

The Passion with God's Eyes
Sermon April 14, 2017

Richard Wayne Bandler is an American author and trainer in the field of self-help. He is best known as the co-creator of Neuro-linguistic programming, a methodology to understand and change human behavior-patterns.

Once Richard visited a mentally ill person in a mental institution, who insisted that he was Jesus. Richard asked this man: "Are you Jesus?" "Yes, my son," the mentally challenged man replied. Richard left and came back with a measuring tape. He started to measure this man's heights and the length of his arms. Then Richard left again. A few minutes later Richard showed up with a hammer, some large nails, and two long 4x4's. He started to nail those 4x4's together into the form of a cross. The mentally challenged man asked: "Richard, What are you doing?" As the cross was nailed together, Richard asked the man again: "So, are you Jesus?" The patient said: "Yes my son." Then Richard said to him: "Then you know why I'm here." Suddenly the patient became scared to death and started to shout: "No! No! I'm not Jesus. I'm not Jesus!"

See, even a mentally challenged person was able to understand that the cross was part the main story of Jesus. It was clear for him that on the cross Jesus suffered enormously, and he did not want to experience what Jesus went through.

I don't think that any of us would be able to experience what Jesus experienced. I don't think that any of us would be able to take the cross on his/her shoulder and to die for others, but Jesus was ready, and he really did.

The old rugged cross is a central part of your salvation. I know people who are uncomfortable with the cross and with the blood of Jesus. The cross has to be in the focus of our Christian faith. We have to look up to Jesus as to our Saviour who accepted the cross for you and for me.

Jesus was the most precious for God, our Father. Jesus was God's only son. God knew that as a right judge he has to punish the sinners, but God did not want the sinners, you and me to perish.

To help you to understand more clearly Good Friday from God's eyes I will present to you in details what the Heidelberg Catechism is teaching about our Salvation. As a minister in Reformed church I was raised and taught by this teaching, which here in North America is embraced by Dutch Reformed Churches.

Question & Answer 10

Q. Does God permit the human's disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

A. Certainly not. God is terribly angry with the sin we are born with as well as the sins we personally commit. As a just judge, God will punish them both now and in eternity, having

declared: “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.”

Q & A 11

Q. But isn't God also merciful?

A. God is certainly merciful, but also just. God's justice demands that sin, committed against his supreme majesty, be punished with the supreme penalty—eternal punishment of body and soul.

Q & A 12

Q. According to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both now and in eternity: how then can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

A. God requires that his justice be satisfied. Therefore the claims of this justice must be paid in full, either by ourselves or by another.

Q & A 13

Q. Can we make this payment ourselves?

A. Certainly not. Actually, we increase our debt every day

Q & A 14

Q. Can another creature—any at all—pay this debt for us?

A. No. To begin with, God will not punish any other creature for what a human is guilty of. Furthermore, no mere creature can bear the weight of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.

Q & A 15

Q. What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?

A. One who is a true and righteous human, yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God.

Q & A 18

Q. Then who is this mediator—true God and at the same time a true and righteous human?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was given to us to completely deliver us and make us right with God.

Reading the Gospels, we can see that the crucifixion is the central of each crucifixion.

God made a bridge between Him and me. This is why we should praise “Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. (Revelation 1:5)

Peter says: “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” (1 Peter 3:18)

Jesus has done what we could not. He brought us salvation. Jesus paid the price for our sins. Jesus came into this world to find you, and me because we were lost. He came to save us from our sin and punishment. He came to grab us with His gracious and loving hand. He came to show us the narrow way. Are you ready to accept His grace? He is here, asking you to follow Him, serving Him until He will receive us into His glory.

Let's open up our heart for Jesus, lets His peace and mercy fill us completely. Let Him to be your Lord and your King and may we worship Him with joy here now, always and everywhere until we will worship Him together in Heavenly Glory. Amen