

The Joy of the Cross

When it comes to living life, most of us live by the calendar. Our schedules are plastered all over some type of medium which enables us to get an idea of what's coming on life's agenda. My family prefers to use one of those big desk calendars where, with one quick look, we can get a clear picture of what lies ahead. Your preference may be a Daytimer (so nineties!), a smartphone or an iPad. You may get your G2 on a G4 network, demanding nothing less than the latest technology!

Regardless of your medium of choice, the calendar can be a source of great excitement. Maybe we're looking forward to marriage, a vacation to the Bahamas, or a new grandbaby. On the other hand, there may be appointments on the calendar which cause us to squirm a little bit as they draw closer; things like April 15, that final exam or a root canal. These are appointments to which we don't look forward with excitement, but which must be kept if we want to live life to the fullest or achieve certain goals. These appointments, although uncomfortable and maybe even foreboding, we face with intentional resolve because we have determined that they are best for us or for those whom we love.

A little over two thousand years ago, Jesus came into this world with one culminating event on His calendar. It was a date which lay in the crosshairs of His life from day one; indelibly etched by His Father's hand. It was a date with the destiny of the Cross.

The Cross was the most horrible of deaths. It was a shameful, excruciating and agonizing death reserved only for the worst of society's criminals. And yet it was upon the Cross that Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, would give His life to satisfy God's holy judgment for sin.

I've often wondered how He could do it. How could He, knowing the agony which lay in store, continue toward that fateful date with purpose and resolve? How could He tell Peter and the rest of His disciples as they turned toward Jerusalem, "I must go...and suffer...and be killed..."? What must it have been like to see that event break from the horizon to the present as the days picked up speed? Then I come to the following verse and I am even more in awe and wonder.

Hebrews 12:2 – Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus endured the Cross for joy. He endured the Cross for the joy of pleasing, and bringing glory to, the Father. He endured it for the joy of paying sin's debt and bringing salvation to the world with the highest cost of love. Greater love hath no man than this; that he would give His life for His friend. Happy Easter!