

Greetings!

When the Roman soldiers beat Jesus and hung Him on the cross, we might think we know how His Father felt while watching, but could we really? I think there is nothing more tragic in a parent's life than losing a child, or having to watch their child suffer.

This week, let's *attempt* to identify with the heart of our Heavenly Father as His Son surrendered Himself to the cross of Calvary.

That's My Son!

Standing at my window, I was stunned to see the car slide to a screeching halt in front of our house on this quiet spring day. As the front driver's door flung open, a young kid bailed out and ran through our neighbor's yard, leaping over their fence. Within seconds, my daughter Nicole, my son Josh, and I were in the yard directing the arriving police officer to the direction of the fleeing boy.

Not to miss an opportunity to play 'Starsky and Hutch' (It's a guy thing.) my son, who was fourteen, and I took to the chase! Like two super heroes, we kept pace with the pursuing police officer until the first fence (That's when I realized my age was catching up with me.) One foot made it into the air as the other caught a tree root, sending me careening into the metal bars. Picking myself up, I motioned my son on, never realizing the danger I was putting him in.

As the pain in my side caused me to buckle over, I gave up the pursuit. Turning up the street, I walked as briskly as my side would allow to the corner of the block. Making another turn at the corner, I could see police cars blocking traffic and the officers, with guns drawn, taking the kid down. Forcing him face down into the dirt, one officer had placed his knee into the boy's back while pulling his arms behind him.

Feeling satisfied that I had help take another "criminal" off the street I strained to watch the action from a distance when the young kid turned his head toward me. His red face, now covered in dirt, looked my way when I heard him shouting to the officers, "That's my dad!" Shocked, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. His shouting increased, "That's my dad!" as I begin sprinting toward him with one hand clasped over my painful side.

As if it was a bad scene from a B rated movie, here we were; my son surrounded by police and shouting, "That's my dad!" while I moved toward him looking like the hunch back of Notre Dame. Bent to one side from pain, with the other hand waving wildly in the air, I shuffled along as quickly as I could, shouting "That's my son! That's my son!" over repeatedly.

"That's my son! That's my son!" I'll never forget that moment. Seeing him surrounded, laying on the ground and crying out for me, I wanted nothing more than to rescue him from their grasp.

The sun had stretched into the noon sky as the clouds gathered overhead. There had never been a day like this before. Earthquakes shook the ground with tremors as buildings cracked from the strain. Rumors reported the dead coming back to life from their graves, while outside the walls of the city; a miracle worker hung dying on his cross.

A tension had overtaken the city hours earlier, as men fled into the night darkness avoiding arrest. Confusion reigned. How could Passover have turned so horrifying?

There was a vast difference between these hours and the day of his baptism. Walking some distance into the wilderness, he came to his cousin John who was baptizing at the river Jordan. Soon John's reluctance to baptize him caved to the will of his cousin as they waded into the dark waters. Rising from his watery grave, the heavens opened as the Spirit descended and a voice was heard, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

On this day however, the heavens closed in darkness and another voice pierced through the crowd, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*)

A father and a son. A God and a sacrifice. How would we ever understand the depth of emotions in a father's heart when he turns his back upon his dying son? And, can we even begin to conceive the terror in a son's mind when there is no one to deliver him, not even his father?

And yet, this is their *gift* to us.

And that's just a thought . . .

My Final Word

At twelve noon on the day of Jesus' crucifixion until 3pm, all of creation entered into a state of chaos. Mountains trembled as the earth shook and darkness filled the skies. For the first time in history, the Godhead was in *distress*.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:16-17 that everything in heaven and on the earth was created by Jesus and that it continues to exist because of Him.

On this dark day, the *unity* of the triune God – Father, Son and Spirit – was in jeopardy as they struggled against principalities and powers over the absolution of mankind's sin. As Jesus was "made sin", the Father *turned aside* from Jesus allowing our sin to hang upon Calvary's cross. For the first time in history, the Godhead was *disjointed*.

Angels and demons alike fought for mankind's destiny; heaven and earth became the battleground for the souls of man. For those three hours, all of creation hung in the balance between heaven and hell.

Because of the divide that now lay between Father and Son, had the Father not turned His gaze once again upon His Son, accepting His blood atonement, I believe all creation would have

ceased to exist. It was only through the compassionate love of a heavenly Father, and the acceptance of the sacrificial offering by a *just* God, that it survived those hours.

How can we ever begin to comprehend the conflict that ensued that day because of our sin?

Triumphantly Forgiven,

Chris

