



Easter Through a Soldier's Eyes

March 2018 - By Tamara Roberts



“When the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, ‘Certainly this was a righteous Man!’” - Luke 23:47

Do you wonder what happened in the hearts of people who were there during Jesus days on earth? What about the soldier who actually nailed Christ to the cross? We don't know from scripture. We can only imagine...

“I hate my job. On my last post, I was assigned to follow possible insurrectionists, watching for signs of conflict. I observed zealots, rabbis, and you name it.

Last month, I was ordered to crucifixion duty. It has quickly become monotonous. Whip. Nail. Cheers. Jeers. Every day the same.

Then, came Jesus. I'd scrutinized Him on my last post. I never saw Him do anything wrong, yet everywhere He went there was opposition.

But, there I was—assigned to crucify Him. Everything about that day was irregular. All my clients cursed and spat. Not Jesus. He laid His arms out on the crossbars instead of fighting us. Bloodied and beaten way more than most, I wondered how He made it up the hill.

And the crowds. Usually, if there was any crowd, it was people who'd been robbed or had a family member murdered. Looking for justice, they appreciated my work.

Two very different crowds surrounded this Jesus. First, those who accused Him of saying He was the Son of God. Whether He was a liar, a lunatic, or their Lord, they hated Him. The other crowd, mostly women, wailed. I'd seen many men follow this teacher on my last assignment. Where were they? I used to watch them, thousands of them. In this crowd, I saw one.

A friend from my old unit, Darius, said one of Jesus' followers cut the ear off of the Chief Priest's servant. But Jesus picked it up and put it back on. He said the servant bled like a slaughtered lamb. Then the ear was back on like nothing ever happened.

Darius was part of those assigned to escort Jesus from trial to trial. He wanted to witness the crucifixion. He hoped to see more miracles.

Between sobs, the women whispered about how unfair it was. They claimed all He did was love. Some said He healed them. Blind from birth now seeing. Deaf hearing. Lame walking. So, what happened? How did He end up here? But, it wasn't my job to judge, just carry out the sentence.

Back to my hammer. One nail through each hand right at the wrist. Then one for both the feet together. After we raised the cross, our centurion, Darius, and I gambled over his robe. Darius really wanted it. He thought it might have some kind of power or something.

While on the cross, Jesus made sure His mother was taken care of. Who does that from a cross? When some jeered at Him, He said 'Father forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.'

Then it got eerie. Darkness overcame the sun in the middle of the day. The King of the Jews yelled, "It is finished." His head dropped and I no longer saw any signs of life in Him. The earth quaked. People ran screaming.

My centurion said He was a righteous man. He was right. I had the blood of the Son of God on my hands. I had stripped Him in public and cast lots for His clothes. I followed orders without question. Maybe I should've ...

I wanted to run and hide but had work to finish. I hurried things along glad for the Jews' Sabbath laws. I broke the legs of the two thieves on either side of Jesus. I knew He was already dead. With shaking hands, I lanced his side until I hit His heart. Water and blood flowed. Definitely dead.

Out of the corner of my eye I glimpsed His mother. She grabbed her side and bent double when I speared Him. That was the first time I'd felt sympathy in any of the crucifixions.

Usually we threw the carcasses from the crosses into a ditch, but Joseph of Arimathea got permission from Pilot to bury Jesus in His own tomb. Darius and I lowered the cross and removed the nails.

The grieving of His followers tugged at me. I watched Joseph gently cover His body and place Him on a stretcher. Following them to the tomb, I saw the official seal of Rome put on the boulder. Two from my legion were assigned to guard duty.

I staggered home and threw myself on my bedding. Eyes stinging, I shook like a scared dog. Wails like those women escaped my lips. What had I done?

Three days later, my friends who guarded His tomb said the body had been stolen and hidden by His followers. I knew those men personally. They'd never shirk their duty and fall asleep. They're strong. No way the followers could overcome either one, much less together. Besides, I've gambled with those guys. I know when they're lying. Their tale was fishy. It made no sense that they weren't killed for letting it happen on their watch.

Over the next forty days, I heard Jesus appeared out of nowhere to his followers. He explained all the Jewish writings and prophecies concerning His death and resurrection. Then, I saw Him myself when He talked to a crowd of about five hundred people. There was no doubt. It was Jesus, the man I nailed to the cross. Yet, here He was, alive, none the worse for wear except for the scars in His hands, scars from my nails.

