

## May Devotion: The Body of Christ Read Matthew 27:31-32

There is one moment in the recent movie *The Passion of the Christ* that gets to me. It is not the tortuous scourging scenes (gut wrenching as they may be), the scenes of a young Jesus, or even the cross itself that get to me. It is one quick moment...if you blink you may miss it. But in this one moment my heart breaks. I weep. And the whole of the film is summed up for me.

Let me set the scene. Simon of Cyrene is standing alongside the road to Calvary, when as the Scripture says, he is “pressed into service” by the Roman guards. At first he is unwilling. But quickly we see a change come over Simon. He has seen this before, but something about this man is different. Simon’s heart begins to break.

Take a moment to imagine yourself as Simon the Cyrene. Think of what you might be feeling as you look at Jesus’ wounded body: battered, bloody, beaten, and bruised. I can imagine there was a feeling of desperation, watching someone die before you... not knowing what to do or how to help. And then Simon realizes he can do something: *he is strong*. He has a strong back. And so it happens that Simon of Cyrene meets Jesus Christ. Simon shoulders the cross of Christ, and with the other arm grabs Jesus and begins to walk, helping Him to Calvary. That is when the moment happens. Here is where I break down. In the film, their eyes meet. Jesus looks at Simon, and in that one brief moment a flood of love, grace, and gratitude flows into his soul. And Simon *gets it*. We know that Simon of Cyrene will never be the same again.

In one look, we see that Jesus loves and honors those who offer their gifts to His glory...however small or seemingly insignificant they may be.

The Bible is full of people who used their spiritual gifts to bring God glory. Peter preached (Acts 2). In **Acts 8: 34-38**, Philip evangelized. But there are many others who used their strengths, their likes, and their interests to bring a “gift” to God. Martha was great at cooking and keeping house. She used her skills to make Jesus comfortable when He came to visit. Mary gave her most expensive perfume (John 12:1-8). Barnabas made people feel good about themselves and Jesus name was spread throughout the world. Priscilla and Aquila opened their home to preachers. In **Matthew 27:57-61**, we find that Joseph of Arimathea used his standing in the community and even sacrificed his family’s tomb for Jesus.

We all have something to offer Jesus. But sometimes we don’t because we feel that it is insignificant... or it doesn’t “fit the bill” of what a spiritual gift should be. But Jesus is honored by every gift given to His service and glory. And God will bless us when we let ourselves offer our gifts to Him.

1 Peter 4:10 *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

### Read 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

As a part of the body of Christ each of us was given a gift and each of us called to serve the Lord with that gift. As you read there are all types of gifts. We all receive different gifts that together are used for one purpose—to Glorify God. In the reading Paul wants us to realize that the gifts we have are not of our own choosing. You can’t choose how tall you are and you can’t choose your spiritual gift. You must focus on what gifts you **HAVE** instead of what gifts you don’t. Open yourself up to who God designed you to be. Lastly, remember that spiritual gifts are given to us **NOT** to advance ourselves but to glorify God by using our gift to serve Him.

1. Pray that God will reveal your gift to you—in His time. Think about what you’re good at and things you like to do. Write these down. How can you use these “gifts” to serve God?
2. Is there an area that you feel like God might be calling you to serve and glorify Him with your “gifts”?

Remember that we can’t just give of ourselves one week out of the summer at OMP. That attitude of giving, selflessness, and using our gifts for God MUST translate to every part of our daily living. Go out and glorify God through your gifts today. You will be glad that you did.