

THE PARADOXES OF THE CROSS (2)

By Keith Greer

Jesus Christ was rejected by men—that we might be accepted by God. “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” {Isaiah 53:3} Sadly, Christ was rejected by the very ones He came to save {John 1:11}. Rejected and despised during His earthly ministry, and finally nailed to the cross, Christ accepted the personal shame {Hebrews 12:2}. Why did He endure such humiliation and anguish? “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.” {Colossians 1:19-21} This rejection paved the way for God to accept mankind.

Jesus Christ became a man of sorrows—so that mankind can rejoice and be glad. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” {Matthew 23:37} Jesus’ Divine wisdom enabled Him to see what lay ahead for the city of Jerusalem and the Jews; it caused Him great sorrow. Take a close look at Christ’s life and the many sorrows He endured, knowing full well what would be the end result of mankind’s rejection of Him and His words. But there were brighter days ahead. “But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” {1 Peter 4:13} Out of extreme sorrow and grief came great joy and gladness.

Jesus gladly accepted earthly poverty— so we could enjoy riches in glory. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” {2 Corinthians 8:9} Even though, while on earth, God’s Son had no place to pillow His head {Luke 9:58}, consider the wonderful eternal riches offered to those who remain faithful. “And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” {Ephesians 2:6,7}

Jesus became sin for us—that we might be righteous in Him. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” {2 Corinthians 5:21} We were overwhelmed with sin and wickedness and without hope in this world. But God, through His Son’s death, repainted that dark picture! Do we fully appreciate the magnitude of the love and mercy He extended to us? Allow this thought to sink deep into your heart— that sin, with all its ugliness and destructive capabilities, our Lord willingly paid the ultimate price that was due every sinner! Honestly, when one truly understands what Christ did for us on the cross, can one offer Him any less than our best service? It’s an overwhelming thought to me that Christ would be willing to pay the price for sin, that God’s justice demanded, for those who He knew would hate Him and reject His grace and mercy. Can one truly say that anyone has ever loved them as much as our Lord loved us and keeps on loving us?

Dear readers, this is exactly what God determined before the foundation of the world. The world may struggle with understanding these **paradoxes**, but they are indeed true. What wonderful blessings we can receive because of the blood shed on Calvary's cross. May we be eternally thankful for such a wonderful Savior! ***