

Easter is very close at hand with Good Friday April 2 and Easter Sunday April 4. Already here in the North Georgia mountains the Dogwoods and Peach Trees are blooming, anxious to show their beauty and shed off the coldest winter since we moved here five years ago – remember Global Cooling not Global Warming. The hardwood trees are budding – all around the glory of God's creations are answering to the call of Spring for another Season in our lives. On May 26, 2017, I had a six-foot-high pink Dogwood planted in our front yard as a milestone for Linda's eight-year anniversary of her receiving the **New Blood** stem cells from her donor during a Stem Cell Transplant. This year will mark the twelve-year anniversary for that **New Blood**, which sustained her for 10 years, and a Dogwood tree that is now fourteen-foot-high. Time cannot be stopped, and every moment brings changes with new events and memories.

Coming out of a cold winter with many days couped up in our homes combined with the ongoing threats about COVID 19, many are anxious to spread their wings and fly like eagles into the warmth of Gods sun. And the presence of Gods Son Jesus is always with us and is always a signpost to our destiny. Easter is probably the most celebrated Church day of any other celebration for Christians. But it should be a time of personal retrospection as to our beliefs and practices and have us know that Jesus is to be worshiped and celebrated every day in prayer and with love, thanksgiving, honor, and praise. Jesus died on the cross at Calvary for all of everybody's sins so that we who are righteous and truly believe can have **LIFE** everlasting and that means into eternity. The key is that we **MUST** acknowledge our sins of our past and present, **Believe** that Jesus died for those sins, and after **HIS** burial for three days He was **Resurrected** from the grave and sits at the right hand of Father God as our **Intercessor** to God. Once we **Believe**, He knows our sins no more past, present, or future.

But can you even realize what this innocent and sinless **MAN** Jesus went through in His thirty-three years of **LIFE** and particularly that last week before the cross? Consider our individual stress, depression, grief, and anxiety and understand He took that kind of stress, depression, grief, and anxiety hundreds and even thousands of times more than we as an individual can experience. That last week of His earthly life from His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, to the garden of Gethsemane, and through the crucifixion, the Bible describes Him as being in a "state of great **anxiety**" and being "overwhelmed with **grief**" as a time of intense wrestling causing Him to cry out to the Father that the cup might pass from Him.

I fully realize that something profound to me and worth sharing can mean little or nothing to someone else that I share with. But often there is a spark for mutual understanding and for some people as Proverbs describes, that have the desire for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. So, I thought in this discourse that we might look at the descriptions and ramifications of Jesus' passion and humanity that last week of His human **LIFE**. His emotions even as the Son of God, who had no sin portrays to us an awareness of the huge sacrifice that He made for all of us who have sinned. Even as such there are few righteous that will enter the narrow gate (Mat 7:14) to be in Eternity with Jesus. The many others will enter through the wide gate (Mat 7:13) to end up in Hell as they will be told that "*I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers* – Luke 13:27". God gave us a free will to choose between different possible courses of action, but many will choose the way of the World and flesh versus being true followers of Jesus through worship, prayer, study of the Word, thanksgiving, and discipling the Christian Word to our fellow mankind. We must **LIVE** a God **LIFE** and a good **LIFE** to be called a disciple of Jesus.

We each often experience the emotions and feelings as Jesus did that last week of His **LIFE**. He was the target and pursued to be put to death by the Chief Priests and Elders (Mat: 26:3) just as many in this World today have only the agenda to protect their power and money versus distinguishing between right and

wrong. He in an act of obedience to the Father had to cleanse the Temple of the moneychangers (Mat 21:12). He wrenched with such agony in His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane that he sweated blood through the pores of His skin (Luke 22:44). He was forsaken by Judas, one of His Disciples, who turned Him over to the Jewish leaders who wanted Him killed (Mat 26:14, 21). Peter, one of His Disciples, disavowed knowing Him three times during His capture (Mat 26:33-34). Two of His Disciples, John, and James sought between themselves as to which one was the greatest and would be at the right hand of Jesus in what they thought would be the kingdom on earth at that time (Mat 20:21; Luke 22:24). His three Disciples, Peter, James, and John could not stay awake in the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus prayed and had to be wakened three times by Jesus when He was in the most traumatic time awaiting death on the cross and being administered to by Angels (Luke 22:43). All of this preceded His destiny to the cross and His death on the cross. Dutch Sheets, a pastor, described Jesus' emotions in this period of time as distressed, anguished, sobbing, pent-up inside, tearful, sorrowful, grieving, heaviness, troubled, anxious, helpless, disoriented, overwhelmed, astonished, close to panic, and shuddering horror. Yet Jesus knew the cup had to pass from Him (Mat 26:39). While all others seemed at that time to have a me, myself, and I focus Jesus "took the fall" so to speak, for all of them and us today. Jesus had His focus on the cross as His destiny for all of mankind.

What Jesus done for each of us continues to make us aware of His presence as the risen Savior. Our greatest ally in our times of trouble will always be Jesus our Christ. We become aware that the only thing we get in **LIFE** is what we give away. The more we give the more we get, however, the only thing we keep forever is what we give away. And what we must always remember is that "with His stripes we are healed- Isa 53:5". When the world sees our love for one another, they will recognize that there is a better way to **LIVE** than how they have been **LIVING**. That is when we will be the light of the World. That is when we will be offering hope to the hopeless. That is when we will be taking those who are spiritually dead and show them how to find **LIFE**. "That is when we will be keeping the main thing the main thing"- Stephen Covey.