTER

Imagine with me that the snow is still on the ground. In fact, that a fresh snow of 6 inches has fallen overnight. Since school is cancelled, my Hope and I go outside to play. One of the games we play is "Follow-the-Leader" and I am the leader. Taking long strides in the fresh snow, I ask her to follow in my footsteps, to put her feet in my footprints. The result is . . . she could not do it. My strides were too long.

This picture you just imagined is why we celebrate Easter.

Romans 5:6 says, "When we were still *powerless*, . . ." Our snow picture is of our powerlessness. Sin has affected us to the extent that we "can't do it." We cannot achieve our own righteousness. We cannot be holy. We are fundamentally at odds with God.

J.I. Packer has said, "Total depravity means not that at every point man is as bad as he could be, but that at no point is he as good as he should be." We are stricken by "total depravity". God's strides are too long for us.

But Romans 5:6 goes on to say, "When we were still powerless, *Christ died for the ungodly.*" Romans 5:8 continues, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Italics added)

God's compassion became the antidote to our depravity. Christ died for us – the powerless, the ungodly, the sinner. In our powerlessness, God had to do something, because we could not.

He did. On the Cross – He died. On Easter – He rose from the dead.

Now imagine with me again the fresh fallen snow, and I am playing follow the leader with my daughter Hope. But this time, after asking her to put her feet in my footsteps, I pick her up, put her feet on top of mine and retrace my steps. This time she does not miss a step.

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SERMON SERIES *pastor Joel Sutton*

Continuing "The Passion: A Walk to the Cross"

April 4 - Jesus at His Trials

April 9 - Jesus on the Cross (Good Friday)

April 11- Jesus' Resurrection (Easter)

New Sermon Series: Families Under Pressure

April 18 – Families Under Pressure: The Pressure of a Happy Marriage

April 25 - Families Under Pressure: The Pressure of Good Sex

May 2 – Families Under Pressure: The Pressure of Divorce

May 9 – Families Under Pressure: The Pressure of Motherhood

May 16 – Families Under Pressure: The Pressure of Fatherhood

BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE FOR US, WHILE WE WERE SINNERS CHRIST DIED FOR US.

FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE PURPOSE STATEMENT



WE EXIST TO:

BRING PEOPLE INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS
CONNECT THEM TO GOD'S FAMILY,
MATURE THEM IN THEIR FAITH,
EQUIP THEM FOR MINISTRY SO THAT GOD'S NAME WILL BE EXALTED.

Prepare to Recognize This Jesus

Becky Juarez confronted Jesus' fragile humanity in a new way with the FEFC youth group the day they viewed *The Passion of The Christ*.

Before viewing this movie with my church youth group, we got the full Middle Eastern experience dining and conversing at the Falafel King. As we finished the meal, the youth pastor gave us a preparatory talk. He warned us that it was very graphic, and not the typical movie found in theaters these days. He challenged us to not laugh inappropriately and warned us that it was a very "heavy" movie.

I couldn't watch the screen the entire time, it was too gruesome for me. As many times as I have heard that "Jesus died on the cross to save the whole world", never had I even imagined half of what was depicted. Now when I hear those words, I have mental images to accompany them. When Jesus was being whipped and beaten, I was horrified at the intense cruelty of the soldiers and the immense pleasure they were receiving from it. Even at the early stages of his torture, he looked to be in enough pain where the typical human would collapse and refuse to continue. It shocked me that he stood back up to endure more, and that through the entire beating, he never called out cursing or pleading.

It evokes such emotions as guilt (in knowing that Jesus died because of my sin), gratefulness (for the gift He has given us), anger (in the torture He endured for us).

I now have a visual understanding of what took place. It may not be word for word from the

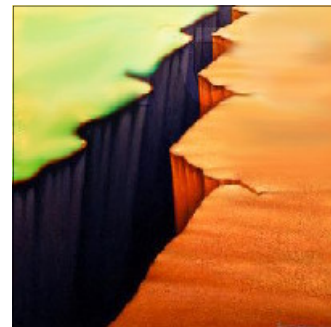


Bible, but they say a picture is worth a thousand words. Seeing it changed my understanding.

A GREATER PUNISHMENT

"The movie 'The Passion of Christ' tries to show us the physical suffering Jesus endured. Still, that horrible physical suffering was not punishment for our sin - the separation from God was. 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Jesus cried out on the cross." Inger's insight contains one of many reasons why God did the impossible: it is the agony of separation. The pain of the cross is everything that accompanies that separation. God knows what that isolation is like, and loved us too much for us to bear it permanently.

"I can't imagine a worse fate than being permanently separated from God's grace and love. Even on earth being separated or rejected by others affects us profoundly and often leaves permanent scars." Inger can testify in a personal way from the death of her eldest son to cancer. God is able to heal and restore. "So many around us hurt everyday and struggle in need of God's love as well as our love. When Jesus overcame death on the cross, He restored 'those who believe in His name' to life. Not just Eternal life, but a life full of grace and riches. The better we know God, the more we know about His riches - His love and care in suffering or joy. He goes with His followers in word and spirit, to sustain us or rejoice with us."