I am sure Jesus is the Messiah the Jews talked about, and I crucified Him. I keep hearing His prayer over and over in my mind. 'Father, forgive them.' Could He really forgive me?"

Prayer: Mighty Loving Father, thank You for loving us all the way to the cross and back. Thank you that we can't out-sin Your forgiveness. May we all embrace Your gift of salvation and share it with everyone for Your glory.

Pray for our Church Family

NRHBC Hospital Board & Prayer Sheet as of February 21, 2018: Linda Wade, Khloe Joy, Jane Faulkner, Family of Arthur Lindsey (Kevin Lindsey's dad), Dorothy Doyle, Paula Jacob, Linda Wilson, Dee Davis, Family of Ron Bramlett, Russell Thomas, Family of Wanda "Fern" Cagel, Marinell Fidler, Family of Joyce Moody, Sutton Savage (Joyce Savage's grandson), Donald Ice (Sue Martin's Brother), Claude Kelley, Jim Todd, and Kathy Engeling (Ben White's daughter).

Pray for these with continuing needs: Alice Abbott, Linda Andruss, Darlene Blackburn, Judy Blevins, Claudia Bone, Charlie Brown, Maxine Calvert, Al/Jonathan Cardenas, Delbert Cason, Judy Cherne, Sherry Christensen, Mike Cobb, Karen Coker, Anne Coleman, Rick Collins, Janie Corbett, Jim Corley, Betty Crumpler, Terry Denson, Ryan Donaghue, Sharon Elliot, Bob Englemann, Jan Farr, Clint Frisby, Judy Gangwere, Barbara Gant, Lupe Garcia, Larry & Anita Griffey, Ray Hamelwright, Tom & Hue Leita Harvey, Mark & Glenna Hays, John Heath, Virginia Hitchcock, Marie Holt, Karen & Kemp Hoop, Brian Hostin, Vaughn Kankey, Mary Frances Kelley, Ed & Minerva Kimbell, Stan King, Helen Kingston, Bob Korb, Becky Langston, Ruth Leeth, Doug Leming, Isaiah Lucas, Virgilia Martin, Doris Pait Mayfield, Don McCain, Charlene McGee, Evelyn McIntosh, Janell Miller, Bob Miner, Ralph & Imogene Mochizuki, Jenny Moore, Bill Norman, Ruth Osborne, Eva Pannell, Jean Pulliam, Vickey Rice, Dell Richardson, Nelda Roik, Jody Rushing, Don Shaver, Linda Shepherd, Ellen Shirley, Becky Shroyer, Brenda & Steve Slaughter, Bea Smith, Gerald Smith, Rosa Lee Smith, Charlsie Smith, Joyce Stafford, Matha Sterling, Crystal Stewart, Ladena Sullivan, Karolyn Taylor, Hubert Thedford, Leland Thomas, Mike Thomas, John Tucker, Evelyn Vaughn, Bob Votaw, Homer Wallace, Eddie White, Lorene Williams, Helen Wilson, Calvin Winters, Mandi Womack and Glenn Wright.

Pray for Ministries of NRHBC & Cross Church

Scott Maze, Senior Pastor requests prayer for:

☞ Friends, family & co-workers who are lost. Pray for people by name.

Danny Roberts, Executive Pastor requests prayer for:

- ☞ Wisdom in determining future Cross Church staff needs.
- ☞ Speedy cooperation from City of Ft. Worth on Cross Church construction permits.
- ☞ Successful Hang Ten Media Campaign.

Jeremy Winters, Cross Church Campus Pastor requests prayer for:

- ✝ Generous giving toward "Grow Together" building fund. We look forward to having our own building.
- ✝ Our search for a Cross Church Worship Pastor.
- ✝ Effective strategy/leaders for community engagement.

Danny Koonce Worship Pastor & Jay Krivsky Worship Ministry Associate request prayer for:

- 🎧 Music & Ensemble preparations for Easter.
- 🎧 Jay is preparing for the Singles Spring Retreat.

Dave Bryant, MS, & HS Ministries requests prayer for:

- 🎒 Student mission trips to Brooklyn (HS only) and New Orleans (Student Choir) during the week of Spring Break. For safe travels and for many to come to Christ.
- 🎒 Cross Building Service on March 28. That students would invite lost friends and many would respond to the gospel presentation.

