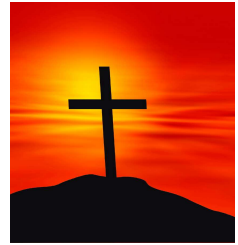




Towards The Goal - A reflection on Easter

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What was the most recent goal you set for yourself?
Was it a big one, or a small one, long term or completed
that same day?

Generally speaking, the greater the goal, the more effort, discipline and difficulty it will involve, and this was certainly the case for Jesus. His goal was the greatest ever set for a man or woman: providing salvation for humanity. He aimed to restore the severed relationship between God and the people He had created. Because the goal was so great, so was the cost of achieving it.

Try and imagine what it must have been like for Jesus as he lived through the last few days of His life here on earth.

Just a week before His crucifixion He experienced the fickle praise of the crowd as He triumphantly entered Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" (Matthew 21 v 5)

Did He know, even then, that this same crowd who were spreading palm leaves before Him and shouting blessings would, just 5 days later, be calling out for Him to be crucified?

While He was throwing out the people who were desecrating the temple by buying and selling there, was He aware of the shortness of time left to Him to show them how far they had moved from worship acceptable to God?

As He explained the significance of His anointing by the woman in the house of Simon the leper, did He wonder if these same disciples who were arguing over the waste of money would really be His witnesses in a hostile world?

Then came the Last Supper, that bittersweet time when Jesus drew His chosen 12 around Him and explained that, not only would He soon leave them, but that one of their own number would betray Him.

On to Gethsemane, and the magnitude of all He was to suffer bore down on Him with such force that He sweated drops of blood. Was He disappointed that His chosen three disciples couldn't watch and pray with Him, or did He sympathise with their human frailty? "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." (Matthew 26 v 41).

We can speculate about Jesus' thoughts during that final period before His crucifixion, and the Bible gives us some insights to help us. But there are things which we don't have to speculate about.

- Firstly, we know that Jesus **achieved His goal** and provided a way so that "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life".(John 3v16)
- Secondly, Hebrews 12 v 2 tells us **how** Jesus achieved His goal - "Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
- Thirdly, in Philippians 3v13 Paul tells us "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Is this the main goal of your life? Or are other things overshadowing it?

Will you endure the hard times by fixing your eyes on Jesus and the joy which He promises is to come?