

THE BLACKSMITHS

The blacksmiths who made the nails are not often considered as we contemplate the crucifixion. But their role in the story of Christ is no less pertinent. The nails used to crucify Jesus were made of iron; they had to be strong enough to support the weight of a grown man. They could not be cast and poured into molds because the furnaces could not generate enough heat to form them. So, they had to be hammered into shape by blacksmiths. The square-shaped nails measured seven to nine inches long and they were in regular use as crucifixion was a common form of execution. Consider these gospel references to the nails that held Christ on the cross:

After they had nailed Him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for His clothes by throwing dice. **-Matthew 27:35**

They offered Him wine drugged with myrrh, but He refused it. Then the soldiers nailed Him to the cross. **-Mark 15:24**

When they came to the place called 'The Skull' they nailed Him to the cross. **-Luke 23:33**

Carrying the cross by Himself, He went to the Place of the Skull. There they nailed Him to the cross. **-John 19:18**

APPLICATION

The blacksmiths didn't just make nails. This was their trade. They made tools, agricultural equipment, weapons, bolts for gates, and who knows what else. So, when they did make the nails, it was just another day on the job for them. It's doubtful the blacksmiths always knew exactly where the nails they made were going. Even if they knew that they'd be used for execution, surely they didn't make nails with the victim's name on it. They were just for some criminal. But what if the blacksmith that made the nails for Christ knew? Would he take extra care to hammer out all the rough edges and make the tip sharper, so it cuts

through cleanly? Would he make the nail heads just a little bit wider to distribute the weight a little more? Or would he put the hammer down altogether and refuse to continue?

We know the suffering Christ endured on the cross for us, from the beating to the crown of thorns. But the nails were the finishing touch and ultimately, it wouldn't matter how much care the blacksmith put into the construction of their nails. They just needed to hold Him on the cross. The nails are only a physical representation of what really held our Savior there - our sins. You see, the nails may not have been made with Jesus' name on them. But they were made with mine on them; and they were made with yours. Every sin we have ever committed, and every sin we commit still, have been hammered into those nails. The blacksmith may have unknowingly contributed to the physical pain of Jesus. But we all play a part in the spiritual pain. Do we remain in our sin and continue crafting the perfect nails or do we drop the hammer altogether and refuse to continue in sin? Christ died to give us that choice.

DISCUSSION/CONTEMPLATION

- What would you do if you were the blacksmith making the physical nails that would hold Jesus?

- What will you do about spiritual nails you still produce?

- Consider the thought that Jesus took the nails for you and offer a prayer of repentance and thanksgiving.

D6-CUSSION

Pray a prayer asking God to forgive you of any sins you committed today. Thank Him for forgiveness.

- What stands out to you the most?

- What questions do you have?

- What is an application for your life?

PRAYERS & PRAISE