

## Behold the Man

A bible program I often use opens with Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening* entry for the day. The evening entry for July 22 titled, *Behold the Man*, opened with this striking statement:

*If there be one place where our Lord Jesus most fully becomes the joy and comfort of his people, it is where he plunged deepest into the depths of woe.<sup>i</sup>*

When Spurgeon wrote this sentence he had John 19:5 in mind, specifically, the presentation by Pontius Pilate of Jesus to the Jews on the day he would be crucified. Take a look at the passage below (I have provided a bit more surrounding context):

**Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. 3 They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. 4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" 6 When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" John 19:5-6a (ESV)**

When you read the passage, what was your first reaction? I would imagine images from his journey to the cross and his public crucifixion came to mind. Were you repulsed? Were you saddened? Were you reminded of your own sin that put him there?

So what made Spurgeon say what he said? At first glance, it seems almost counterintuitive to say that we should find joy and comfort in the most awful of days to ever take place on this earth. Shouldn't we be filled with mourning and sorrow when we reflect on the day that Jesus gave his life for us? The answer is a resounding yes! Spurgeon in this evening entry goes to some length to remind us of the grotesque imagery from that day. But what I believe Spurgeon wants us to remember is that we should not languish in the place of sorrow and mourning because Jesus's death on the cross did not bring about his end, but rather the end of our sin! Jesus rose from the dead victorious over sin and death! It is precisely because he was the man of sorrows that we could be comforted and filled with joy!

One of my favorite songs captures this idea vividly. Listen to a stanza of lyrics from *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*:

Behold the man upon a cross;  
My sin upon his shoulders;  
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers.  
It was my sin that held him there  
Until it was accomplished;  
His dying breath has brought me life;  
I know that it is finished.

Yes, my sin held him there **until it was accomplished**. What was accomplished...His death bringing me life. Oh the agony, but oh the glory!

Interestingly, both the Old and New Testaments tell us that God the Father and the Son were pleased, even joyous at the prospect of the cross and what it would accomplish. Isa 53:10-11 in the NASB says it this way...

**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.  
11 As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
He will see it and be satisfied;  
By His knowledge the Righteous One,  
My Servant, will justify the many,  
As He will bear their iniquities.**

And again in Hebrews 12:1b-2

**...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)**

This is such a helpful reminder! For though we too may be temporarily plunged into the depths of woe, because of his work on the cross our future eternity is secure in him. One day we will join him before the throne of grace and know only pure pleasure and joy! And his satisfaction will be complete at the full and final restoration of his children all of whom will spend eternity singing praises to the Lamb. Oh may that day come quickly!

Meditate on these final words from Spurgeon. As you behold the man I hope that you will find joy for your soul!

*Gaze upon him, ye mourners, for if there be not consolation in a crucified Christ there is no joy in earth or heaven. If in the ransom price of his blood there be not hope, ye harps of heaven, there is no joy in you, and the right hand of God shall know no pleasures for evermore. We have only to sit more continually at the cross foot to be less troubled with our doubts and woes. We have but to see his sorrows, and our sorrows we shall be ashamed to mention. We have but to gaze into his wounds and heal our own. If we would live aright it must be by the contemplation of his death; if we would rise to dignity, it must be by considering his humiliation and his sorrow.<sup>1</sup>*

Pastor Brad

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<sup>i</sup> Spurgeon, C. H. (1896). [\*Morning and evening: Daily readings\*](#). London: Passmore & Alabaster.