Inger Stenseth

Something Around The Corner (The Action)

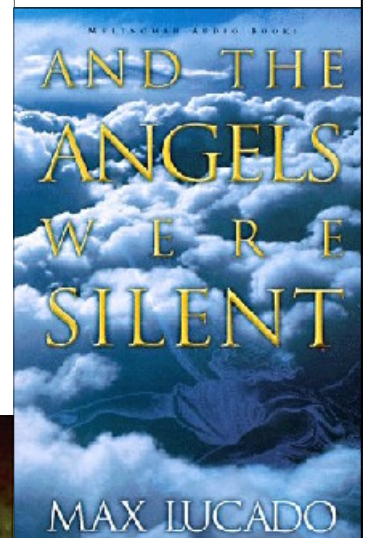
Prayer Points

Imagine the moment a whip lashes through the human skin of God. It is one image still branded in David Larson's mind from *The Passion of The Christ*. David, one of your FEFC youth, knows this is no ordinary love. He said incredulously, "As I watched the flogging, I kept thinking 'HE DID THAT FOR FOR US and we do so little for Him!'"

Not only did the film help David to understand better God's sacrifice, but he realized the **why**. David stated with enthusiasm, "We are His creation. He has made us. I know He loves me because of the things I see Him help me with like my grades and family. I ask God for help and He helps me reach my friends!" I asked David, If God did not answer you right away and allowed you to suffer, how would you know He still loves you and why? "The Bible tells us, and because we are alive today. Why would He create us? I know that He has something waiting around the corner for me in any way He chooses." The result of David encountering Jesus' love compels him to read the scriptures daily. David is in awe of Christ's sinless nature, and is trying to obey Christ when sharing the gospel. Check out the excerpt from *The Passion of Jesus Christ* by Piper. There is a great link between obedience and righteousness and the sinless nature of God - just what David is exploring in scripture.

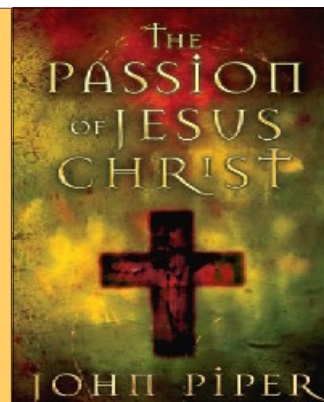
There is more around the corner for David most definitely...and the best parts are found in Christ!

- Pray for David's protection. His friend whom he invited to the *Passion of The Christ* accepted Jesus!
- Pray for David to gain wisdom, and to keep growing in the knowledge of God and in the scriptures
- Keep praying for the FEFC youth group and their spiritual walk.



His suffering and death were also a climax and completion of the obedience that became the basis of our justification. He was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2:8. His death, was the pinnacle of His obedience. This is what the Bible refers to when it says, "By one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)

Therefore, Christ's death became the basis of our pardon and our perfection. "For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21).



Jesus lives in the forgotten. He has taken up residence in the ignored. He has made a mansion amidst the ill. If we want to see God, we must go among the broken and beaten and there we will see Him.

He rewards those who truly want to find Him, is the promise. "Anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me" is the plan.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Join us for a very special service taking place on Friday the 9th At First Evangelical Free Church. The service involves a unique integration of choir, drama and worship team. You won't want to miss it. The service will begin at 7 pm. Invite a friend too.



❖ FEFC NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS ❖



- Games
- Crafts
- Songs
- Snacks
- Bible Stories

Vacation Bible School

Where: First Free Church

Who: Kids age 5 – entering 6th grade

When: Monday, July 26 - Friday, July 30

(from 9:30 am – until 12:00 pm)

Additional information is coming. Reserve these dates as you plan your summer activities!



Brian & Sara Gallagher are proud to announce the birth of Betsy, born Monday, March 16th at 6:37pm. She weighed in at 7lb. 13 oz. and was 21-1/2" long.

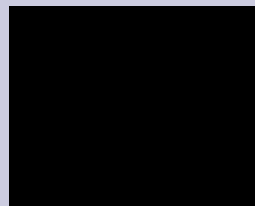
Welcome Betsy!

Jon & Carrie Boyum are proud to announce the birth of Christina May, born March 17th at 9:43 am. Christina weighed 7 lb. 8 oz. & 21-3/4" long.

Welcome Christina May!

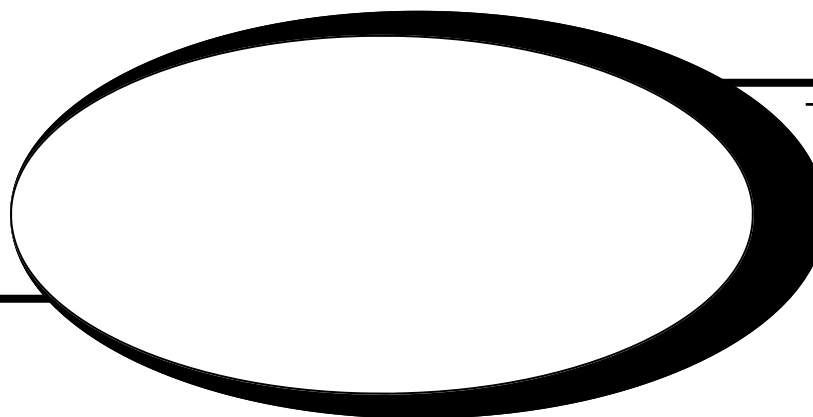
Dear praying friends,

March 22-April 2, at 9 am I'm part of a team that does daily assemblies in secondary schools in my area of the city. All the schools have predominantly Muslim students. We are presenting a skit and short talk about what Easter means. We have to preface our remarks to say this is what the Bible teaches, but it is an opportunity to present Truth to students about Jesus. Pray for a clear message, for open hearts as the Seed is dropped, and that it will take root. Thank you



<name withheld>

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TO BRING
TO CONNECT
TO MATURE
TO EQUIP
TO EXALT