



REFLECTIONS

April 6, 2014, Refreshed from May 6, 2007

"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:36

Approaching Gethsemane

Restless nights occasionally come to us all. Sometimes there seems to be no explanation for them at all. A few times the cause is excitement about an upcoming event, but often insomnia can be attributed to anticipation of something undesirable. So imagine the agony Abraham suffered the night before he was to give up his son as a sacrifice.

You remember that Abraham took Isaac, his long awaited son, up to Mount Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice to God. God had promised Abraham a son. He promised to make Abraham a great nation with heirs as many as the stars. Yet, God had also asked him to take his only legitimate son up to the mountain and sacrifice him as he would a lamb. Abraham was called to do something he did not want to do, and surely the anticipation of it produced a restless night.

Jesus must have felt the same way as he approached Gethsemane to pray. He understood what He was called to do, but that did not mean that He wanted to do it. In fact, Jesus said to his disciples, **"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow..."** (Matthew 26:38) Then with his face to the ground and with blood dripping from his forehead, he prayed for the cup to be taken from him.

Most likely God had similar feelings. He must have approached Gethsemane with a heavy heart much like Abraham had as he anticipated the sacrifice of *his* son. Tomorrow Jesus would suffer the most humiliating abuse and punishing pain. But *God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son.* (John 3:16)

God spared Abraham's son; and Jesus was resurrected from the dead. But God did not spare them from the anticipation and fear of pain.

From time to time, we are all called to do something we do not want to do. Whether it is to let go of someone we love or a possession we cherish, or whether it is a commitment to fulfill our life's purpose, at some time in our walk through this life, we find ourselves approaching Gethsemane. And God does not spare us the pain of it all.

But he is a loving God. God may not prevent the suffering, but he does open the doors of life beyond the pain.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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