D'Ann Laywell-Children's Ministry & Caren Crow-Preschool Ministry & Sandra Zwerg-KID Worship Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🚗 Preschool needs helpers at 9:30: 1 for babies, 1 for 1 year olds, and 1 for 2 year olds.
- 🚗 ESL; an opportunity to minister to our community.
- 🚗 More KID Connection volunteers needed at 9:30 and 11:00 so parents can attend Worship and BFGs.

Daniel Stafford, GPS (Singles) Ministry requests prayer for:

☺ God's direction in the GPS (Singles) Ministry.

D'Ann Laywell, Women's Ministry requests prayer for:

☞ Women to form godly friendships.

Stuart Pendell, Couples Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🙏 Stronger, healthier, and happier marriages.
- 🙏 Re-Engage class starts January 21 and runs for 12 Weeks.
- 🙏 Those marriages that are just barely hanging on - That God would use this class to bring those couples closer to Him and to each other.

T. J. Daugherty, Director of Global Missions requests prayer for:

🌐 God's direction in missions and helping those in need.

Jody Hayes, Wellness & Senior Adult Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🙏 Opportunities to share Christ with those who use the Wellness Center each week.
- 🙏 Vitality among senior adults as they serve Christ.
- 🙏 NRHBC widows to feel love & experience ministry.

Joshua Jones, Director of Communications requests prayer for:

- 🙏 Courtney and I as we are fostering. Prayer support to raise these children to know and love Jesus.
- 🙏 More volunteers are needed for Media Ministry.

Bus Ministry requests prayer for:

🚌 Adult riders (18 yrs +) to assist each week or every other week; Sunday mornings and/or Wednesday evenings.

Numbers to call for Prayer Concerns:

International Mission Board
Prayer Line 1-800-395-PRAY (7729)
North American Mission Board Prayer
Line 1-800-554-PRAY (7729)
International Mission News
<http://www.imb.org>
North American Mission News
<http://www.namb.net>
General Prayer Requests
diane@nrhbc.org

North Richland Hills
Baptist Church
6955 Blvd. 26
North Richland Hills, TX 76180

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Let us pray for the special activities of our church

- Mar 2—Women’s Ministry to Canton
- Mar 4—Lord’s Supper in AM services, Family Dedications, Life Defining Evangelism Class begins, Deacon Meeting & VBS Kick-Off.
- Mar 5 & 19—Mom to Mom.
- Mar 9—WOW Ministry to a Mini-concert and Luncheon, & Kids Night Out.
- Mar 10-17—CrossChurch Vancouver Mission Trip & Student Brooklyn Mission Trip.
- March 11—Daylight Saving Time– Spring Forward, Discover NRHBC New Members Class, & Family Skate Night.
- Mar 11-16—New Orleans Student Choir Mission Trip.
- Mar 12-15—Family Mission Trip to Riverbend.
- Mar 17—GPS Hayride ‘n’ Hotdogs in Benbrook.
- Mar 18—Hang 10.
- Mar 25—Baptism Sunday and Leadership Equipping Meetings.
- Mar 29—Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m.
- Mar 31—Annual Eggstravaganza, 10 a.m.-12 Noon, South Lawn.
- Tues Morn Sr Bible Study & Tues Ministry Choir singing at various facilities
- Hispanic Ministry
- Kids Beach Clubs
- Media Ministry
- Music Ministry
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Wellness Center Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Homebound Ministry
- Ladies Prayer Group
- Men’s Bible Study
- Pastor’s Prayer Team
- Upward Basketball
- Women’s Ministry
- Young Singles Thursday Night Bible Study
- KID Worship
- Library Ministry
- Men’s Ministry
- Preschool Ministry
- Wednesday WILD
- Young Singles 20s Ministry

- Academy Home School Choir
- Adopt-A-School Mentoring
- Angel Land Preschool
- Apartment Ministry
- BSF Groups
- Bus Ministry
- Child Care Ministry
- Children’s Choir
- Children’s Ministry
- Connect Classes
- Couples Ministry
- Cross Church Campus
- Divorce Care
- Divorce Care for Kids
- ESL Program
- Financial Peace University
- Fine Arts Academy
- Food Pantry
- G.A.L.s Drama Group
- Global Focus Ministry
- Good News Club
- GPS (Singles) Ministry
- GPS (Singles) Prayer&Praise
- GriefShare Ministry