

I remember walking into Jerusalem. When we got there with Jesus and my brother, and the others. It was intense. The crowd was incredible they were all shouting “Hosanna!” “Hosanna in the highest!” It was crazy! We were so excited. When Jesus wrote in, it was like he was already King, he was just missing the crown. And then it was just before the feast, and we were getting ready, when Jesus started to teach again. And you know what happens when Jesus teaches... well he's so wise and we're so, unwise. A lot of what he said we just didn't really understand. We thought we understood, but we didn't really actually get it. And Jesus said the “hour has come for the son of man to be glorified”. And that was incredible! After 3 years we thought Jesus would finally overthrow the Romans, take his place as king, and finally get the crown that he deserves. Between that and the crowd, we were just so excited; so it didn't make any sense to us that Jesus was so troubled.

He wasn't excited at all. In fact later that night in the garden, Jesus was praying and we could all hear him and he actually prayed “Father save me from this hour”. Can you believe that? Why would Jesus want to be saved from this hour? This is what it all came down to this is the moment that we had all been working towards for the last 3 years. And we were all thinking it: ‘Jesus, I mean getting cold feet is one thing, but not wanting to do it, and asking God to save you from it? Why on Earth would you pray for that? Because up until this point we all were convinced that Jesus was going to come and take over from the Romans and establish this Kingdom that he had been talking about for so long. We thought that he was going to get his crown and be our King. And what we didn't know then, is that Jesus actually knew that he was going to the cross. He knew that he was going to die for our sins. So that made what he prayed next, even more incredible. After he said ‘father save me from this hour’ he then prayed “but for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify your name”. Wow. That's incredible that he would pray such a thing knowing that he was going to the Cross, but he still wanted to do God's will even if it meant death on a cross. And then you heard what happened next didn't you?

That's when the voice thundered from heaven and said “I have glorified it and I will glorify it again!” Sorry my God voice isn't that good, but I wasn't the only one that heard it- others heard it too! People were arguing whether or not it was God or an angel from heaven, but it affirmed for us that Jesus was worthy of following, and we were supposed to keep following him. We were so certain after everything we had been through that he was the one; so that's why what happened next was so confusing.

You see when we were in the garden that's when the guards came and arrested Jesus. We didn't know what was going on. Peter tried to fight back, and actually swung his sword and cut off a guard's ear! But Jesus stopped him and said to not fight. They took him away and we ran we didn't know what to do. We weren't sure what was going on, or what Jesus's plan was, but we knew that in the morning we would go early and we would try to convince them that Jesus did nothing wrong and that he was totally innocent. I don't know if any of us slept that night, I know Peter didn't. He tried to find out what they were where they were taking Jesus.

The next morning we went as early as we could to wait for Jesus to come out after meeting with Pilate. And when he came out he had been beaten so badly we didn't even recognize him. Pilot brought actually brought out two people Jesus and Barabbas. Barabbas was a robber. It was a custom at the time to release a prisoner this time of year. And Pilate asked “who should I release to you?” So we shouted as loud as we could

“Jesus!” But the crowd was so loud, and our voices were just drowned out. “Give us Barabbas!” they shouted. What? Why would they ask for Barabbas over Jesus? Pilate wasn’t even convinced, but still he released Barabbas and we were stunned. Jesus had done nothing wrong. Before we knew it, Pilate it asked what to do with Jesus and the crowd was shouting “Crucify him!” Our voices were drowned out in a sea of shouts and it wasn't long before Jesus was carrying his cross to be crucified. They took him up the hill and they nailed him to that cross and raised him into the air.

You know it's funny, because the night before Jesus and said “When I am lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all people to myself”. We thought he meant when he is raised up as king or exalted and lifted up in Praise, but what he actually meant was when they lifted him into the air on the cross. You see, a lot of what Jesus talked about we didn't totally understand. Because we can't just take things at face value. We can't just hear things the way that we want to hear them. When Jesus went to the Cross to die it wasn't just that he died on that cross - he rose again! He actually lived! God had a plan that no one else knew about but Jesus. Jesus have been telling us all along, we just didn't get it. We didn't understand because we already had expectations.

