**Why a crown of Thorns?**

***John 19: 1-3***

Have you ever experienced a moment in life when everything suddenly changed? When you felt the ground shake below your expected path in life. It’s not always negative happenings that alter our path in life, positive events and situations do as well.

Maybe it was your wedding day,

the birth of a child,

 Or maybe when you got that better job.

 Or maybe even when you became an empty nester.

When those kinds of things happen, our lives seem to change.

1. There is a moment in the history of the world that caused everything to change. Sometimes we take this event for granted because we are so far removed from it.
2. But because it happened, everyone in the world was given an opportunity. But, this event set into motion a plan that had been set for countless ages.

I find it interesting that we can find the whole message of the gospel in one small fact of scripture. This has been God’s plan, His design for His creation. The angel comes to Joseph and tells him that Mary will bear a son who will be called “Immanuel.”

**That is the gospel story in a nut shell! “GOD IS WITH US!”**

We have good days and we have bad days that affect and can even change the direction of our lives. However, talking about a bad day effecting everything:

In a matter of a short period of time, Christ was betrayed, arrested, convicted, denied, and beaten severely, all while holding the knowledge of His impending death on the cross.

**However, and thank God there is a however, because that event happened, and because He defeated death in the form of the resurrection, we meet here in this place with the hope of eternity!**

In our world, in our lives we claim to be people who remember the cross on a daily basis.

We claim to live for Christ. yet, when was the last time we focused on Golgotha.

Or focused on Jesus, on His pain, on the cross, or His separation from the Father for a short time.

When was the last time you and I focused on His sacrifice for each one of us in a personal way.

Sometimes we fail in our commitment to keep the cross in our thoughts and in our foundation for living each and every day that we have been blessed with.

Terry and Rob have recently both presented sermons aimed at this very thing!

We are continuing that chain of thought this morning.

**We should be motivated to live a life dedicated to Christ Jesus because the cross stood**. We should be motivated to be the children of God because of His forgiveness.

In John 19, Jesus is in the midst of His darkest and most painful hour on earth. Having stood trial for nothing He did wrong. The Jews delivered Him to Pilate to be condemned. Pilate asked Him questions about truth, about the Kingdom He has talked about and his Kingship. Pilate could find nothing wrong with Him, but having his hands tied with the Jews and a fear of an uprising he consented to having Jesus flogged. This wasn’t a form of simple spanking; flogging was a form of torture to weaken the individual to the point of near death.

**Why did this have to happen?** Why did Pilate have Jesus flogged? Why did they mock Him and call Him King of the Jews?

And our main point for our consideration today:

**Why was a crown of thorns placed on His head and what does that signify?**

People never give in easy to change in their lives. But Jesus came into the world and preached a gospel message of change!

He preached a message of emotion to one another.

He preached a message that would have the effect of ending most religions of that day.

He preached a message of change of a new creation, a new Covenant

**(2 Cor. 5:17) “Therefor if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away, behold new things have come.”**

Change sums up the whole gospel,

 change in outlook,

change in circumstance,

change in the view of eternity.

Jesus came and fulfilled the plan of God that had been planned since the fall of man in the garden.

He came and suffered in our place.

He came to die in our place.

He came to pay our price for our sin.

He came and rose again!

That’s the gospel. That’s why He died, that’s the reason for the cross.

BUT HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED WHY HE WORE A CROWN OF THORNS?

We will be reading from Genesis, but first, It is amazing how so many Old Testament stories find deeper meaning in the New Testament.

The saying that the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed rings true in so many ways.

For instance; We read in the Old Testament book of Exodus about the several plagues that God issued to Egypt to free the Israelites. The last plague would be the worst and cause Egypt to set them free. The Spirit of God would move through Egypt and kill all the first born. God tells the people through Moses and Arron that each family is to take an unblemished lamb, and adds that they are to take some of the blood and put it on the door posts and on the lintel of the houses to protect them from the death of the first born that was to overcome Egypt.

In the same way the blood of Jesus, the unblemished lamb of God, would protect those who accept Jesus as Lord against the sting of Spiritual death.

When we read Genesis 3, most of us know that chapter as the one that tells of the fall of man. When God created man, they were made in His image and had a relationship with God that is difficult for us to grasp. It was an intimate relationship with their creator.

God gave them dominion or power over everything. He gave them one restriction. They could not partake of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. After Eve was tempted, they both fell to that temptation.

