



REFLECTIONS

April 20, 2014

"I am the way and the truth and the life."

John 14:6

More than a Story

Crowds lined the streets as the Grand Marshall led the parade down Main Street. The kick-off to a week of celebration brought cheers, excitement, and anticipation to the ceremonial event each year. The Grand Marshall set the stage, but the focus seldom resided on the leader very long. But when Jesus entered Jerusalem the scene was different. Cheering crowds waved palm branches as he rode by. The celebration was the Passover, but to many Jesus was the main attraction. And no matter the season, he still is.

The Easter story is celebrated each year as Bible passages are read and the story retold just as in other seasons we read story favorites like *Barrington Bunny* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. But this one is more than a story. Take a moment to live it.

A lowly donkey carried the Lord Jesus on a triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The days following led him and his disciples to a dining table in a private room. Picture it—better yet, *feel* it—*Feel* it the way John felt as he leaned against the Master. Feel it the way Peter felt when Jesus knelt to wash his feet. Feel it the way Judas Iscariot felt when Jesus dismissed him to go do what he had to do. More than a story took place that night.

Take the walk with the disciples as they followed Jesus across the Kidron Valley to an olive grove we know as Gethsemane. Stand in Peter's shoes as soldiers clutched the arms of his Lord to haul him away for reasons not understood. Immerse yourself in the confusion he felt when Jesus scolded him for striking a soldier's ear. Imagine his bewilderment when Jesus submitted himself to hostile soldiers who forced him back across the valley to face angry Pharisee accusers. It's more than a story.

Just as pictures embody our souls with the horrors of war when standing on the Gettysburg battlefield, or the magnitude of sacrifices made at the site of the Normandy invasion, allow pictures to unfold on Jerusalem's narrow streets along the way to Golgotha. Feel the emotion erupt through the pores of your skin when envisioning the horrors that unfolded there. It's more than a story.

Feel the disgrace of naked exposure on the cross and spit hitting his face. Count the blessings of grace bought by the disgrace he endured for you. It's more than a story.

Stand among the markers at Arlington National Cemetery. They tell more than a story. They are alive with the sacrifice of so many who ensured us the freedom to stand there. Then stare into the stark coldness of a tomb where Jesus was placed. Notice the nearby stone rolled away from its entry. Feel the joy that he is not there and the elation that because he lives, you have received life everlasting. It is more than a story.

Jesus is the Way. He is the Truth. Through him we receive everlasting life.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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