

John 19:17-27

In each of the other three gospels, Jesus is led to the cross. Not so here.

John is careful to have us see Jesus, carrying his own cross, **he went forth** to the place of the skull.

Walking by himself.

He is going there without anyone forcing him.

They crucify him, as they have routinely crucified thousands before. It seems they do it out of duty. They have no interest in him.

And then he and the others are forgotten.

Pilate uses the situation to twist the knife into those annoying clergy and to humiliate the Jewish people.

The sign said, "Here is your king!"

The chief priests do their best to push all of that humiliation over onto Jesus.

The soldiers, their work done, know that he won't need his clothes again.

They play fair and nice with each other and make reasonable arrangements, unconsciously fulfilling prophecy.

They had noticed his quality undergarment, no place to tear it without wrecking it. Better to toss the dice for it.

On the cross Jesus is ignored as others look to their own interests.

And so it is breathtaking that Jesus of all people, looks down on the scene and his heart goes out to two others.

Jesus, crucified, thinks of how much it will hurt his mother to lose her oldest son. She will be lost without him, he knows it.

Jesus, crucified, thinks of his best friend. He knows that John will be so lonely and lost without him.

And so there, hanging, bleeding, dying, Jesus has the presence of mind to introduce them to each other as mother and son.

Where does Jesus find the strength to do this?

He finds the strength in that which has motivated him all of his life.

Love for his father. Love for his family. Love for his mother and his friend.

And, love for you and me.

For when we see him carrying his own cross. We know that it is ours, yours and mine that he has on his back.

When he goes forth to the place of the skull, we know that he is freely going to our place of judgement.

And when he is crucified, we know that he is giving himself to be crucified.

Out of love for you and for me.