



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #323
Friday... Day of Agony and Atonement

Jesus' Atoning Sacrifice On the Cross

Jesus' Third Saying on the Cross: The Formation of His New Spiritual Family
Text: JN 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.

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = MT, Mark = M, Luke = L, John = J, Acts = A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, red italics identify the words of Jesus. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

Table with 2 columns: Label (Location, Timeline, Jesus' Life Context, Title) and Context Digest (Golgotha, Outside the Western City Gates of Jerusalem, Early April (Month 39), Stage VIII: Passion Week, E. Friday: Day of Agony and Atonement, Jesus' Atoning Sacrifice on the Cross, Jesus' Third Saying on the Cross: The Formation of His New Spiritual Family)

Today's reading contains Jesus' third saying on the cross.

"Woman, here is your son," (27) and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

This was a tender word from Jesus that cared for the needs of his mother, while addressing one of the most basic components of our salvation. In addition to providing for our forgiveness of sins (Saying #1)

and possession of eternal life (Saying #2), Jesus died on the cross to form believers into the fellowship of the family of God, the household of the Trinity (Saying #3).

Jesus had been crucified about nine in the morning. He repeated his first saying, his prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies, consistently throughout his first hours on the cross. One of the two thieves on the cross beside him became a believer in Jesus as he observed the way our Lord responded in prayer to the ceaseless mocking he endured. Jesus second saying promised eternal life to the penitent thief. Then, a little before noon, Jesus turned his attention to the tiny cluster of those who loved him, standing near the cross.

Mary and her sister were there, as well as Mary Magdalene, yet another Mary, and the apostle John, *"the disciple whom Jesus loved."* No doubt other unmentioned disciples like Peter were present as well.

Jesus was the oldest son, and the head of his earthly family after Joseph had died. He had responsibility for the care of his mother. So, Jesus surprised everyone present by giving care for his mother to the apostle John, by instructing both of them to treat each other as mother and son. John took Mary into his home from that point forward. He was from a wealthy family and could easily afford to do this. The surprising thing was that John was probably the youngest of the apostles.

Jesus knew that James, his younger half-brother would assume headship of the family after the Lord died. While James was not a believer yet, Jesus knew that he would appear to James after he rose from the dead, and his half-brother would not only believe in him, but would also go on to be the lead elder of the church in Jerusalem, and pen the epistle that bears his name. James was destined to be a pillar of the early church.

So why did Jesus not entrust Mary to James, but to someone who was not a family member instead? There was a very important reason for this.

Throughout his ministry Jesus had emphasized the priority of Kingdom relationships over earthly ones (see DJN #90). He had come to create a new family of God, that would include both former Jews and Gentile in one spiritual fellowship, patterned on the love and unity that characterizes the Trinity.

"And being the high priest that year, (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus was going to for the nation; and not for the nation only, but also that might gather together into one family the children of God throughout the earth." JN 11.51-52

The death of Jesus was intended to break down every relational barrier that sin creates between people, so that we, like Jesus, would forgive our enemies, share one form of eternal life in common with those who believe in Jesus, and become one spiritual fellowship in the unity of love. Jesus had prayed for this unity in his High Priestly prayer in JN 17.

Now, on the cross, he spoke this new family into being by forming a spiritual bond between his earthly mother and a disciple whom he also loved.

The priority of kingdom relationships over earthly ones blossomed into practical expression as Jesus died, and his love became the unity between spiritual children of God that was stronger than the ties forged by flesh and blood. Jesus died to break down every barrier between those who believe in him, and create the unity of the Trinity among the children of God.

"He came unto his own, and his own did not receive him. But those who did receive him--those who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the power of human ability, nor of the will of parents, but who were born out of God." JN 1.11-13

Forgiveness of sin and eternal life are personal blessings that are experienced by believers on an individual basis. They lead, however, into a life of fellowship with all believers in the shared love of the Trinity, and each other. Jesus died on the cross to create the fellowship of the family of God—not to create lone ranger christians who fellowship with God, but not other people.

The new relationship between the apostle John and Mary was the first expression of the the spiritual family of God, and it came from Jesus on the cross.

APPLICATION:

The words, sacrifice, and example of Jesus on the cross create unity and fellowship among believers. It is sin that separates us in broken relationships. Receiving Jesus' forgiveness empowers us to forgive each other.

His life and love enable us to live in unity if we will pray for it and pursue as HIS priority for us. Our fellowship in the Trinity family was important enough to Jesus to give his life on the cross to create and sustain it. This is the legacy of Jesus' third Saying on the cross.

Is there someone you need to forgive, as Jesus has first forgiven you, and them?

Is there a relationship with another believer that you need to restore?

Are there physical, emotional, spiritual, or relational needs of another believer that you need to meet today?

Do these things and more in honor of Jesus' death.