Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #17

Holy Determination

**Luke 23:56 (NASB)** *56  “Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment*.”

It is now Saturday of the Passion week, the Jewish Sabbath. Jesus’s ministry is over, at least that was what many of His followers thought. Most returned to their homes, their businesses, their livelihood to return to what was once “normal”. Jesus had given them such hope, such encouragement. They truly believed He was the Son of God. But sadly, many of them had the wrong idea about Him. Many who followed believed He would deliver them from the bondage of the Romans and would lead them to be a great nation that would never be oppressed again. But now He was dead. Had it been just a dream? Was it something they had believed to be true, but had the wrong person?

But something did happen, and His true followers knew that. The twelve disciples, minus Judas, had gone to the upper room and delayed their going to Galilee because of fear for what would happen to them. And doubt was creeping into their hearts as well. We know from Thomas’s reaction when He saw Jesus and put his hands in the nail prints and in Jesus’ side where the Roman spear had penetrated Him, that Thomas was losing hope. After all, Jesus was dead. Everyone saw Him die. Everyone knew that no one could survive what Jesus had gone through. They saw Him taken down from the Cross and put in the tomb. They knew He was dead.

However, there were a few weren’t ready to give up. We are told that Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, the mother of James and other women who were with them, came early, even before dawn, to anoint the body of Jesus. That was the customary thing to do. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had taken Jesus’s body down from the cross and put ointments and spices on it and wrapped it in a tomb, but these ladies were determined to prepare His body themselves.

I am captivated by the determination of these women. What made their determination so great? Was it pride and their Jewish heritage that caused them to prepare Jesus’s body even before the Sabbath as Luke tells us? Was it just sheer will that they went early to buy more spices and to go to the tomb? They knew Jesus was dead and there are many indications that their actions proved that this was the end?

Even though they knew Jesus was dead, they still believed the Scriptures. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah. They believed that He would come again one day. That was all they needed. Therefore, they held on to that hope. Because Jesus was coming back.

Beloved, what motivates you? What motivates you to follow Christ, specifically? For many, it is what Jesus can do for them. Others are like the rich young ruler who needed something from Jesus, but when He doesn’t deliver as expected, they leave and forget Him. What is it that makes you willing to forsake all in this life and put Jesus at that top of your priority list? How are you showing that He is your priority? Do you have a holy determination to follow Him, even if in this life you never see more than an empty tomb?

These ladies knew that Jesus was dead, yet they followed Him even to His grave. Would it be that you would be willing to change your life to meet Jesus every day, everywhere, in every moment? Many people start well, but when Jesus appears to be indifferent or not real anymore, they treat Him as a dead man and not as the living Christ, the Redeemer of their souls.

Today, on the day we remember when our Lord was in the grave, will you be so determined to follow Him that you will reorient your life to go with Him, even when He appears to be dead? Will you take part in all that He commands us take part in to prove your faith and hope in Him? Will you be a part of the church that He died for, not just in name, but in action? How will you show your holy determination to follow Jesus?

**Matthew 4:19-20 (NASB)** *19  “And He \*said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20  Immediately they left their nets and followed Him*.”