This brought sin into the perfect creation that God had made. God’s righteousness, God’s holiness would not tolerate the sin of Adam and Eve.

I know most of you know almost by heart the story in Genesis 3. You know about the fall of man, and so you might be asking how does this have anything to do with the cross and crown of Jesus?

After the sin of Adam and Eve, God declared judgment on them for their failing, their falling. And it’s interesting what occurs**. Genesis 3: 17+18 {READ}**

After the fall of man God cursed the ground because of what Adam and Eve had done. They had lost the intimate relationship that they had enjoyed.

***What was one very important thing that was put into the ground at that point?***

Verse 18 talks about thorns being put into the ground**. Is that significant? Of course it is!**

Why were the thorns put into the ground? Because of sin. Adam and Eve sinned against God by partaking of the fruit of the tree that was prohibited. They fell out of the relationship that God intended because of that sin. And that sin is the reason that thorns began to grow in the ground. Thorns that blocked Adam and Eve from reentering the Garden.

Christ Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, took those same thorns that came into existence because of sin, and wore them on His head and defeated sin so that we wouldn’t have to experience the judgment that sin deserves, and on the cross as He defeated that sin, He wore that crown.

**In those thorns, is the massage of the gospel!**

Those thorns that **“we”** brought into existence because of our sin, Jesus takes away because of love**. GOD IS IN THE BUSINESS OF FORGIVENESS!**

**Genesis 3 is not only about the fall, but about God’s redemptive work of forgiveness!**

We see that in the thorns Jesus wore on the cross.

What a wonderful message of hope and forgiveness we see in every aspect of the crucifixion.

It may be easy for us to overlook why a crown of thorns. The placing of that crown of thorns may not seem as significant when we are considering all that Jesus endured that day He was crucified:

The use of thorns as a crown was not just something someone thought of as a last-minute means of torture and mockery, **it was meant to be!** It would have been so much easier to shape a crown out of vines or twigs that were abundant. How long would it take to weave a vine as opposed to thorns?

 ***( Here are a couple of examples)***

After the flogging after the thorns were put on His head he was delivered to be crucified. He carried His own cross but was so weak, He required the help of a man named Simon. He was taken to Golgotha to be executed. They divided his garments, they mocked and laughed at Him. When He was thirsty, they gave Him sour wine. He was then nailed to the cross to slowly suffer and die. The physical pain the emotional pain the spiritual pain He endured we can’t fully grasp.

Yet as He was being mocked and laughed at, throughout the pain He underwent for nothing He did wrong, He managed to call out to the Father**, “ Forgive them Father for they no not what they do!”**

**JESUS TAKES OUR THORNS, OUR SINS ON HIS HEAD AND OFFERS US FORGIVENESS!!!**

In closing let me ask. Did the crown made of thorns have any significance?

It would have been a lot easier to shape a crown out of simple vines that were all around. The maker would not have to avoid sharp thorns in weaving it. They may have thought that the crown made with thorns was simply a means of mocking Jesus, **but I believe it was the providence of God. God is demonstrating to us by the crown being made of thorns, that that which kept man from the garden, sin was represented by the thorns on Jesus’ head showing us that He bore our sins on the cross.**

The thorns in the garden represented man’s sin as keeping us at bay from entering, are the same thorns that our Lord Jesus wore on the cross! Again, He bore our thorns, our sins that day on the cross!

Those thorns that pierced the Lord’s scalp, that caused Him pain, were our sins that he bore.

We read in (1 Cor. 15: 55=56) **“O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting. The sting of death is sin,”**

*The scalp of Jesus was stung by those thorns. He was stung by our sins!*

In answering our closing question, “Did those thorns have significance?” The New Testament is most assuredly the Old Testament revealed. **Yes they Do!** We can see God’s plan of redemption all throughout biblical history. All of it pointed to that day Jesus went to the cross.

Jesus gave the world an amazing gift. His self-sacrifice came about so that we wouldn’t have to experience the punishment that sin deserves.

Through His resurrection, we have the assurance of eternal life as forgiven children of God. Our thorns have been removed! We can once again enter the garden.

God did this for all of us not just a select few. **John 3:16**

When we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior through the waters of baptism, we were washed clean of sin, our thorns were removed.

If anyone here or on line has yet accepted this gift of God, now is an opportunity for you to make that life changing decision. As we stand and sing this song, come forward and we will assist you in reaching your goal of removing those thorns, those sins that have been plaguing you. God freely offers you forgiveness.