

Wyoming Men's Retreat Talk outlines:

Intro - Recorded talk

- Introduce myself
 - My background
 - How I became Catholic
 - How I got started in evangelization
 - What I do full time
- Introduce the topic
 - The Law Of Love: Linking the Garden of Calvary to the Garden of Eden... all points in between.
 - That we might become the man in the Garden... standing in the gap as Priest, Prophet and King
 - Why?
 - IF Jesus is God, then why?
 - Why condescend to become like one of us in all things except sin?
 - the drudgery of life? All the baggage that comes with human existence?
 - Why endure the humiliation?
 - Why go out of his way to a garden across the brook Kidron?
 - crying out in anguish and sorrow to let this "CUP" pass from him? Is this cowardice? Is this weakness?
 - Why the sweat of blood?
 - Why the betrayal from one of his closest? Why the hoard coming out with clubs & swords?
 - Why does he go to meet them?
 - Why not run?
 - Why endure the suffering?
 - beaten... whipped, his flesh torn from his body
 - spat upon,,, cursed, counted among the condemned
 - nailed to a tree and hung... naked,,, exposed in front of all
 - slowly to drown in his bodily fluids
 - The God of the universe... hastily buried in a garden tomb for 3 days
 - Why descend into the pit?
 - Why rise again?
 - Why ascend into heaven?
 - Why is it all from a garden?
 - Why endure all of this when He is God? Why not simply snap His fingers and declare man redeemed?
 - To be sure Jesus is God... it is the one thing that earned him the death penalty... **Mark 14:**
 - [61] But he was silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

- [62] And Jesus said, **"I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."**
 - [63] And the high priest tore his garments, and said, "Why do we still need witnesses?"
 - [64] You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death.
 - [65] And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him with blows.
- So... If Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, endured all this trouble... then surely there must have been a very good reason why... other than simply to die for our sins and redeem us from our just wage... namely the fires of Hell... eternally separated from God.
 - Yes, of course it is that... but also... it is sooo much more!
 - **Something MORE profound going on...**
 - **Don't read with our 21st century eyes and ears... rather... with the eyes and ears of a first century Judean!**
- **Want a hint?** Remember the time when John the Baptist sent his disciples to investigate Jesus? **Matthew 11:**
 - [2] Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples
 - [3] and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"
 - [4] And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:
 - [5] the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.
 - [6] And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."
 - **CCC - 1505** "Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases." [112](#) But he did not heal all the sick. **His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God.** They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death through his Passover. On the cross Christ took upon himself the whole weight of evil and took away the "sin of the world," [113](#) of which illness is only a consequence. By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can

henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion.”

- **CCC 549** - “549 By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death, [274](#) **Jesus performed messianic signs**. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below, [275](#) but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God's sons and causes all forms of human bondage. [276](#)”
- **Isaiah 33: [20]** Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, ... **[24]** And no inhabitant will say, "I am sick"; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.
 - See other examples like:
 - Is. 26:19
 - Is. 29:18
 - Is. 35:4-6
 - Is. 61:1-2
- **Matthew 5: [17]** "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.”
- Not just a nice thing to do... not just compassion for those who suffer... not just pity on the lost and damned!
 - All of those things... but also... sooo much more!
 - There is a purpose to each and every aspect of the Passion of Christ. Not a single minute detail is to be over looked, they are perfections of Old Testament types!
 - Ignatius Catholic Study Bible Commentary on Matthew 8:17
 - “Isaiah foretold of a servant figure who would take Israel's sins upon himself and heal God's people (Is. 52:13-53:12). This servant would inaugurate the restoration of the tribes of Israel and bring the Gentiles to the family of God (Is. 49:6). Matthew sees Jesus in this role, ushering in the Kingdom by expelling demons and healing diseases. The close relationship between sin and physical affliction is assumed (cf. Ps 107:17; Is. 33:24; CCC1505).”
- **Why the cross?** To find the answer to this question we must journey back in time.
 - Back to the beginning... back to the first Man, and his encounter in a garden!
 - There we shall find the clues that will unlock the mystery of the passion, death and Resurrection of Christ.
 - We will fly through Salvation History and see each of the Covenant Mediators... in their Mountain top experiences with God.... in their good times & bad!

- More than that... there we shall find our own calling as men of God...
- There we shall learn what it means to be the man in the garden!

