

Identity Doubts

A LENTEN REFLECTION

Physical torture wasn't enough though, for once Jesus had been crucified, the mocking began.

The robbers who were crucified on either side of him heaped **insults** on him.

The chief priests and the teachers of the law **mocked** him, saying: *"He saved others, but he can't save himself"* (Matthew 27:42).

There were the passers-by.

No doubt there were quite a number of them on that main highway. As they went past they jeered and they hurled insults, they shook their fists and cried: *"You who said you were going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God"* (Matthew 27:40).

If you are the Son of God ... I've heard those words before somewhere. Remember when Jesus was being tempted in the desert? Satan said to him: *"Jesus, if you are the son of God tell these stones to become bread"* (Matthew 4:3).

"IF you are the Son of God ..."

Was the temptation here for Jesus to turn the stones into bread, or was he being tempted to doubt who he was?

Was Jesus being tempted to doubt that he was the Son of God?
I'm sure Jesus knew who he was, but Satan wanted Jesus to doubt what he knew.

Satan wants us to doubt what we know,
to doubt who we are,
to doubt what God has said.

In the garden of Eden we find another temptation scene.

Satan tempted Eve to disobey God by saying to her, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" (Genesis 3:1) **Did God really say that?** Was Satan tempting Eve to eat the fruit, or was he tempting her to doubt what God had said. As if to say, "no he didn't say that, you misheard, you know better."

When Jesus was on that cross, was he being tempted to doubt his identity? Was there a little voice saying to him:

"You! Call yourself the Son of God,

REALLY?

You're joking, right?

You, the son of God,

look at you!

You hardly look like the Son of God,

you're a mess,

you're pathetic.

How could **you** be the Son of God?

God wouldn't want you for his son!"

Do you ever doubt who you are?

Do you ever hear a little voice saying

“You, a child of God,
REALLY?”

“What makes you so special?”

What makes you anything out of the ordinary?

You’re just you, nothing remarkable.

Why would God want you for his child?”

Are we sometimes tempted to doubt who we know we are in Christ?

Galatians has a lot to say about being sons of God. It says: *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ ...”* (Galatians 3:26)
Galatians goes on to say: *“You are no longer a slave, but a son and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir”*
(Galatians 4:7)

We can be sure that through our faith in Christ we are sons of God.

So often we define ourselves by what we do,
By what we look like,
By our work and our skills,
By our family.

But our true definition is found in Christ.

“For in Him (Jesus) we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Who we are to Christ is someone incredibly loved and valued.

Jesus knew who he was.

He didn't have to prove it by getting off the cross. In fact, he proved it by choosing to stay there and go through the death that he did. He knew that this was the moment that he had come for.

But it **must** have been tempting to come down. Can you imagine the looks on the mockers' faces if Jesus had climbed down from the cross and said: “**see, I told you!**” But he didn't. He stayed.

Jesus knew who he was, therefore **His concern** was not for himself. In his final moments Jesus did three amazing things.

1. He prayed: “*Father forgive them, they don't know what they 're doing*” (Luke 23:34).
2. He forgave the dying thief who had a change of heart, comforted him, and promised him a future in paradise (Luke 23:40-43).
3. He thought about the care of his mother and entrusted her to John (John 19:26-27).

In the time that Jesus could well have been consumed by his own pain we see him ...

thinking about other people.

Jesus knew who he was, and he knew this was the moment he'd come for.

He knew he was the son of God.

What defines your identity?

Who defines your identity?

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