



Counting the Cost (Part 1)

Without doubt the world we live in today is not our home. Everything happening around us seems so wrong. Many people are filled with “—*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world*” (1 John 2:16). And why does everything cost so much. 1974-76 a couple of bottles of insulin sold for about \$2.50 each and today I found a bottle of insulin from Novolog for \$570.00. There seems to be no stopping of inflation, and people grudgingly will pay, yet, when it comes to “religion” most Americans want a cheap religion, one which costs them nothing—no time, no out-of-pocket-expense, and no personal-sacrifices. With this in mind, let’s consider a few things.

If I think about the cost of my Christian faith, I must consider what it cost our Lord. Peace, Heaven, no pain, comfort, and being close to the Father. Jesus paid the cost and sacrificed such a blessed state to come and live as a man.

Now, Jesus, who easily could have been king over all the earth, lived as a carpenter's son. But our salvation demanded a cross instead of a crown, shed blood instead of a throne. Not an easy life.

Furthermore, while Jesus walked the earth with man, He had to endure the hatred coming from the very “man” He came to save. Yes, the cross was the ultimate form of agony, but we must not forget the many things Jesus had to suffer during those three years prior to His crucifixion.

He was betrayed! Judas, hand-picked by Jesus to be one of His apostles, spent three years in a close relationship to each other. No doubt Jesus loved Judas as the rest of the apostles. Yet, it was a kiss (Matt. 26:48), the most intimate expression of love that Judas made Jesus known to His enemies. We should all, to a degree, understand the pain, humiliation and sorrow He must have felt being betrayed in such a way. O’ how Jesus' heart must have ached when Judas betrayed Him.

He was physically punished! At the house of Annas, the Jewish officers struck Jesus with his hand (John 18:22), the Jews spit in Jesus' face, beat Him and slapped Him and mocked Him (Matt. 26:67-68). While before Herod, the “*men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate*” (Luke 23:11). Jesus was scourged (John 19:1) by the order of Pilate. Soldiers “*stripped Jesus, put a scarlet robe on Him...twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head...mocked Him...spat on Him...took the reed and struck Him on the head*” (Matt. 27:27-30). The Lord of Glory paid the price of enduring humiliation from man whom He created, even though He had the power to call ten thousand angels, He just paid the price for you and me.

Jesus Crucified! Now, after He endured all of these agonies, the Son of Man was then taken outside the city and crucified. Nailed by His hands and feet to the cross. As a child living in California, I remember stepping on a nail that went all the way through my foot, and I also remember the pain. I didn’t do that for you or anyone else, but Jesus our loving Savior endured the physical and mental anguish when the Roman soldier took his hammer and spike and drove it through, and that was for you and for me. No doubt, as the cross on which Jesus hung fell into its hole, Jesus' body sagged against the nails. His flesh was torn by sagging against the nails. The pain must have been intense. But Jesus paid it all for you and for me.



“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

It cost our Lord mental anguish! Can you imagine the horrible feeling which must have welled up inside of Jesus as He became like a carniesideshow as those Jews crowded together just to watch Him die? Thousands, no doubt, came by that day just to ridicule and mock Jesus. In that crowd were hurled insults one after another—all aimed right at Jesus. *“And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 save Yourself, and come down from the cross!’”* (Mark 15:29-30). *“And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.’”* (Luke 23:35). *“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’”* (Lk. 23:39). Yet, from our Lord, no retaliations. He accepted the cost of your and my souls.

What I would have done, what would you have done, had we been in His place? If I had the power to command armies of powerful angels, I cannot fathom allowing any man to do this to me, let alone allow it to save people who hated me. I would have just invoked that power and they would have died on the spot. But Jesus was not like us, He was *“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29). Why didn't our friend, Jesus act like us? Because He was paying the high cost of Christianity, our souls.

A high price to Jesus! The price of His shed blood on the cross of Calvary, in order that the sins of man might be forgiven. Could a greater price have been paid? I cannot imagine it. He sacrificed more than His possessions; He gave His life for you and me.

All that Jesus did was because of the love He, and the Father had for us. The story of the cross is a story of love. God loved us enough to send His Son Jesus to die for our sins. Jesus loved us enough to go through the pre-crucifixion agonies as well as to die on the cross. What did I do to deserve such a wonderful gift? Nothing! For many of my years I lived and acted rebelliously against God, being counted as His enemies. Yet, God still loved me enough to plan the means by which I could be saved. All this applies to you—He did it for you!

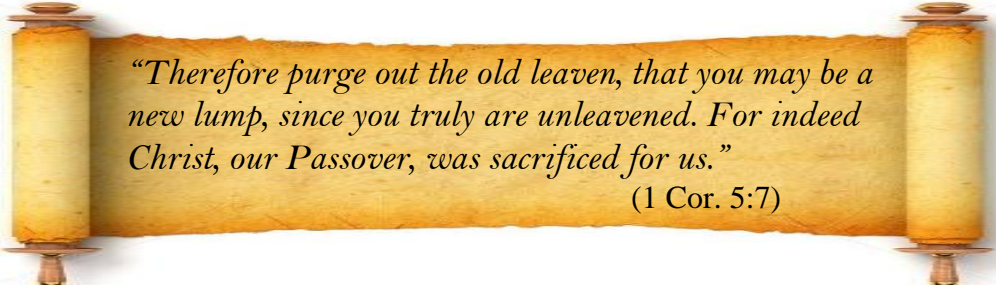
Jesus said, *“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”* (John 12:32).

This, is referring to His death, the story of His sacrifice on your behalf. The drawing power was to be the gospel (Romans 1:16), the word of God (Romans 10:17). Fact is fact, and Jesus gave His life as a ransom for our salvation. Because He first loved us, we should reciprocate and love Him. We should want to express our sincere thanks for all that He did for us.

The gospel which details the story of Jesus' love for us is the only power which God will use to bring men unto Him. **If men are not emotionally touched by the story of Jesus and God's love for us, they are too hard-hearted to be saved.**

The cost for Christianity was very high, the Father's gift to us of His only begotten Son, Jesus. Indeed, very high! There are some prices which man has to pay (not in the sense of earning his salvation) in order to be saved. We shall consider some of them next week.

Love
Dave Scarpino

A scroll with text on it, featuring a parchment-like texture and wooden rollers at both ends. The text is written in a cursive font.

“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”

(1 Cor. 5:7)