

Meditations – April 20 & 21, 2024

April 21

Mark 14:65(NIV) ⁶⁵Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

Though most historians believe these to be Roman guards assigned to a temporary service of the High Priest, I do not think the text implies this. Instead, I think they were a group of Jewish thugs that were in service to the High Priest. Remember: The High Priest were corrupt. This abuse took place after the mock trial before the Sanhedrin. After all, it was the High Priest that wanted Jesus dealt with! Death!

The spitting in the face is an act of declaring the shame upon the one spit upon (Numbers 11:24). It is interesting to note that the Lord used spit to heal, but man uses it to insult. The blindfolding of Jesus seems to be directly related to His claim of being the Messiah. Roman soldiers would not have come up with this idea; it is purely Jewish. The Messiah was prophesied to judge correctly without hearing or seeing (Isaiah 11:3). When they struck Him, they asked Him to judge who it was that had committed the crime. If He was the Messiah He should know their name. He could have told them their name and that of their entire lineage back to Adam, but He remained silent. He was determined to endure this to the end for you and me.

Then the guards took Him and beat Him. These men were trained fighters. They knew how to inflict pain. The rabbinical laws forbid the abuse of a condemned man, but this was no ordinary prisoner. It was envy that caused the religious leaders to murder Him. They were convicted by His words, and shamed by His increasing number of followers. They were being exposed for what they really were. No abuse of Jesus could have been enough for them. The Scripture says, "Jesus endured for the joy that was set before Him." He endured because He knew you would one day come and find the cleansing that He would provide through the cross.

Meditation: Treasure your salvation. Never forget the high price paid for it. Never!

April 20

Mark 14:70-72 (NIV) ⁷⁰Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." ⁷¹He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about." ⁷²Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

Peter, bold, blustery, confident Peter didn't run like most of the disciples. He followed Jesus to the home of Caiaphas. John was there too. John was known by the priestly family and not under the threat that the other disciples would have been. As Peter warmed himself by the fire, he could probably hear talk of taking this prisoner to Pilate for permission for execution. That was a dangerous place to be. Execution Roman style meant unspeakable pain, the most excruciating death imaginable. To sit there by that fire in the enemy's courtyard was really taking a chance. Peter had promised he would not leave Jesus alone, but then he was spotted. "Aren't you one of them? You have a Galilean accent."

The third denial came with curses, anything to get out of being caught right there and then. He denied any knowledge of Jesus. Then the rooster crowed just as Jesus had predicted. Luke wrote that at that moment Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter. Peter broke down. He was not as strong as he believed himself to be. Neither am I. Neither are you. We can't – but I know a Man.....and without Him we can do nothing. We can make all the oaths we want, but without His power we will never keep one of them.

Have you sat in that "courtyard"? I have. As I waited in jail to interview a potential resident for our drug program, they would almost begin to speak about the "born-againers". Would I remain silent and deny that I knew Him to remain in this person's favor? Silence is denial. When I stand to pray at various gatherings, will I say the name of my Savior or give in to the demands that I use the generic "god".

JESUS! What a name! It brings division. It stirs up emotions. If I remain silent, I should weep with Peter. The Lord turns to look at you and me also. Don't deny that you know Him. I hope our lives are a dead give away that we are one of His disciples. I hope there is enough evidence to convict us of being His. Silence only makes us **ONE OF THEM.....**

Prayer: Lord, help us not to deny You!

