

Jesus' Concern For Others (#2)

Joe Slater

Even as Jesus was being led out of Jerusalem to be crucified at that horrible place called Golgotha ("place of a skull" in Hebrew), He was concerned about the welfare of others. *"And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts which never nursed." Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?'"*

In only a few minutes, the Roman soldiers would be driving spikes through Jesus' hands and feet. In only a few hours, He would be dead. Still, Jesus was concerned about others. He knew that within about 40 years the Roman army would surround Jerusalem and destroy it. The horror and bloodshed would be beyond description. Women and children would not be spared; in fact, families would suffer most because they could not move quickly enough to escape. The prospect of such suffering grieved Jesus deeply. He had tried to get the Jews to believe in Him, that He might spare them from this divine judgment. In anguish He had cried, *"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! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"* (Matthew 23:37-39).
More Next Week

God, What Can I Do For You?

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58, ESV).

Fanny J. Crosby's blindness came from a doctor's mistreatment for an eye infection when she was one year old. Fanny did not let blindness hinder her, nor was she bitter. However, her one wish was to be able to read. She tried to go to school, but the teachers did not know how to teach her, and they sent her home. But her grandmother read the Bible to Fanny daily, and she memorized what she heard. She often prayed to God, asking, "What can I do for You?"

Fanny's gift from God was her ability to compose poetry, which she had friends write down. Her mind and heart were filled with God's word, and she turned to it for her poetry. During her lifetime she wrote and had set to music hundreds of the hymns that Christians all over the world sing. She was voted one of the most important women in the United States.

"What can I do for you today, God?" This is a prayer we can say every morning. It will turn our minds from our troubles to God's power and strength as He works for us, with us, and through us. No matter what our circumstances are in life, God will use us in His kingdom when we give our lives and our substance to Him.

Let God surprise you. You may think you have no talents to use for Him, but He will show you what you can do. Whether it be a cup of cold water given in His name, or some great deed, God will guide you and bless you. As James wrote, *"But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing"* (James 1:25). May God bless you as you work for Him.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)

Thank God If You Can Read This

The US Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy reports that 14% (32 million) of American adults are illiterate. Twenty-one percent read at or below the 5th grade level. Of the youths who interact with the juvenile court system, 85% are "functionally illiterate" (literacyinc.com). One in four children in America will become illiterate adults while 20% of high school graduates are considered functionally illiterate (Visually by Rockcontent, 2017).

As alarming as these statistics may be, they pale in comparison to the number of Americans who are biblically illiterate. According to pollster George Barna, "the Christian body in America is immersed in a crisis of biblical illiteracy" (magazine.biola.edu). Amos, the Old Testament prophet from the Southern Kingdom (Judah) who preached to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) spoke of this danger when he lamented, "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord God, 'That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord'" (Amos 8:1).

We give thanks to all those who contribute to the biblical training of our young people, from parents to Bible class teachers to participants in the Lads to Leaders program to those who work with and interact with our youth program. Training our young people is one of the most important obligations to God.

So, if you can read your Bible give thanks to God and show your appreciation and gratitude to our teachers.

--David Bragg (via *Bulletin Gold*)

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Some people's minds are like concrete: thoroughly mixed up and permanently set!