

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25)

It makes a difference where you stand. Sometimes if you are standing too close to the curb after a rainstorm, you may be drenched by a car splashing water out of the road. If you are standing too close to someone as they fall, you may be knocked down kind of like a domino effect. Not too long ago I heard that someone was standing too close to a target of a drive-by shooting. The bystander was injured along with the intended victim. Then you hear of *the innocent bystander*. When it comes to the Cross of Christ, are there really any innocent people to be found close by?

To be a disciple of Jesus, there must be a cost. Someone has to pick up the cross. Jesus said that if any one followed Him, they must pick up their cross daily. That is a costly endeavor. The trials and tests that come from following Jesus are painful. But the cross was designed for crucifixion, not comfort.

The glory of the cross is that God went there for us. It was intentional and not an accidental circumstance. It was planned and purposed. And God Himself was the only truly innocent bystander. Consider these thoughts:

I. THE CROSS AFFECTS ALL THOSE WHO ENCOUNTER IT.

The women who stood there were transfixed by the horror and drawn close by the love. Even today, we are drawn to the cross. We cannot negotiate our way to God around it. We cannot bypass it. We must go to the cross. We are changed by it. We will either reject it or accept it.

II. THE CROSS AFFECTS THE ONE WHO IS CRUCIFIED.

The one on the cross does not survive the experience. There are no living survivors of the cross. When we pick up the cross daily, the purpose is to carry it to the place where we must die to ourselves.

III. THE CROSS AFFECTS THOSE WHO WITNESS THE CRUCIFIXION. When we witness people die, it makes a difference to our lives. When we understand that Jesus was crucified as an innocent man, we are moved to examine why. The innocent must die to redeem, or purchase the guilty. When we see His love for us displayed on the cross, the Holy One for the unholy ones, we are never the same. We become witnesses to the scene when we acknowledge our need for Jesus to be crucified...His death for our life.

IV. OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS COSTLY TO EVERYONE AROUND US. Obedience to the will of God was costly to those who loved Jesus. Our obedience to God will be costly to those who love us. We cannot obey God and things remain comfortable and constant for those around us. We are continuously being conformed to God's image.

V. DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD COSTS MORE. There are no innocent bystanders at the cross. The only innocent one was Jesus.

When you consider your position in Christ today, are you standing close to the Cross?

Thank You Lord for the Crucifixion...the Resurrection...Your Life for my life.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam