

“At the cross”

By Roberto Bruno

The cross to us today is a religious symbol but in history it was a tool of pain and death. The Roman cross that Jesus died on was an instrument devised by the Persians and later adopted by the Romans to punish wrongdoing against the government of the day. As a matter of fact, those condemned to the cross had to wear a placard defining their crime around their neck and then the placard was nailed to the cross upon crucifixion. The Roman government wanted all to be aware of the guilty party, the crime he committed and the consequences for such wrongdoing.

Many feel that it was Rome that put Jesus to death. Jesus had no particular quarrel with Rome and did not violate Roman law and yet he was punished by the Romans in accordance with Roman law, and executed by a means exclusively reserved for those guilty of crimes against the Roman Empire. It was a "cruel and unusual" punishment, calculated to derive the maximum amount of suffering. As such, the Roman practice adhered to a very precise procedure. Jesus was beaten almost to death with staves and whips. Then Jesus was nailed to a cross through the wrists and feet to die a painful death of suffocation and heart failure. All in a days work for the Roman soldiers but was it? “...for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”. I Corinthians 2:8.

The cross was all part of God’s plan to bring hope to the lost and dying. “Surely He has borne **our** grief’s and carried **our** sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for **our** transgressions, He was bruised for **our** iniquities; the chastisement for **our** peace was upon Him, and by His stripes **we** are healed”. Isaiah 53:4-5.

We are living in a season of hope. The death and resurrection of Jesus gave humanity real hope for the first time in history. Hope is a word that we like to throw around. “I hope this works, I hope you feel better, I hope for this or that”. The true essence of the word gets cheapened at times. To the world, hope is to long for something, it’s to anticipate something that we want with all of our heart to be fulfilled.

We need hope in our lives, and while the hope the world offers are based on our wants and desires things that don’t satisfy and things that will fail us. The hope that Scripture talks about is different. This hope can be defined as this: “*an expectation based on the promises of God*”. This hope is different! This hope is eternal and won’t fail us. The work that took a cross, the very symbol of death and despair and a tomb, the epitome of hopelessness and turned them forever into symbols of life and hope for the believer. That whoever believes in what was accomplished upon that cross and believes in who it was that walked out of that tomb would be saved. That’s the hope we have.

