

The Solitary Life Of Jesus

Isaiah: "Who is this Who comes from Edom with blood-stained garments? This One Who is glorious in His apparel, striding triumphantly in the greatness of His might?"

Jesus: "It is I Who speaks in righteousness, mighty to save!"

Isaiah: "Why is Your clothing stained with blood and Your garments like one who treads the winepress?"

Jesus: "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was no one with Me. I trod them in My anger and trampled them with My wrath, and their blood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My clothing ... I looked but there was no one to help; I was appalled there was no one to uphold Me, so My own arm brought salvation to Me and My wrath upheld Me" (Isaiah 63:1 to 5).

This dialogue is between the prophet Isaiah and the Lord Jesus before He was born on earth. Jesus was then known as the Angel of the Lord or the Angel of His Presence. There are many such dialogues like this in the Old Testament. Edom is symbolic of Gentiles; Jacob is symbolic of the children of Israel, called 'the peoples'. In this passage of scripture, Jesus inferred His clothes were stained with the blood of those He was angry with, but His clothes would certainly have been stained with His own blood, as He said above, "I stained all My clothing." Pilate had Jesus viciously whipped. He was surrounded by the whole battalion. We can try to put ourselves in His situation. Imagine how terrifying it would be to be surrounded by a hundred violent men – and He was all alone with nobody standing up in His defence. His clothes were removed by the Roman soldiers, then after He had the crown of thorns put on His head and they had mocked Him, His own clothes were put back onto His bleeding body. 'They stripped Him of His clothes and put a scarlet robe on Him; and weaving a crown of thorns they put it on His head ... and when they finished mocking Him they stripped Him of the robe and put His own garments on Him and led Him away to be crucified' (Matthew 27:26 to 31). People today become upset when two or three men surround and beat up on one man – imagine being beaten up by a whole battalion! That is something to pause and think about. That alone is enough to make one shudder at the frightening thought of it. It must have been absolutely terrifying for Him. Jesus said they were especially wicked sinners (Matthew 26:45).

Notice in verses at the top of this page, Jesus commented four times, that He had to endure the crucifixion alone. "I have trodden the winepress alone; there was no one with Me; I looked but there was no one to help; I was appalled there was no one to uphold Me." None of His disciples, family or friends helped Him or supported Him, even though He looked for someone – anyone, to uphold Him in His hour of need. Although Jesus had a large family and many friends, His life was solitary. He had a lonely ministry that was filled with both rewarding and frustrating moments, and He had little support. Indeed, He often chided His disciples for their lack of belief, courage, support and faith. That does not mean He felt lonely all of the time, but there are verses that show us He was looking for support from His friends in His darkest hour. He was betrayed, denied, abandoned and let down by His friends. His family rejected His ministry and were sometimes unkind to Him about it. While hanging in agony on the cross, Jesus felt abandoned by God the Father. How many of us could endure that level of intense isolation?

Jesus was born in the small obscure village of Bethlehem (Luke 2:4 to 7) and never visited a city larger than Jerusalem. He never travelled more than about 300 kilometres from his place of birth, except as a baby when He spent about two years in Egypt with His parents (Matthew 2:14 & 15, 19 to 21) then spent the rest of His childhood and early adulthood in Nazareth (Matthew 2:22 & 23; Luke 2:39). Jesus did none of the things that people usually equate with greatness and He didn't go to the equivalent of a tertiary school (John 7:15). He was the eldest of seven or eight children born to Mary and Joseph and He worked with Joseph as a builder (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Jesus had at least three cousins that are mentioned in the Bible; John the Baptist and the sons of Zebedee, James and John. Their mother Salome was Mary's sister.

Jesus began His ministry when He was about thirty (Luke 3:23) when He was baptised by His cousin, John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13 to 17). He had no outward credentials but Himself and His constant prayer to God the Father (Luke 6:12). Jesus defended unpopular causes. He counted among His friends the poor, the weak, the outcast and the lawbreakers. Jesus never wrote a book but has had thousands of books written about Him. He never held an office but has had thousands of church offices spring up in His name. He never married, had a family and never owned a house. In fact at one time, he had nowhere to live. 'Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head' (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). If we study those verses closely, we can see a pattern emerging. Jesus had a family, so why was He homeless?

Initially, it seems Jesus' mother Mary was excited about His unusual power. When the family were invited to a wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1 to 11), Mary told the attendants to do whatever Jesus said to do, and being put on the spot by Mary, Jesus turned the water into wine. Jesus would never have shamed His mother by not doing that miracle, but He did not want to do it. He said, "What has that got to do with you and Me? My hour has not yet come." Mary ignored Jesus' words which basically meant, "We should really mind our own business. My ministry for miracles has not begun yet." Mary's honour was at stake and Jesus, not wanting to embarrass her, did what He did not really want to do. But it seems their attitudes to His power changed.

Although Jesus had younger siblings, they deeply resented His ministry which isolated Him from them, to the point where on one occasion, Jesus ignored their requests to see Him. 'His mother and His brothers came and standing outside, sent word to Him, calling for Him. A crowd was sitting around Him and they said to Him, "Your mother, brothers and sisters are outside asking for you." Jesus replied, "Who are my mother and brothers?" He looked around at those who sat in a circle around Him and said, "See! Here are My mother, My brothers and sisters; for whoever does the will of God is My mother, brother and sister!"' (Mark 3:31 to 35). 'Jesus' mother and brothers came toward Him but they could not get to Him because of the crowd. Jesus was told, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside wanting to talk to You." But He answered them, "My mother and My brothers are those who listen to and obey the Word of God"' (Luke 8:19 to 21). These comments could be taken two ways. Either, Jesus was embracing everyone who obeyed the Lord; or these verses strongly infer that Jesus felt His family were not listening to and obeying the Word of God. What Jesus said about His family was almost a snide remark. He did not go outside to speak to His family, but instead ignored them, so it seems there was resentment in the family of Jesus because of His ministry; but it got worse.

