

## The Test of His Courage

Matthew 20:17-19

### 1 Introduction

- a) Courage = Doing the right thing, whatever the consequences.
- Ø owning up – confessing wrong doing by ourselves
  - Ø 'whistle blowing' – exposing wrong doing by others
  - Ø speaking the truth even when the listeners reject it
  - Ø sharing the gospel in a hostile environment
  - Ø going into battle, whether against a physical enemy or against spiritual forces of darkness
- b) Jesus showed outstanding courage on many occasions:
- Ø nothing wrong in himself to own up to, but he did expose wrong doing by others, 'whistle blowing' (eg, temple trading)
  - Ø spoke the truth to hostile Jewish leaders
  - Ø went into gentile territory to preach the good news
  - Ø wrestled with spiritual forces that would turn him away from his main purpose for coming

### 2 He set his face towards Jerusalem

- a) This is the third time Jesus warned his disciples that he was on the way to Jerusalem to die. This time he makes it clear that it will be death by crucifixion (Matthew 16: 21; 17: 22, 23).
- b) Similar accounts in both Mark and Luke – growing sense of foreboding of tragedy to come.
- Ø Mark says that Jesus was walking ahead by himself, and

that the disciples were amazed and afraid (Mark 10: 32-34). But they did not understand what was happening.

- Ø Luke tells how Jesus took the disciples aside so that he could explain what lay ahead (Luke 18: 31-34). But they could not grasp that he had to die.

### 3 He sensed the extent of the suffering ahead

- a) Jesus knew he would have to endure every possible kind of physical and emotional and mental suffering.
- b) *Betrayed* into hands of Chief Priests & Scribes: the suffering of the *disloyalty of friends*.
- c) *Condemned to death*: the suffering of *injustice*
- d) *Mocked* by the Roman: the suffering of *humiliation* and *insults*.
- e) *Scourged* by barbed whips: the suffering of *physical pain*
- f) *Crucified* by being nailed to a wooden cross: the ultimate suffering of *death*.

### 4 He saw the light at the end of the tunnel

- a) Beyond the curtain of suffering lay the revelation of glory; beyond the Cross was the Crown; beyond the defeat was triumph; and beyond death was life. The road to glory must go through Calvary.
- b) For those who follow Christ, suffering will often precede glory. That is part of what 'take up your cross and follow me' means.

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09/03/08

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<sup>17</sup> Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them,  
<sup>18</sup> "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death  
<sup>19</sup> and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

1 The head that once was crowned  
with thorns  
is crowned with glory now;  
a royal diadem adorns  
the mighty victor's brow.

2 The highest place that heaven affords  
is his, is his by right;  
the King of kings and Lord of lords  
and heaven's eternal light.

3 The joy of all who dwell above,  
the joy of all below;  
to whom he demonstrates his love  
and grants his name to know.

4 To them the cross with all its shame,  
with all its grace is given;  
their name, an everlasting name,  
their joy, the joy of heaven.

5 They suffer with their Lord below,  
they reign with him above;  
their profit and their joy to know  
the mystery of his love.

6 The cross he bore is life and health,  
though shame and death to him;  
his people's hope, his people's wealth,  
their everlasting theme.

*T Kelly (1769-1855)*

<sup>2</sup>We had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. <sup>3</sup>For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, <sup>4</sup>but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2: 2-4