

5. SIMON FROM CYRENE

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. Mark 15:21

As I write this, my heart is heavily burdened with another man's pain.

The way was gorged with people.
Multitudes.
Flooding into the narrow, suffocating streets.
Like cattle.
Swarming over rooftops.
Like locusts.
Hissing.
Like snakes.
Laughing and taunting.
Like fools.

And I?

I said nothing.
Struck dumb at what was before me.
Three men.
Each with a cross upon his back.
Being led to their death.
Two of them haggard and worn.
Tired and thirsty.
The other so badly beaten that He was no longer recognizable.
He could barely stand under the weight of the cross.

He stumbled.
Once.
Twice.
A third time.

The guards yanked violently, angrily at the rope tied around His chest,
screaming at Him to stand.
But He could not.
The Centurion yelled something to his men.
Instantly their hands were upon me.
Iron hands.
Throwing me toward the fallen man, ordering me to take up His cross.

The multitudes taunted me.
Spat on me.
Threw stones at me.
Forbade me from Passover.
I lifted His cross.
More stones.
More taunting.
I lifted Him.
A hail of stones.
Deafening taunts.
Together we walked.
Through the multitudes.
Flooding into the narrow, suffocating streets.
Like cattle.
Swarming over rooftops.
Like locusts.
Hissing.
Like snakes.
Laughing and taunting.
Like fools.

There were women.
Weeping.
Lamenting.
Calling Him Jesus.
Savior.
Son of God.
He stopped.
And spoke.
“If they would do to an innocent man what they do to Me, what will they do to the Jewish nation?”

I did not understand what He meant by that.

Neither did the women.

We walked on.

We climbed the hill where they would crucify Him.
The soldiers seized the cross from my back and threw me to the ground.
They threw Jesus to the ground.
I shed tears.
Tears of shame for affronts, indignities and trespasses.

As I write this, my heart is heavily burdened with another man's pain. My journey to celebrate Passover, my journey into joy, has ended as a passage into sorrow.

Everything has changed.

Signed in my own hand,
Simon of Cyrene.

Written By: William McDonald/Lexington, KY
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RELATED QUIZZES

VOCABULARY

1. Burdened: feeling weighed down with troubles and problems
2. Gorged: crammed; filled; stuffed
3. Multitudes: great numbers of people; huge crowds
4. Suffocating: smothering
5. Swarming: gathering and moving about in great numbers
6. Locusts: grasshoppers
7. Taunting: teasing; making fun of; insulting
8. Struck dumb: was so surprised he couldn't speak
9. Haggard: looking thin and very tired, usually due to a lot of suffering
10. Centurion: leader
11. Forbade: say no to; did not allow
12. Hail: to shout out loudly
13. Lamenting: feeling sorry for; to feel sad for
14. Savior: a person who saves or rescues
Son of God: Jesus
15. Crucify: to put to death by hanging on a cross
16. Seized: grabbed roughly
17. Affronts: disrespect; insult; abuse
18. Indignities: embarrassments
19. Trespasses: unlawful acts, usually acts of violence causing injury

1. By saying that the streets were _____ with people, there must have been a lot of people.

A. Burdened

- B. Gorged
- C. Seized

2. A Biblical word describing huge numbers of people is _____.

- A. Locusts
- B. Centurion
- C. Multitudes

3. The women in the crowd were weeping and _____.

- A. Lamenting
- B. Suffocating
- C. Swarming

4. Because Simon helped carry the cross, he was _____ from Passover.

- A. Burdened
- B. Haggard
- C. Forbade

TRUE/FALSE

1. There were huge numbers of people watching what was happening. True.
2. Jesus stumbled only once while He was carrying the cross. False. He stumbled three times.
3. When Simon picked up the cross, some of the people threw stones at him. True.
4. Simon felt sorry for Jesus so he offered to help carry the cross. False. Simon was forced by the soldiers to help carry the cross.
5. Simon was ashamed of the way the soldiers treated Jesus and the way the people laughed and taunted Him. True.

READING COMPREHENSION

WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STORY?

- A. Helping someone is not always a good thing.

- B. It's okay to help someone as long as you don't look bad to other people.
- C. Help someone in need no matter what other people think or say or do.

WHAT BELONGS IN THE MIDDLE?

- 1. Simon lifted the cross.
 - 2.?
 - 3. Simon and Jesus walked together.
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- A. Simon rolled up his sleeves.
 - B. Simon lifted Jesus.
 - C. Simon lifted his eyes toward Heaven.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 1. When Simon saw the three men carrying their own cross through the streets he was so surprised that he _____.
- A. Fainted.
 - B. Was struck dumb.
 - C. Screamed and yelled.
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- 2. Simon knew that by helping carry the cross he would _____.
- A. Have to miss Passover for 5 years.
 - B. Be banned from Passover.
 - C. Be first in line for Passover next year.

INFERENCES

When Simon wrote about what had happened, he knew that _____.

- A. No one would believe him.
- B. Everything had changed.
- C. People would think he was a hero.

FACTS AND DETAILS

- 1. Jesus had been beaten so badly that He was _____.
- A. Allowed to walk without carrying a cross.
 - B. No longer recognizable.

C. Helped by the soldiers.

2. When Simon lifted the cross, the crowd threw stones at him. He knew that if he lifted Jesus, they would _____.

- A. Be nice to him.
- B. Throw even more stones at him.
- C. Run for their lives.

3. While the women were weeping and calling out to Him, Jesus _____.

- A. Ignored them.
- B. Told them to be quiet.
- C. Stopped to talk with them.

4. When they reached the hill where they would crucify Jesus, the soldiers _____.

- A. Said thank you to Simon and sent him away.
- B. Gave Simon thirty pieces of silver.
- C. Seized the cross and threw Simon to the ground.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cyrene was a city in North Africa more than 1,000 miles from Jerusalem. Simon traveled a long way.