

Wednesday Devotional

April 12, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 27: 32 (I know it's after Easter, but this makes one think a little bit).

A Sacred Burden By: Sue Monk Kidd

Simon of Cyrene: I was just a simple bystander that day, one of a thousand pilgrims who'd come to Jerusalem for Passover. The whole city was in an uproar. People shouting "Crucify!" jamming the street, waiting for the Nazarene to pass. It seemed incredible. I mean, this was the same man who'd ridden a donkey through the street a few days ago, hailed as a king! The crowd had swarmed about him, waving branches and throwing coats in his path. "Hosanna!" everyone shouted. I even broke a branch off a date palm and joined in myself.

But all of that had changed. Now the Nazarene trudged up the street, bent under the weight of a wooden cross. He came closer and closer, here and there stepping over a dried branch. Suddenly he was right beside me! I could smell the blood and sweat and hear him laboring to get his breath. The next thing I knew, he stumbled. Without thinking, I reached out to catch him. But he fell at my feet.

"You!" a Roman soldier shouted. "You're so willing to help, you carry it the rest of the way!" He thrust the cross onto my back. The Nazarene lifted his eyes and gave me a sad look that pierced my heart. Maybe he's the Messiah after all I thought. It was a long, difficult walk. People taunted me just as they did the Nazarene. But you know, I was glad in the end they those me. Me – Simon, carrying the Messiah's cross!

But I was not so special. You see, I was simply doing what he asked all his disciples to do every single day – to take up their cross and follow him...to walk with him even when the way is difficult and painful. *Father, teach me today that there is no short cut to Easter.....that I am called to walk with you even in your suffering.*