

The Holy Spirit Will Help You

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some of those who stood there heard it and said, "This Man is calling for Elijah." Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with wine, and put it on a stick, and gave it to Him to drink. The rest said, "Leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." And Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, released His spirit (Matt. 27:45-50).

All of the suffering Jesus experienced culminated on the cross. There, He suffered completely and totally in every category simultaneously. We do not worship a God who stands back at a safe distance viewing the horror story of human history, but rather a faithful High Priest who empathizes with us. He's been through what we go through, felt what we feel, and conquered what we face.

We spend our energy seeking to run from these things, but Jesus willingly ran to them.

Crucifixion was and is brutal. In recent times, crucifixion continues by extremist terrorist groups such as ISIS. The goal of such horror is always the same—to strike terror in the hearts of others. To crucify one person publicly is to send a chilling fear into the hearts of anyone and everyone who might agree with them or follow them. The message is clear: Do not believe what they believe, or you will endure what they endure.

All of human history had been marching to the cross of Jesus. As Jesus hung there bleeding, weeping and dying, the visible mob of humanity as well as the invisible legions of angels and

demons were anxiously awaiting His response. Jesus suffered nobly, humbly and lovingly. Then He died—and needed to wait for time to vindicate Him. The same is true for you. If history does not vindicate you, eternity will.

What I'm sharing in these devotionals on suffering are things I've learned as I walked through my own valley of the shadow of death. When suffering comes, it does feel as if we are in a wilderness. You feel overwhelmed, discouraged, fearful and even hopeless. In your worst moments, the Holy Spirit cries out to you, begging you not to harden your heart toward God or rebel against God's will for your life. Our greatest need when suffering is the Spirit. He reminds us of Jesus' suffering for us and comes to help us suffer well. {eoa}

Mark Driscoll *is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor and the author of many books, including Spirit-Filled Jesus, which you can order here. He currently pastors The Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his family. For all of pastor Mark Driscoll's Bible teaching, please visit or download the app. You can download a free devotional e-book from pastor Mark here.*

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