

THE MALCHUS EVENT: THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50-51; John 18:1-10

Jesus performed many miracles during His earthly ministry. One of those miracles was performed as Jesus walked the bitter road to Calvary. It happened in the Garden of Gethsemane just after His prayer of commitment to the Father's will. He faced the angry mob sent to arrest Him. When we read the four Scripture passages at the heading of this devotional we find the story of the servant of the High Priest losing an ear! Only John the Beloved identifies the man Malchus as that servant. Further, it is only John who identifies Simon Peter as the disciple who whipped out his sword and severed the ear of Malchus.

While the setting for the miracle that followed is found in each of the four Gospels, only the Beloved Physician Luke so beautifully calls attention to the unconditional compassion of Jesus as He healed the severed ear of Malchus.

The major focus of this interesting entry in the record found in all four Gospels is not on a man named Peter whose impulsive attempt to defend Jesus flashed with lightning speed to cut off a man's ear.

No! The focus is on Jesus, **the God Who cares!** He was not an opportunist, doing something to prove His power in order to fend off the troops...just **the God Who cares!** His was not an act of desperation, diverting attention away from His accusers to avoid being arrested...just **the God Who cares!**

The dynamic emphasis must focus on the caring, compassionate heart of Jesus. A man who was part of an entourage sent to arrest Jesus as He walked the bitter road to Calvary was now standing before Him, bleeding, hurting, and in all probability frightened. The compassionate heart of Jesus could not let him continue in that state. He gently touched the man's ear and healed him.

Can we imagine the report of the Captain of the troops as he reported to Caiaphas? The dialogue may have gone something like this:

Caiaphas: "I see you were successful in arresting that rabble-rouser from Nazareth! How did it go?"

Captain: "Well, fine, I suppose, but something troubled me, and still does!"

Caiaphas: "Just what is it that troubles you?"

Captain: "Everything went according to plans, except for that ear."

Caiaphas: "What ear? What do you mean?"

Captain: "Well, this big fellow, 'Peter' I think they call him, took out a sword...quick as lightning...and cut off the right ear of your servant Malchus. We might have expected some resistance, but it was not the resistance that bothers me. It's that ear."

Caiaphas: "What do you mean...that ear?"

Captain: "That fellow called 'Jesus' was calm and caring. He just picked up the ear and put it back on the servant's head like it had never been cut off...no blood, no scar...Yes, Sir, I saw it! It's that ear that bothers me! I can't look at the servant Malchus without being troubled at just why we had to arrest Jesus Who healed that ear. Malchus is a man with a miracle ear."

Caiaphas: "Well...forget it...we have Him now!"

Captain: "I can't! It's that ear...it troubles me! The Man Jesus was different. It was difficult to arrest Him. I can't get over that ear...it still troubles me!"

As we walk the Road to Easter, we too may be hurting, lonely, weary, frightened, perplexed ... but remember Jesus **IS the God Who cares!** Reach out to Him... the Compassionate Christ.

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