

### **AGONY IN THE GARDEN**

*And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast, and kneeling down, he prayed, Saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground.*

- Luke 22:41-44

Addictions can cause some of the most painful agony known to man. The agony comes when I have full knowledge of my sinfulness yet feel paralyzed to overcome it. I fear the slightest temptation yet I will not resist to the point of shedding blood. Christ experienced and took on the agony of my addictions. In the darkness on the Mount of Olives He fell to His knees in prayer as the temptations of my addictions approached. He fought my addictions not with legions of angels or bands of apostles but alone in prayer. Christ has overcome the world and He has overcome my addictions.

Lord, help me to trust in you and pray and choose "death rather than sin," death rather than my addiction. Give me the strength to resist my addiction even to the point of shedding blood.

### **SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR**

*Then therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him.*

*Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

- John 19:1, Isaiah 53:4-6

At the scourging at the pillar Jesus took upon Himself the intense physical sufferings of my addictions. His flesh was torn open with each lash of the whip by my addiction to sins of the flesh. His wounds poured forth the dark red blood for my addiction to alcohol and drugs. He was stripped for the scourging for my addiction to pride. He was strapped and secured to the pillar for my addiction to power. Yet, as Isaiah says, "by his bruises, we are healed." Jesus has taken the physical punishment for my addictions. I must keep the image of Christ being scourged ever fresh in my mind. If I am resisting and overcoming my addiction I will see the scourged body of Jesus as a beautiful gift to me. If I am not resisting with all of my strength I will see His scourging as meaningless and will one day find the whip in my own hand. However, Jesus will be, "dumb as a lamb before his shearer and he shall not open his mouth."

### **CROWNING WITH THORNS**

*And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head.*

*For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: I am turned in my anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened.*

*I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me.*

- Mark 17:19, Ps 31:4, Is 50:6

The second gate that guards against addiction after the eye is the mind. Through the mind thoughts race of how to use or abuse God's gifts. The mind when guided by an upright heart will stand fast against temptation and addiction. The mind alone, without the heart, will excuse and reason away God's laws. God knows what I need before I ask and knows all of my thoughts. Jesus suffered the cruel crowning of thorns for my sinfulness of thought. Every thorn and blow to the head brought Him intense suffering. He experienced the suffering that accompanies the mental battles of my addiction. Lord, help me to echo the words of the prophet Isaiah when I am faced with temptations toward my addiction. "The Lord God is my helper, therefore I am not confounded: therefore I have set my face as a most hard rock: and I know that I shall not be confounded."

## CARRYING OF THE CROSS

*And the whole people answering, said:  
His blood be upon us and our children*

*And bearing his own cross, he went  
forth to that place which is called Calvary, but  
in Hebrew Golgotha.*

*- Matt 27:25, John 19:17*

The wood of the cross most likely weighed as much as Jesus did Himself. He was forced to carry this cross even after the cruel torture He had previously endured. However, the weight of Christ's cross was not a weight of oak or cedar or any other wood. The weight of His cross was the weight of my addictions. He carried the weight of the extra food from my gluttony. His cross clanked and jingled under the weight of empty whiskey bottles and crack pipes. The impure images from pornographic magazines flapped in the wind on the path to Calvary. Christ carried them all on His shoulder. The weight was tremendous and caused Him to fall. Yet as an example He stood once more and continued on, determined to crucify my addictions on that hill outside Jerusalem. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." He did not lay down that cross nor can I. I must carry my cross daily and bring my addictions to Calvary to be crucified. When I fall I cannot stay down or the weight of the cross will crush me. I must rise and continue my journey. When Jesus says "follow me" he means to Calvary.

## THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH

*And it was the third hour, and they  
crucified him.*

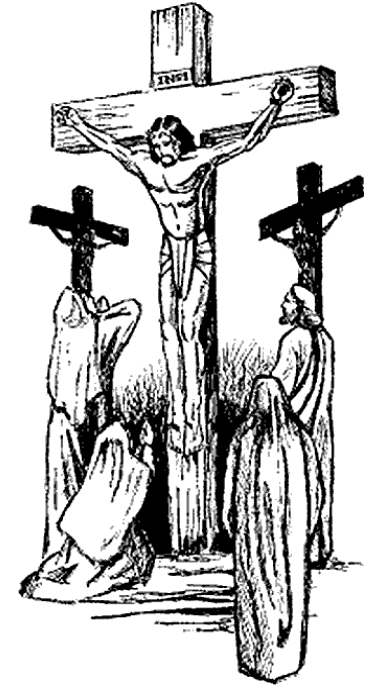
*For many dogs have encompassed me:  
the council of the malignant hath besieged me.  
They have dug my hands and feet.*

*And they shall say to him: What are  
these wounds in the midst of thy hands? And he  
shall say: With these I was wounded in the  
house of them that loved me.*

*- Mark 15:25, Ps 21:17, Zechariah 13:6*

On the cross Lord Jesus You took upon Yourself all of my addictions. You, who were without sin, became sin that I might have eternal life. You, purity Incarnate, were stripped naked in the midst of all for my sexual addictions. Your only possession, your seamless garment, was taken from you for my addiction to things, and the soldiers gambled to win it. You took my addiction to anger and violence and allowed your hands and feet to be pierced. You Jesus, meek and humble of heart, were lifted up for all to see and ridicule for my addiction to pride. You, who were called a drunk and a glutton, drank the sour wine for my addictions to food and alcohol. You took the punishment and death my addictions deserve and nailed them to the cross. When you had done all of this you said, "It is finished." Sin and addiction were finished. Their power was put to death on the cross. Lord, help me to trust in this one saving act and constantly participate in it by bringing my sin and addiction to mass and washing myself clean in your blood.

## THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF ADDICTION



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