 The way of the cross

Consider our Lord’s original Way of the Cross to Calvary. What was it like? How did He remain steadfast in it, right to the end at The Cross. It is a case of enduring love. (Pause) Walking alongside Him for two years and more was Simon Peter. What was his view of the Lord’s Suffering? He had much trouble with it, but underwent conversion of heart, even if slowly and painfully. He would die on a cross himself, in Rome, but put upside down by request, in humility to Jesus’ Cross.

START: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

All: By your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. (***repeat)***

STATION ONE. THE JUDGMENT BEFORE PILATE. PETER HAD TRIED TO INTERVENE. HE HAD SPOKEN TO JESUS ABOUT NOT LETTING HIM SUFFER, NOT IN HIS PRESENT COMPANY. HE HAD TRIED TO DEFEND JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSENAME.

STATION TWO. JESUS ACCEPTS AND CARRIES HIS CROSS. PETER HAD HEARD THE MASTER SAY TO ALL OF THEM, UNLESS YOU DENY YOURSELF, TAKE UP YOUR CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME, YOU CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE. IT HAD BEEN A CONFUSING MESSAGE ABOUT ACCEPTING SUFFERING WITH HIM. WHAT CROSS WAS JESUS TALKING ABOUT? NOW, ON THIS JERUSALEM ROAD, THEY KNEW.

STATION THREE. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME. PETER IS REMINDED OF THE PREDICTION THAT JESUS MADE OF HIM, THAT, BEFORE THE COCK CROWED, HE’D HAVE DENIED HIM. PETER HAD SNUCK INTO THE COURTYARD AFTER THE SURPRISING BETRAYAL OF JUDAS OF THE MASTER, JESUS’ ARREST, AND BEING TAKEN INTO THE CITY. SOMEONE HAD NOTED HIM IN THE CROWD, AS BEING A GALILIEAN AND LIKELY FOLLOWER. HE DENIED IT. AND JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME.

STATION FOUR. JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER. PETER, JAMES AND JOHN HAD KEPT A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER, THE NAME THEY GAVE FOR MARY. THEY WERE STUNNED BY THE INTENSITY OF HER FACE, AS SHE SAW JESUS ON HIS WAY OF THE CROSS. SHE WAS SO MOURNFUL, AND YET, SO STILL FULL OF FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD. HE HAD NOT SEEN THE TWO OPPOSITES SO MERGED IN A PERSON, LIKE IN MARY’S WITNESS HERE TO HIM.

STATION FIVE. SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS. IT WAS ANOTHER SIMON STEPPING IN TO SERVE JESUS THIS TIME. FOR SO MANY MONTHS, IT HAD BEEN SIMON PETER, SON OF JONA. YET HE HAD BEEN MARKED AT THE COURTYARD, AND FEELING AWFUL NOW ABOUT IT, HE DESTRACTED IN BEING CLOSE TO JESUS. YET JESUS GAVE HIM A FINAL LOOK OF LOVE, EVEN AFTER HE HAD LOOKED UPON HIS MOTHER WITH SUCH HEARTFUL CONCERN. PETER LEFT IT UP TO JOHN TO STAY CLOSE TO MARY FROM THAT POINT ON.

STATION SIX. VERONICA OFFERS HER VEIL TO JESUS. EVEN WHILE SOME OF THE MEN WERE SHRINKING AWAY, AS IN SOME APOSTLES AT THIS POINT, SOME OF THE WOMEN COME FORWARD IN BRAVERY. LOVE IMPELLED THEM FORWARD. VERONICA WIPED JESUS FACE, IN A MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY, WHEN THE SOLDIERS WERE DISTRACTED BY THE CROWD. THE HOLY FACE WAS IMPRINTED ON THE VEIL.

STATION SEVEN. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME. PETER RECALLS THE OTHER PERSON WHO SINGLED HIM OUT, IN HIS SECOND DENIAL OF JESUS PREVIOUSLY. IT STINGS HIM HARD IN HIS MEMORY, AND IN THE DISTANCE, JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME.