'Jesus went from place to place in Galilee but He would not travel to Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was drawing near. Jesus' brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea so that Your disciples may see the works You do, for no one does anything in secret when he wants to be conspicuous. If You must do these things show Yourself publicly and make Yourself known!" His brothers did not believe in Him either. Jesus said to His brothers ... "Go to the Feast yourselves. I am not yet going" ... Jesus went alone because He did not want to be seen ... Suddenly, when the Feast was already half over, Jesus went up to the temple and began to teach' (John 7:1 to 14). We can identify more resentment and Jesus' isolation here. Jesus' brothers told Him to go to Judea, where they knew the Jews wanted to kill Him. There did not seem to be a lot of brotherly love shown to Jesus by His brothers. Notice too, Jesus went to Jerusalem all alone.

There is another very telling verse that seems to imply Joseph and Jesus were estranged because of His ministry and teaching. 'The Jews murmured (criticised) Jesus because He said, "I am the Bread that came down from heaven." The Jews kept saying, "Is this not Jesus, the Son of Joseph Whose father and mother we know? How then can He say He came down from heaven?" Jesus said to them, "Stop grumbling and saying these things against Me" (John 6:41 to 43). So we can see that the Jews knew Joseph and Mary, but it is not recorded in the scriptures that Joseph ever acknowledged Jesus or His ministry. It almost appears as though He was rejected by His whole family. When Jesus was a baby, it was always Mary who pondered things in her heart, but never Joseph (Luke 2:19 & 51). Another verse shows us Jesus' ministry was not accepted by His family, and He was saddened by it. They said, "Is this not Joseph's Son?" ... Jesus said, "Solemnly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his own town" (Luke 4:22 & 24). 'They were offended by him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country, and in his own house" (Matthew 13:57). The level of resentment experienced by His family could explain why Jesus had nowhere to live. That could also explain why Jesus gave responsibility of caring for His mother Mary, to His cousin John who was a strong believer (John 19:26 & 27). That was supposed to be the duty of Jesus' brothers. It wasn't until after Jesus died and was resurrected before His family came to believe in Him (Acts 1:14). The epistles of James and Jude were written by two of Jesus' brothers.

The tide of public opinion turned against Jesus as He had prophesied it would (John 15:24 & 25). Jesus asked His disciples to stay awake and watch with Him for just one hour, but they kept falling asleep. Jesus was peeved when His disciples could not stay awake with Him as His arrest was imminent, and He spoke slightly sarcastically when He told them to 'sleep on' (Matthew 26:36 to 46). His friends promised not to deny Him and said they would die with Him (Matthew 26:35; Mark 14:31), but in the end they all ran off fearing for their own lives. Mark ran away naked because the soldiers grabbed hold of his clothes. 'They all left Him, and fled. Mark followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around himself over his naked body. The young men grabbed him but he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked' (Mark 14: 50 to 52). Only Peter wept

in repentance when he realised Who he had denied (Matthew 26:75; Luke 22:62). All his friends ran away (Mark 14:50) or stood at a distance (Matthew 26:58; Luke 23:49) when He was betrayed with a kiss by His close friend Judas (Luke 22:48), was turned over to the Roman authorities and finally endured a mockery of a trial. Jesus was whipped, beaten, tortured, was starved and went without water (John 19:28) before being nailed (John 20:25) to a rough wooden cross (John 19:17) – a cross made from wood that He had created in the first place (John 1:3). There was a thief crucified on either side of Him (Matthew 27:38). As Jesus was dying, His Roman crucifiers and executioners gambled away His blood-soaked clothing (John 19:23 & 24) – the only property He owned on earth. When He died, He was buried in a borrowed tomb through the generosity of a wealthy follower, Joseph of Arimathea (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57 to 60; John 19:38 to 42).

In His final moments on earth, Jesus felt abandoned, forsaken and failed by God the Father in His greatest hour of need. “My God. My God. Why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). In the end, there was no one who stood with Jesus, even though He looked for support and for someone to hold Him up during that time, but He endured it all alone. Even though He was surrounded by family and friends, His life appears to have been very solitary. He had a ministry that was very lonely and at times, misunderstood and resented. Some Jews were offended by Him, just because He chose to heal people. It is very possible to feel lonely in a crowd of people, and there must have been times when Jesus felt that way. He was the only Person on earth Who was also God, and as God and our Creator, for Jesus to come down to the limitations of humanity, must have been incredibly hard.

Two thousand years have passed and today, this solitary Man is still the central figure of the one and only hope for mankind, our only way of salvation and the leader of man’s progress. Jesus is no longer alone. He has believers from every tribe, language, people and nation on this earth (Revelation 5:9). No army, navy, air force, police force, government, king, queen nor any individual has affected the entire world for the good of mankind like this one solitary Man. No one has been able to bring the hope of peace and eternal life like Jesus did. He may have lived a solitary life, but He is our solitary hope. There is nowhere else we can go. He is all we have. ‘Blessed be the Lord God, the Father of our Lord Jesus our Messiah! By His mercy we have been born-again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus our Messiah from the dead. Born anew into an undefilable inheritance that is eternal, reserved in heaven for you’ (1 Peter 1:3 & 4).

Amen and God bless you.

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