



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 8

December 26, 2021

No. 52

## Calvary

Kenny Chumbley

**Calvary was where Jesus achieved the lowest point of human failure.** Crucifixion was the most ignominious death possible. It is difficult to imagine how one man could more effectively show his loathing and contempt for another man than by reducing him to crucified carrion—scourging him, subjecting Him to humiliating, brutal farce, and then nailing his naked, bleeding body, battered nearly beyond recognition, to a cross where he could be mocked and spat upon by his enemies, the helpless victim of their filthy insults, the agony of dying extended as long as possible.

**Calvary involves all that makes belief in a good and loving God difficult.** It epitomized everything that is unreasonable and unfair. Accepting its necessity is difficult; comprehending its horror is impossible. If there's ever a time for asking Why?, the cross is it. The question wasn't answered, but the cross was endured. As Dorothy Sayers noted, God "had the honesty and courage to take his own medicine."

**Calvary was not a transaction that changed God's attitude toward man but a revelation of God's love for man.** God's love eternally predated Calvary (Rev. 13.8). What stands as the greatest symbol of man's hate, even more, is the greatest symbol of God's love.

**Calvary shows the reality of Jesus' faith in God.** Though deeply troubled by His approaching death (Matt. 26.38, Jn. 12.27) and instinctively shying from it (Matt. 26.39), Jesus put His faith in God. Faith is the way by which we come in contact with ultimate reality, for faith is the path to God. Without it, we will never reach Him. Without it, the most important things worth knowing will never be known.

**Calvary shows that the innocent suffer for the guilty.** "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." What a remarkable insight into the depth of unconditional love. Because love is to be without limit, whenever there is moral and spiritual failure in the one loved, there is suffering in the one who loves. No one sins unto himself; the effect of our sin is beyond our ability to control. Our sin always hurts another; always. Yet, in the alchemy of divine love, the suffering of the innocent is the key ingredient in overcoming that which caused the suffering. Only when we bring this truth into our own hearts and relationships can we forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

**Calvary was the greatest event in history, but it was the resurrection that proved it so.** At Calvary the deck was completely stacked against Christ. He died cursed by God and man. His friends couldn't help; His enemies wouldn't help; the Romans dared not help; Heaven refused to help. The stone was sealed; the tomb was guarded. (It all reminds me of Elijah drenching his altar and sacrifice on Mt. Carmel in order to better flaunt the power of God.) But on the third day, the stone was rolled back, and the grave was empty. The gates of hell had done everything they could do to prevail—but hell was beaten into disgrace by the power of God. It was the resurrection—not the Sermon on the Mount or any other miracle—that ultimately convinced men that Calvary was the sacrifice that made heaven possible. And this thought changed the early disciples to where they believed that they were engaged not merely in a temporary earthly struggle, but in an eternal undertaking in which every event was thereby potentially glorified.

The resurrection's validation of Calvary should change us as well. For ours, you see, is not mere hope—we have a reason for our hope. *No. 150 The Prairie Papers*

# Evacuation Order

Jared Hagan

Do you ever wonder about the people who won't leave? It always seems to happen. A natural disaster is occurring and mandatory evacuations are sent out, but some people just won't leave. They hold out hope that the hurricane won't be as bad as the experts warn. They think that maybe they can protect their house from the oncoming fire. Whatever their thinking, they are often wrong. Lives are lost as a result, not to mention rescuers risking their own lives to save those people.

Why wouldn't they just leave and be safe? I suppose they don't believe the warnings. I suppose they are attached to their stuff and unwilling to risk losing it (not that they can really protect their homes and stuff in a large natural disaster). I suppose that they don't want the hassle of evacuation. After all, the roads quickly get overwhelmed and escape is tediously slow. Why bother, right?

But after the disaster is over, I have heard many people, after being rescued, comment that they shouldn't have stayed.

I don't know about you, but I always find myself nodding along with them. "Yep. You should have left." And I confess to thinking the people a bit foolish. They were warned. They should have known better.

Do you agree?

If so, perhaps you should consider the warning that John gives us about this world. "The world is passing away" (I John 2:17). This world is doomed. We've been warned by the foremost expert: God. He isn't guessing.

The world is doomed. All of the material things of this world will be destroyed. But not just that. John adds, "And also its lusts" (I John 2:17). All of the worldly desires are doomed too.

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (II Pet. 3:10).

This world is facing a disaster unlike anything it has ever seen before. It will truly be the end. It could happen at any moment. And God has—in a way—sent out an evacuation order. Flee from the lusts of the world (I Pet. 2:11). Dedicate yourself to spiritual holy conduct which will last rather than focusing on worldly things that won't (II Pet. 3:11-13).

Have you obeyed the order? Or do you find yourself making the same mistakes as those people we spoke about earlier? Do you act like the world is doomed or have you attached yourself and your heart to everything the world has to offer? Maybe we don't think the end will really come, so we go on living a life focused on physical things and following worldly lusts. Maybe we don't want to give up the things of this world. Maybe we think that doing so would be too painful and too much of a hassle.

It is so easy to sit in judgment of those on television who've had to be rescued because of their stubborn foolishness. But maybe they are just a reflection of ourselves. In their case, at least some of them survived. Those who don't heed God's warning won't be so fortunate.