

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **John 19:17-20**.
- B. Roy H. Enoch (11-7-93).
- C. The disciples moved through successive stages as they contemplated X's death on the cross. Our purpose in this lesson is to help us experience the death of X and its impact on our lives and to move us to the stage of dedication.
- D. Have you ever gone through an intensely emotional experience?
 - 1. Have you lost a job suddenly and unexpectedly?
 - 2. Have you lost your possessions through a catastrophe, like having your house burn?
 - 3. Have you been w/a close friend/family when they were told they only had a short time to live?
 - 4. These experiences compare w/the disciples' feelings when their Lord died on the cross.
- E. Behavioral scientists say that there are definite steps in accepting grief and overcoming it. We want to examine six words that describe the apostles' progress to the complete dedication and devotion that characterized their lives and deaths.

I. **CONFUSION** (the first reaction when the mob took Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane).

- A. **THEN** their reaction was understandable:
 - 1. Was He really the Son of God?
 - 2. If He was the Messiah, why didn't He call down angels to protect Him?
 - 3. Why did He stand so indifferently and not defend Himself or let us defend Him?
 - 4. Why did I flee, and not die with Him?
- B. **NOW** we have the same kind of confusion at times:
 - 1. If X is Lord, why are there problems in the church?
 - 2. I've tried to be a good Xian, why do I suffer, feel guilty or have doubts at time?
 - 3. Why do I sin when I want to be a good Xian?
 - 4. Why do I seem to take the easy way out at times?
- C. **ALWAYS**, there seems to be general principles:
 - 1. Some things are not understood at the time.
 - 2. We must often clear our heads and look at the long term solution.
 - 3. The fight against sin is a life-long struggle:
 - a. We make progress as we become more mature.
 - b. We must always continue to fight the battle.
 - 4. Confusion in battle is a common reason for people being lost:
 - a. We must keep our focus on the most important goal.
 - b. Tom Steed said: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."
 - 5. Satan always tries to confuse people, because that makes them ineffective.

II. **FEAR** (is often a consequence of confusion).

- A. **THEN** the disciples must have realized what was happening to Jesus could happen to them.
 - 1. The disciples all fled, though Peter followed "afar off."
 - 2. Fear was why Peter denied knowing the Lord with cursing and swearing.
 - 3. The "fear of the Jews" (19:38) seems to be why the disciples were behind locked doors (20:19, 26).
 - 4. They had reason to be afraid, because the danger was real.
 - a. The cross was designed to punish and strike fear into all who looked upon it.
 - b. It was a slow agonizing death.
- B. **NOW**, we also need to contemplate the cost of being a Xian:

1. We are thankful that our persecution is usually milder, though often feared. We may lose our job, or a friend, or be rejected when we stand for what is right.
2. It is difficult when we contemplate the price WE may have to pay to be faithful to X.
- C. Xianity **ALWAYS** has a cost for the recipient to pay:
 1. See Mt. 16:24-26.
 2. Because of the confusion and fear in a difficult situation, one must decide ahead of time to do what is right and then not dwell on the consequences.
 - a. A wise and strong person weighs the consequences and is determined to do right.
 - b. Daniel knew that the law had been signed when he went to his room. He opened his window toward Jerusalem, and prayed.
 - c. Make up your mind to do what is right even if it means you will be put to death.