STATION EIGHT. JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN. MORE WOMEN COME FORWARD TO SEE JESUS, AS HE WALKS OUTSIDE THE WALLS TOWARDS GOLGOTHA. THEY WAIL AND LAMENT HIM, AS LIKE A SON OF THEIRS. PETER CAN HEAR THE WAILS, BUT JESUS IS OUT OF DISTANCE NOW. HE CRIES TOO.

STATION NINE. JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME. AS JESUS STUMBLES HIS WAY TO CALVARY, PETER CONSIDERS HOW HE WIMPERED EVEN IN THE ACCUSATIONS OF A LITTLE GIRL WHO HAD FOUND HIM OUT. HE HAD GOTTEN OUT OF THE SITUATION, BUT IT LEFT HIM SO PARALYZED. JUST THEN, HE THOUGHT OF JESUS KNOWING IT AHEAD OF TIME, AND PREPARING HIM FOR HIS OWN WEAKNESS. JESUS HAD MERCY ON HIM, THE POOR SINNER, THE SAME MAN ONCE IN THE BOAT OF GALILEE.

STATION TEN. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS. PETER CAN SEE THE CROWD MOVING TO THE SKULL PLACE AND THE THREE CROSSES ERECTED. HE RECALLS THE MASTER SAYING: THE SON OF MAN HAS NOWHERE TO LAY HIS HEAD. HE RECALLS JESUS LIVING ON THE KINDNESS OF OTHERS. HE TOOK NO PERSONAL ITEM TO THE CROSS BUT THE CLOTHES ON HIS BACK, WHICH WERE BEING REMOVED NOW, AS THE SOLDIERS SEEMED TO BE SMASHING ON A CROWN OF SOME SORT ON JESUS AS HIS ONLY CLOTHES, AND PERHAPS A LOINCLOTH.

STATION ELEVEN. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS. PETER COULD NOT IMAGINE HOW JESUS WAS GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS DILEMMA. HE HAD SEEN JESUS GET OUT OF MANY SITUATIONS—A STORMY SEA, A VIOLENT MOB, AN INHOSTILE TOWN, AN ISLAND WITH A DEMONIAC, AND MORE. HOW WOULD JESUS ESCAPE THIS? THE NAILS WOULD KEEP HIM AFFIXED.

STATION TWELVE. JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS. THE LORD AND MASTER HAD TOLD IT TO THEM. HE WOULD DIE. JESUS EVEN HAD SPELLED IT OUT FOR THEM, AND TOLD OF SCRIPTURES TO FULFILL, SO HE COULD BE THE LAMB OF GOD. ON THIS FEAST OF THE PASSOVER TIME, AND THE LAMBS BLOOD, HERE WAS THE ONE HIS COUSIN HAS LIKEWISE TABBED AS THE LAMB OF GOD. HIS ALTAR WAS A CROSS.

STATION THIRTEEN. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS. PETER IS A DISTANT WATCHER. BUT JOHN, HIS GOOD FRIEND, WOULD BE THERE FOR JESUS, TO TAKE HIM DOWN. IT WAS KNOWN THAT TWO OTHER MEN WERE THERE TO HELP, JOSEPH THE ARIMITHEA AND NICODEMUS. HE NOTED HOW ONE HAD COME BACK INTO THE CITY FOR PERMISSION TO BURY JESUS IN THAT MAN’S TOMB. AND IT HAD BEEN GRANTED.

STATION FOURTEEN. JESUS IS BURIED. PETER DOES RECALL MARY’S TRUST IN THIS MOMENT. HE WILL ARISE. HE RECALLS JESUS’ WORDS, THAT ON THE THIRD DAY HE WOULD ARISE. WOULD IT COME TO BE?

ON SUNDAY MORN, HE CAME RUNNING TO THE TOMB, UPON THE REPORT OF MARY MAGDALENCE, AND HE CONFIRMED IT: IT WAS AN EMPTY TOMB. HAD JESUS RISEN AS HE SAID?