CRY INTO GOD'S SILENCE (Mt. 27: 46)

ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? – MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? WHEN CHARLEMAGNE, KING OF THE FRANKS, FIRST HEARD THE STORY OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, HE EXPLODED IN RAGE. GRABBING HIS SWORD & RATTLING IT, HE SHOUTED, OH, IF ONLY I HAD BEEN THERE WITH MY LEGIONS, I WOULD HAVE SLAIN THEM ALL. WE MAY SMILE AT CHARLEMAGNE'S LOYALTY – OR SMILE AT SIMON PETER WHO ACTUALLY DID DRAW HIS SWORD IN JESUS' DEFENSE, BUT WHERE WAS GOD THE FATHER IN ALL OF THIS – ABBA, DADDY, GOD ALMIGHTY WHO COULD HAVE HELPED. DADDY DID NOT EVEN LIFT A FINGER ON JESUS' BEHALF. JUST IMAGINE – GOD THE FATHER HIDING BEHIND THAT CLOUD OF DARKNESS THAT COVERED CALVARY THAT DAY WITH THE TEARS STREAMING DOWN HIS CHEEKS. HE WOULD NOT EVEN COME DOWN TO THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE TO RESCUE HIS SON WHO KNELT DOWN THERE IN UTTER AGONY, CRYING OUT, DAD, PLEASE TAKE THIS BITTER CUP FROM ME! DAD COULD ONLY SEND AN ANGEL TO STRENGTHEN HIM..... ARE THERE ANY OF US HERE TODAY WHO ARE ABLE TO EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE GREAT PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION – THE GREAT & HOLY & MAJESTIC GOD SPLITTING APART LIKE AN UNSPLITTABLE ATOM – ALL OF OUR SINS & THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD TRANSFERRED FROM US HUMANS TO HIM – GOD TAKING THIS TREASURY OF WRATH THAT I HAVE BEEN STORING UP MY WHOLE LIFE LONG – THIS MASS OF EVIL – TAKING IT ALL FROM MY ACCOUNT & YOUR ACCOUNT & EVERYBODY ELSE'S ACCOUNT & PLACING IT ON HIS DEAR & BELOVED SON AS THE ETERNAL SCAPEGOAT: MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? THIS CRY OF DERELICTION – THIS CRY OF ABANDONMENT IS THE GREATEST MYSTERY THE HUMAN HEART & MIND COULD EVER CONSIDER – GOD'S SON ABANDONED BY HIS FATHER! HE WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN ALL OF HISTORY WHO WAS WITHOUT SIN. AND HERE HE IS THE VICTIM OF INJUSTICE & CRUELTY & UNBELIEF & DISLOYALTY. HE WAS KILLED BY THE BIGOTRY OF SOME & THE INDIFFERENCE OF OTHERS. HE EXPERIENCED WHAT GOD ALWAYS EXPERIENCES AT THE HANDS OF A WORLD FILLED WITH CORRUPTION..... JESUS HAS BECOME NOW BOTH THE VICTIM OF SIN & THE OFFERING FOR SIN. HE HAS BECOME THE LAMB OF GOD WHOSE BLOOD IS BEING SPRINKLED ON THE MERCY SEAT FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD. ST. PAUL SAYS TO SO WELL: FOR OUR SAKE GOD THE FATHER MADE HIM TO BE SIN WHO KNEW NO SIN SO THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. (2 Cor. 5:21) THE PROPHET ISAIAH IS EVEN MORE DRAMATIC: HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS; HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES..... THE LORD HAS LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL. JESUS ENDURED THE AWEFUL SILENCE OF GOD SO THAT NOW THROUGH ALL ETERNITY HIS FATHER WILL HEAR HIS CRY FOR OUR PARDON & OUR FORGIVENESS.....

I WANT YOU TO SEE THAT JESUS' CRY OF DERELICTION IS ALSO A PRAYER OF GREAT COURAGE. WHAT ARE WE CHRISTIANS TO DO WHEN GOD SEEMS TO IGNORE OUR CRIES FOR DELIVERANCE? THE DRAMA, A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS, TELLS HOW Sir Thomas More DEALT WITH THIS QUESTION. Thomas More WAS CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND UNDER King Henry VIII. HE RESIGNED FROM THIS OFFICE AS CHANCELLOR WHEN King Henry DIVORCED & REMARRIED & FORCED THE CH. OF ENGLAND TO BREAK WITH THE CH. OF ROME. Thomas More REFUSED TO SIGN UNDER OATH A STATEMENT WHICH HE BELIEVED IN HIS HEART WAS ABSOLUTELY WRONG. AND FOR THIS HE WAS IMPRISONED IN THE TOWER OF LONDON TO AWAIT EXECUTION. HIS DAUGHTER, Megan, VISITED HIM & PROTESTED THE INJUSTICE OF IT ALL: IN ANY STATE THAT WAS EVEN HALF GOOD, YOU SHOULD BE RAISED ON HIGH – NOT PUT HERE. More SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS HE SHOULD JUST STAND FAST – HANG IN THERE. MEG PROTESTED AGAIN, ASKING IF HE HAD NOT ALREADY DONE AS MUCH AS GOD COULD REASONABLY WANT. More' s ANSWER WAS SLOW & DELIBERATE: WELL, FINALLY, IT ISN'T A MATTER OF REASON -- IT IS A MATTER OF LOVE..... SO IT IS HERE WITH JESUS. HE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HANGING THERE AGAINST THAT BLACKEND SKY. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SITTING IN JERUSALEM'S PLACE OF HIGHEST HONOR. BUT HIS WAS THE STORY OF LOVE – A LOVE THAT WOULD NOT LET US GO. On a Hill far away stood an old rugged Cross, The emblem of suffering and shame. And I love that old Cross where the dearest & best. For a world of lost sinners was slain. THE BK. OF HEBREWS HAS A PASSAGE OF RECURRING SIGNIFICANCE: IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, JESUS OFFERED UP PRAYERS OF SUPPLICATIONS WITH LOUD CRIES & TEARS TO HIM WHO WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIM FROM DEATH -- & HE WAS HEARD FOR HIS GODLY FEAR. ALTHOUGH HE WAS A SON, HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE THROUGH WHAT HE SUFFERED; & BEING MADE PERFECT HE BECAME THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION TO ALL WHO OBEY HIM. (5:7-9) HIS LOUD CRY, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? WAS ANSWERED IN THE RESURRECTION! BECAUSE OF HIS BITTER SUFFERING & DEATH & REDEEMING LOVE, THE FATHER HAS RAISED UP HIS SON & HAS GIVEN HIM A NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME..... OUR FAITH MAN SEEM TO BE TOTALLY DORMANT – LIKE A SEED LYING ON THE GROUND – BUT OUR WAITING MAY BE JUST A TIME OF PREPARATION FOR THE BURSTING FORTH OF THE RISEN XP IN OUR LIVES, REPLACING WHAT WAS PERHAPS NOTHING MORE THAN SURFACE XIANITY. WHEN WE THINK WE ARE CAUGHT IN NOTHING MORE THAN DEAD SILENCE, THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT BEGINS: THE SPIRIT INTERCEDES FOR US WITH SIGHS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS. JESUS WHO FIRST CRIED OUT: WHY HAVE YOU, GOD, FORSAKEN ME? IS NOW ABLE TO KEEP HIS PROMISE: I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS. EVEN WHEN WE ASK WHY? ..... GOD IS HERE. HE IS LISTENING & HE WILL ANSWER.