III. **HORROR** (must have characterized the disciples as they watched the crucifixion).

- A. **THEN** the disciples actually witnessed the cross:
 1. It was a slow, horrible death.
 2. The spikes.
 3. They could do nothing about it.
 4. The blood.
 5. The labored breathing.
 6. The cruelty.
 7. Jesus said, "Woman, behold thy son," and "son, behold thy Mother."
 8. It never left their minds as they were ever aware of His suffering.
- B. **NOW** we are still horrified by the cross:
 1. It should bring tears to our eyes and pain to the heart that carefully considers the suffering of the innocent for the guilty.
 - a. It shows the terrible effect of sin.
 - b. It shows the wonderful love that God has for us.
 - c. It is our example of how to serve God (1Pet. 2:21-25).
 2. Someone said, "I asked Jesus how much He loved me, and He stretched out His arms and died for my sins."
- C. The horror of the cross should **ALWAYS** be a reminder to the world of how bad we are to have left God.
 1. It shows how inhuman man can be to his fellow man.
 2. It shows how ungodly we can be to God.
 3. May we always be horrified by cruelty, injustice, murder and torture.
 4. Let us never stand idly by when others are mistreated.
 5. Let us never stand idly by when the name of X and the Father are used w/contempt.

IV. **JUBILATION** (should characterize our hearts when we think of the cross).

- A. The cross represents forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.
- B. **THEN** they must have become excited w/great joy as they heard testimony of the women and saw him resurrected.
 1. They wanted to believe, but could it be possible?
 2. He had talked about the temple: "Destroy it and in three days I will lift it up." Could it really happen?
 3. Were the women who reported seeing the angels and the Lord just hysterical? Could they be believed?
 4. But the tomb was now empty! Then, they saw the Lord!
 5. Their hands must have shook, and their hearts pounded, and they could still hardly believe their eyes. But praise God, He IS alive!
- C. **NOW** and **ALWAYS** there is jubilation when we read of the resurrection and glorification:
 1. As the cross is horrible, the resurrection is wonderful beyond belief.

2. The resurrection and ascension are the very heart of the gospel (1Cor. 15:12-20).
3. The great news today is that the spiritual dead are being buried by baptism into the death of X and raised to a new life (Rom. 6:3-4).
4. Those raised with X as new creatures should seek to do His will (Col. 3:1-3).

V. **DISCIPLINE (must be developed to be useful in His service).**

- A. **THEN** they needed teaching that they might have direction for their lives in His service.
 1. They must have realized that they were lacking since they had fled when He was taken.
 2. He came and taught them how He had fulfilled the Scriptures (Lk. 24:45-49).
- B. **NOW** and **ALWAYS** the cross/resurrection should be the very foundation of our faith.
 1. Since X died, we must live for Him, as He came to do the Father's will.
 2. Faith in Him requires complete obedience to His will and word.
 3. We should let that word continually guide us.
 4. We should seek X's continual training.
 5. We should seek opportunities to study it for ourselves and enjoy discussing it w/others.

VI. **DEDICATION (will be the result of our JUBILATION and DISCIPLINE in faith).**

- A. **THEN**, something changed in the disciples:
 1. The same men who had fled a few days earlier, were now willing to stand before the Jewish leaders, who had demanded the crucifixion of their Lord, and declare His resurrection and power as the King of kings and Lord of lords.
 2. Their lives were never the same after the ordeal of the cross.
 3. They all died a martyr's death, except John.
- B. **NOW**, if we truly go through the specter of the cross, we can never really be the same.
 1. X died for me and I **MUST** live for Him.
 2. Paul speaks of the cross being "made of no effect" (1Cor. 1:17-18). This happens if we do not put Him first in our lives.
- C. Dedication means **ALWAYS** serving Him.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Some saw the cross and saw horror; others only see foolishness and are disgusted.
- B. Some only know the fear, and the sacrifice, but not the glory and blessing of the cross. Some know about the benefits of the cross, but will not deny themselves that they might receive the glory (Rom. 8:17).
- C. Some know the joy of the resurrection, but not the dedication to receive the blessing.
- D. Some fail to make the connection between baptism and the d-b-r of X. They cannot become a Xian, because they reject the birth in water and the Spirit.
- E. If X could forgive the disciples for leaving Him, and Peter for denying Him, He will forgive any weakness we have if we turn from it and follow Him.
- F. Won't you make the journey to the cross, experience the--CONFUSION, FEAR, HORROR, JUBILATION, DISCIPLINE and DEDICATION that will change your life for eternity?
- G. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.