You've heard about my vision? The one that God gave me? I was standing before the Throne and it was surrounded by the four living creatures and the 24 elders, and in God's powerful right hand, he held a scroll that was sealed with Seven Seals. And this scroll was different. This scroll was The Book of Life. This scroll had God's plan for Earth and creation. This scroll had the way that God was going to rescue a creation that had become so broken. Then a voice of an Angel thundered out and said “Who is worthy to take this scroll and open it Seven Seals?” I'm not good with angel voices either- it doesn't do it justice. But I knew that once that scroll was opened, God would restore his creation. I looked around to the creatures and the elders, waiting for one of them to take the scroll but they didn't. None of them were Worthy. I looked around to all of Heaven and no one took the scroll. I looked to the Earth and no one on the earth or under it was worthy to take the scroll. But if no one took the scroll, then we are lost. If no one was worthy to take it and open it and unleash God's plan, then we are lost! Are we so lost?

Then one of the elders said to me do not weep. Behold The Lion of Judah the root of David has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and it's Seven Seals. I looked up by the throne and among the living creatures and among the elders was a lamb. The lamb looked as though it had been slain, and it had seven eyes and seven horns, and I knew this lamb immediately. It was familiar. It was Jesus. And Jesus went and took the scroll from the right hand of the father and immediately – Oh! And I thought the crowds coming into Jerusalem where amazing! But they were nothing, nothing compared to what I witnessed. The creatures and the elders bowed down with their Harps and their bowls, and cried out “Worthy are you to take the scroll and open it seals for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God”. And I looked around and the voice of many myriads and myriads and thousands and thousands of angels started to shout “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!” And all of heaven and every creature on the earth and under the Earth and in the sea cried out “To him who sits on the throne, and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever amen!” You see Jesus was Worthy. He is the only one who can execute God's perfect plan. He is the only one who can rescue Humanity from ourselves and from our sin. When you look at this cross - recognize that Jesus didn't just die -he lived! When you see this cross, know that there is so much more behind it than just a couple of pieces of wood. This was part of God's big plan there is more than we can perceive and see and understand in our tiny view of the world.

Even when we were with Jesus, we came across so many different people. There were the **unbelievers** who thought that Jesus was just a troublemaker and that he caused division and anger. They thought he should just go away because he caused so much trouble. They were just thinking about the here and the now and what was immediately in front of them, and they didn't like that Jesus was disrupting that. They didn't see that God was working in far bigger ways and that their comfort had to be disrupted. And then there was the **Pharisees**. The people that you think should get it, the people that were religious that called themselves followers of God, and yet they didn't understand at all what Jesus was trying to do. They thought his ways were making a mockery of God because they understood God with such a tiny perspective. They thought following God was just about following his rules, pleasing him so he didn't get angry. They missed the love and mercy that God had shown to them for generations and generations. And then there were the **disciples** those who followed after Jesus. The crowds who thought that he was the Messiah. We missed it because we thought the messiah was just a man sent by God and we didn't realize that he was God in the Flesh - he was the word that had become flesh. Love incarnate. We just expected him to overthrow the Romans and set up a kingdom on Earth that we could follow and be a part of. I thought my brother James and I would be in his inner circle, ruling alongside Jesus with the other disciples. It wasn't until we saw Jesus risen from the dead that we realized and began to realize all that Jesus had taught had been preparing us for this. There was so much more to Jesus being our king. We expected a crown like Caesar or David had, and Jesus got an earthly crown – a crown of thorns. Jesus knew that if he didn't go to the cross, he wouldn't get the crown that he deserved.

So when you look at this cross, don't just see two pieces of wood, don't just see some wise teacher who lived at some point in history. Because there was so much more that was going on. He did all this because he loves you. God gave his one and only son, so that anyone who would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life. We all didn't understand at first. But God didn't come into this world to condemn it, but to save it – so that he could open that scroll. And friends, the **ONLY** way, that you will ever have your name written in the book of life is if you are born again. You must have the Son and put your trust in him, or you will not have eternal life. When you look at the cross don't just see the wood. The reason Jesus isn't on there anymore was because it didn't end there.