

May 1, 2004

Pastor Jerry Shirley
Grace Baptist Church
3770 N. Water St.
Decatur, IL 62526

Dear Pastor Shirley:

If ever there was a small book to be studied on how to walk by faith, it is the record in Hebrews 11 of those in the Old Testament who lived and died by faith. There was Abel, who made a **presentation** to God by faith, and Enoch who demonstrated the **possibilities** of walking by faith. Noah's walk was the **performance** of faith, and Abraham's long walk with God revealed the progress of faith. Sarah waited on a child and demonstrated the **patience** of faith, and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph clung to the **promise** of faith in the future. Moses is our model of the **persuasion** of faith, and Joshua and Rahab the **perils** of faith.

How often do you and I witness God doing something impossible in our life? It ought to be so often as we have needs we cannot meet, relationships we cannot mend, or dreams we cannot fulfill in our own strength. This is when we claim the verse in 2 Corinthians 5:7 "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

The above is what I had to do on April 14th, have faith that God would do the impossible in Sarah's life. She knew she was having some problems, as she knows when she has jaw pain that an artery or arteries are blocked. She put off going to the doctor because 11 years ago in April as she was having a cath her artery collapsed, she had a heart attack, had to be shocked back, then had to have heart bypass. Well she made an appointment and the doctor sent her to the hospital and within an hour she was in the cath room. The doctor had to put in three stints and do an angioplasty. So pray with us that all will go well and that she won't have trouble with her body rejecting the stints. "We walk by faith and not by sight."

I am not happy when I am not preaching, but God knew she needed to be near home, not traveling, so I didn't have any engagements at that time. We covet your prayers as I have May filled and I like for her to be with me.

Thank you for your prayers and faithful support. Please call if I can be of help to your and your ministry.

Sincerely in Christ,
Glenn Stockton
The Pastor's Friend

ENCOURAGEMENT

MAY 2004

Good Morning Friend,

Paul wrote ... *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Galatians 6:14)

In the last couple weeks, God has used some events to profoundly deepen my personal understanding and appreciation of the Cross of Christ.

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST, The film focuses on the twelve hours leading up to His death on the cross. It was difficult to watch ... the trials, the endless beatings, seeing men spit into the face of Jesus ... the levity, the mockery, and the laughter of his accusers. The film graphically presented His suffering. It was bloody. It was brutal. But too brutal? Too bloody? Probably not. In fact no words could adequately tell of his pain and suffering. No film footage could overly-state the intensity of His suffering ... physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The writers of the Scriptures endeavor to speak of the intensity of His pain but human language is too limited to tell the entire story.

Isaiah, writing 800 years before the birth of Jesus, prophesied the enormity of His pain in chapter 53. These words jump out of the text: *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed...the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,... Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.*

Psalms 22 also envisioned His suffering. It says, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

All four gospel writers give additional details of His suffering before the cross and on the cross. Many sermons in the book of Acts also speak of His suffering. Peter's sermon at Pentecost says that *Jesus was crucified and slain:* (Acts 2:23). The writers of the epistles give more explanation as to the purpose and severity of the cross.

So the major question is not whether the Jews did it or the Romans did it. **You and I did it.** Our sins nailed Him to the cross. Let's be specific... **I did it. You did it.**

With the hymnist, I can sing... *So I'll cherish the old rugged cross.*

Be Encouraged
Glenn Stockton