- **The Ambush...**

- The Marine Corps Story...
- Back in the early nineties, when I was serving in the United States Marine Corps, I found myself leading a squad of Marines on a search and destroy patrol in an area known for a lot of enemy traffic. **We were out looking for trouble and we sure enough found it.** We were moving in an offset formation, in two columns, with each man spread out by about 15 to 20 feet apart with me walking between both columns in the center. We were moving along, our M-16 semi automatic rifles in the ready position, with the butt stock in our shoulders, eyes just over the sights, and trigger fingers covering the trigger well, ready for action, with no contact in sight. All of a sudden, my point man threw up a closed fist sharply into the air. The squad immediately stopped cold in our tracks and held our breath! We stood still, and quite, with our eyes peeled scanning the area, and our ears opened, waiting for another signal. The point man flattened his hand out, with his palm facing the ground, and lowered it toward the earth slowly. As each man squatted down in response, I moved up to see what was going on. I knelt down next to him, and with out even saying a word, he simply gestured, with two fingers pointed at his eyes, and then in the direction he thought he saw movement. I looked but I didn't see anything. I motioned back to stay put, and stay down, then moved quietly up the trail another fifteen or so yards to get a better look. Sure enough... there was an enemy patrol moving in a parallel path to our own about 100-150 yards, through a wooded area.
- After conducting my leaders recon I made my way back to the squad and began to move my men up. This was what we came for.... action... to seek and destroy. I maneuvered the squad into an ambush position, on top of a slight rise, with great visibility through the tree line, and excellent fields of fire, so we could engage the enemy, from the high ground, in a good ol turkey hunt. **We were ready, this is what we trained for... the men were in place and waiting for my command.** I waited and watched as the enemy patrol was walking into the ambush. For maximum effect I wanted at least 75% of that patrol in the kill zone before we would open up on them. They wouldn't know what hit them.... like fish in a barrel we were about to do some serious damage.
- The moment came... I yelled out... "fire!" and 16 men, with M-16's, and at least one SAW (squad automatic weapon), let loose! The firepower was intense! But... no sooner than we opened fire we began to receive fire from our rear! I swiveled around and saw muzzle flashes coming from our six, about 50 yards away, out of a gully! **NOT GOOD! The hunter becomes the hunted! We were now caught in the middle of two**

hostile, and deadly, enemy units and had to act fast if we were to survive this!

- The Marine Corps trains for just such a scenario knowing that you may one day face it. The military understands that when the bullets start flying there is no time to stop and think, ponder, consider, ask for opinions, weigh the trends, and statistics, or take a poll. It's life and death... and every second counts as humans, those closest to you, those who are in your care and custody, start to lose their lives. In combat... we must already know what to do or else we are dead already. ***In the case of an ambush, there is only one way to respond... counter attack with all you have, through violence of action, devastating the enemy positions as fast as possible, and then breaking contact and getting out of dodge!*** You must be as violent as possible if you want to survive. You must overwhelm the enemy with superior firepower. You have a choice... hunker down and allow the enemy to pick you off, or counter attack and have a chance at killing them before they kill you. You must attack the attacker with out even thinking.... It must be instinct!
- On that day... when I turned to see my worst nightmare come true... being caught in an ambush... I acted with out thinking! ***I yelled, "contact six-o-clock!" then stood up, and barked "get online assault through, get online assault through!"*** and began to move toward the gully while firing my M-16. I looked around and noticed that I was the only one standing, the only one moving forward.... my men were hugging the ground and didn't want to stand up. We had to assault through the enemy position if we were going to live. What were they doing? "Get up!" I screamed "get online assault through!" as I grabbed one Marine by his belt and hauled him to his feet! "Get up! Get up!" They just lay there thinking there best chance to live was to stay on the ground! Little did they know it was a guaranteed death sentence! The enemy was successful in convincing my men to lie down and not engage in the fight.
- Fortunately, for all of us, there were no bullets flying through the air that December day on a mountain in Camp Pendleton, California. It was an exercise during a 3-day mock war during Marine Combat Training. I can't imagine it would have turned out very well if it had been a real encounter with a deadly force. Seeing the muzzle flash of an automatic weapon, even one firing blanks, sweeping across your chest at only 50 yards is a sobering sight... enough to give you a sense of the fear real combat soldiers experience in Iraq and Afghanistan today. I honestly do not think I would have lived through the encounter but, ***I was not thinking, only reacting to the environment and the training*** the Marines drilled, sometimes pounded even, into my thick head. It was "muscle-memory" not courage that carried me through that encounter. I feel this event illustrates a valuable lesson for fighting temptations and winning in spiritual combat

- The Garden will teach us to turn towards the ambush and not run from it.
- Christ has come to do what we could not... he is the summation of all human history.. this is HIS-Story....

■ **Numbers 21:**

- [8] And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."
- [9] So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

■ **John 12:**

- [30] Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine.
- [31] Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out;
- [32] and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."
- [33] He said this to show by what death he was to die.

■ **2 Corinthians 5:**

- [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

For in the garden we shall find the answer... why the cross? Why the suffering?