

Perspective

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Love will make you do crazy things

I'm just sayin'

By Mike Carroll
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Actor Will Smith might have irreparably damaged his film career when publicly walking onstage at the Oscars and slapping presenter Chris Rock in an angry response to a joke Rock made about Smith's wife's.

Minutes later, after being presented with the Oscar as best male actor, Smith's tearful mea culpa for his display of violence was "Love will make you do crazy things."

Speaking of love, this Sunday is Easter, the sacred day Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ from the grave. I say "speaking of love" because the Bible is a love story, from start to finish, with Scripture proclaiming God's essence as "love."

Of course, there are many types and levels of love. In his book "The Four Loves," C.S. Lewis talks of affection, friendship, eros and charity. Charity, or agape, is the highest and deepest form of love.

But this highest form of love has an example which is the highest of the high: Christ's death on the cross for our salvation.

On the cross, Christ gave the most He could possibly give: his life. And He gave this ultimate gift under the most horrible conditions of unfairness, public humiliation, and incredible pain (nailed to a cross, skin flayed and bleeding, a crown of thorns digging into his skin, bruised and bloodied). And He died for the noblest of reasons—our Salvation, everyone's Salvation—not just his followers—but everyone, even the Romans who put him to death, forgiving

them even while they cruelly mocked him.

But this seems crazy. Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah the Jews hoped would come and vanquish their oppressors, the Romans, did not escape the cross. Instead, the world got Christ's mercy, forgiveness and perfect love. Like the love Christ's disciples had for Him.

Up until Christ's crucifixion, Christ's disciples had displayed unflinching loyalty. But at His arrest in Jerusalem, they flinched. They were suddenly filled with doubt and fear, afraid for their own safety and lives. Even Christ's most loyal disciple, Peter, denied knowing Christ, three times, to inquiring minds: "I don't know the man."

The disciples watched Christ die like an ordinary man on the cross, bleeding, in pain, crying out: "My God, My God. Why have you forsaken me?"

They would have been dispirited, disillusioned, saddened that the Messiah they'd dedicated their lives to was not the Messiah they'd hoped for. He couldn't help Himself—all alone, in pain and humiliation, dying on this lonely wooden tower.

Surely the disciples would have returned home, back to where their journey all began, as simple men, toiling along the shores of Galilee. But they didn't. Instead, a miracle occurred: Christ survived the grave, then appeared to the disciples in various ways at various times and charged them with the Great Commission of bringing the



hope of Jesus to the entire world.

What else can reasonably explain the sudden about-face of the disciples, now regrouped after Christ's death, other than the Resurrection? They each fully realized that this task of spreading the Good News of the gospel meant that Christ's fate awaited them: ridicule, rejection, persecution and probable death. Yet they committed to the Holy task, went forth into the world, never recanting their faith despite persecution and death.

Because love will make you do crazy things.

Christ's resurrection is something that cannot be proven or disproven by science since science only deals with the natural, finite world, and has no reach into the divine infinite. What is available to us, however, is the historical record of the miraculous transformation of Christ's disciples from cowering doubters into fearless witnesses to

Christ's triumph over the grave. Their transformation, and their martyrdom, is powerful corroborating evidence of the Resurrection.

Regrouped and rededicated, they ventured out to preach Christ's message. Scripture only reports the killing of James the Greater, and Judas's death, so we're left with the historical record—garnered from oral tradition, written records and historical research—as to the disciples' fate.

Although the reports vary, there is a general consensus that, at minimum, all of the disciples faced persecution and many were violently put to death for preaching Christ's message. Following are reports of martyrdom.

Peter and Paul were martyred around 66 AD by Roman Emperor, Nero: Paul was beheaded, Peter was crucified (upside down because he proclaimed he was not worthy to be crucified right side

up like Christ). Andrew, Peter's brother, was crucified on an X-shaped cross in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey.

James the Lesser (son of Zebedee) was stoned and clubbed to death in Syria, while his brother, John the Evangelist, escaped martyrdom, dying a natural death.

James the Greater was killed by sword at the command of King Herod Agrippa, Roman client king of Judea, around 44 AD, near Palestine.

Thomas was murdered in India, allegedly pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.

In Africa, Philip was cruelly put to death in North Africa, impaled by iron hooks in his ankles and hung upside down until dead, while Matthew was staked to the ground then speared.

Bartholomew was skinned alive, then crucified, head downward, purportedly while praying for his attackers, in Armenia.

Jude (Thaddeus), was beaten then crucified, and Simon the Zealot was sawn in half while on a joint missionary trip to Persia (Iran) around 73 AD.

And Matthias, the apostle chosen to replace Judas, was stoned and beheaded in Jerusalem.

Note: there is also evidence that Christ's half-brother, James the Just, who, around 62 AD, was thrown some 100 feet off a tower wall, survived, then was beaten to death with clubs, all for repeatedly refusing to deny his faith in Christ. Up until Christ's resurrection, James had doubted Christ's divinity—another powerful testament to the reality of the Resurrection.

They loved their Lord with all their heart, soul and mind, and willingly laid down their lives to profess the Good News of the Risen Christ, out of love and for love.

Love will make you do crazy things.

mike carroll

The king of unfinished projects

I have a lot of projects started that move along about as fast as two turtles in a sack race. But more annoying (for other people) are the preliminary stages of projects that never even get started. Some are scarcely imagined.

I tend to collect building materials that I think I might be able to use someday somehow. Most of the time, there isn't enough material for a project, but it could be cobbled together with other material, which may be now or may never be in my possession.

Most of this miscellaneous material finds its way to me via the free route. Some of it is recycled while some is leftover new material from someone else's project. It's generally slated for the landfill and I'm

Ramblin' Man

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doing my civic duty by rescuing it.

But there are other pipelines, such as auctions, clearance sales, and mistakes. I once replaced all the counters in my kitchen with countertops that had been cut wrong for someone else.

Several weeks ago, I brought home three boxes of

unopened vinyl tiles that look like wooden planks. My wife laughed, perhaps to keep from crying. I said I could use them to put down a new floor in my office.

She pointed out that I already had recycled flooring for that purpose, but I found it laborious to pull nails out of old oak planks. It will make nice

firewood one of these days.

Several years ago, we redid the walls in my office using paneling that I had rescued from an old insurance office and had held on to for nearly 15 years. I knew I'd use it someday. But I haven't been able to use the office because it needed a floor.

My wife agreed to free up the funds to finish the floor. Now don't get the wrong idea about who's in charge here. I still wear the pants. She wears the pockets.

We bought six more boxes of vinyl tile to match the three free boxes. Still, that's a 33 percent savings.

It's a floating floor, so there's no need for nails or glue. The pieces simply snap together. There was just one

little problem. The room has baseboard electric heat, and the tile needed to slide underneath it. But to snap it together, you have to lift up on it, push it one way, then another, then pull it down while pushing forward, turning clockwise while doing the splits on the floor.

There was no room to get it to snap together properly without removing the heaters, which was not going to happen. As a result, there was a small gap between pieces on that end. As you continue to piece the floor together row by row, the gap continues to expand resulting in little adjustment gaps throughout the project. I believe that is why area rugs were invented.

Working as my schedule allowed, I finally finished the

floor in about three weeks, which is about how long it will take for the muscles in my legs to recover from all the squatting, sitting and standing.

There was also a fair amount of blood spilled during this project. I'm not sure how that happened, but every time I worked on the floor, I found a new abrasion, scrape or slit on my hands.

Now I'm ready to install the trim, which I rescued from a 150-year-old building. Which is probably how long it will take me to finish the office.

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