

Was it worth it Lord? As you hang on the cross and look out into the future, was it really worth it Jesus? Was it worth the betrayal, the denial, the injustice, the abuse, the torture, the beatings? Was it worth the chafing of the coarse wood against your back, the blinding sun in your face? Was it worth the long march up Golgotha's hill? Was it worth the jeers and the stripping? Was it worth the nails, the pain searing through your soul? Was it worth the cross, Lord Jesus? Was it worth it?

What do you see from that cross, Jesus? Do you see the people turning away from you and walking out of the garden? Not just the curious ones who have come out to see a carnival of death, but your friends. The ones you chose and the ones that chose you. Walking away, hiding in the secrecy of the crowd. Is that who you died for Jesus?

From the height of that cross, Jesus look at your early church. Is that what you died for? Did you die so that Jews would be tormented and killed in your name? Did you die so that people that experienced your love and life differently would ridicule, exile and even murder each other? Was it worth all this so that your church, your Body, could grow in political power, military might and economic wealth? Did you die so that your body, once stretched on the cross, would be torn asunder by conceptual differences, corruption and immorality?

Was it worth it Lord? But don't stop looking there Lord. Look down on the Church as we have known it. Look at the church of the last 100 years. Is this what you died for, Lord Jesus? A church that refused for the most part to recognize the forces of evil that was invading the world. That turned a blind eye to the suffering of Jews, Gypsy's, the different, the unacceptable. That pinched off their nose so that the smell of the ovens wouldn't interrupt the odor of incense. Is that who you died for?

A church that refused to accept the gifts and talents of women and still struggles. A church that refused to support women's fight for equality and so often counseled submission, obedience and toleration of abuse. And still does.

A church that for the most part refused to become involved in the Civil Rights struggle for people of color. That still represents the most segregated segment of American society. That refuses to accept cultural diversity. That commissions paintings of you, a first century Jew, that look like a northern European. That closes its eyes to the plight of the poor in the majority of the world. Is that who you died for?

A church that seems to care more about people's private actions than about the content of their character. That still insists on creating rule books and litmus tests of true Christianity. A church that allows its members to spew venom and hatred in the name of God.

Did you die for the church of the crusades, the silent churches of the holocaust and the American south, the churches gathered outside cemeteries condemning the young men being buried in its gates? Was it worth it Lord?

And Lord, after you've looked at your church, look at us. Did you die for us, Jesus? Was it worth it, Jesus? Have we justified your suffering? Have we redeemed your torture? Have we even lived out your commands. You know the ones, to spread your Gospel to the ends of the world, to preach the forgiveness of sins, to love one another as you loved us. Have we done that to your liking, Lord?

Have we made the Kingdom of God a present reality in our lives, Lord? Is our world the world you envisioned it would be 2 millennium after your died? What do you think of this place, Jesus? What do you think about Protestant and Catholics killing each other in Ireland? What

do you think of Jews and Moslems killing each other over your homeland? What do you think of Christians being sold into slavery in parts of Africa? Or genocide of your children because they look a little different? Was it worth it Lord?

What do you think of kids killing kids on our streets and in our schools? What do you think of our culture that promotes violence and disrespect as societal rights? What do you think about the way we're bringing up our children, Lord? Was it worth it?

Look at me Lord. Did you die for me, Jesus? Was it worth it? Is my life an imitation of you, Lord? Do I live the message you preached? Do I live a kingdom life? Do I re-present your love to the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the different? Was it worth it Lord?

Do I tell people about the wonderful things you have done for me? Do I even recognize them myself? Do I put my whole trust and love in you? Do I treat others as I would have them treat me? Do I wash the feet of my friends, let alone my betrayer? Do I carry my cross and follow you? Do I love others as you have loved me? Do I love you as much as I love others? Was it worth it Lord?

Do I disappoint you Lord? Do I give you any joy, Lord? I know I must. Have I ever furthered your mission Lord? I think I have. I'm not always complacent, lazy, fearful. I've done good things, Lord. I try, Lord.

But was it worth it? As you look at your Church throughout the years, as you look at us in our lives, and yes, Lord, as you look at me, was your pain, your anguish, your humiliation, your shame, your death. Were they worth it Jesus? Did you die in vain, Lord?

As I listen to the story of your final days, as I walk with you on that long road of sorrows, as I look into your face, as I look into the face of your mother at the foot of the cross, as I hear

the hammer on nails, as I hear the groan of the men raising the cross, as I smell the evil and fear of the crowd, as I see the blood and the pain and the dirt and the anguish. As I listen to your words. It is finished. You are finished.

As I look at your body, dead and alone, wrapped in a borrowed cloth, lain in a borrowed tomb, I have to know, Did you die for me, Jesus? Am I worth it?