

"Sit," said the officer, "let us talk." Soon I was sitting by the fire with the officer and his two escorts, while the Syrians were relaxing noisily on one side of us, with My followers sitting sullenly on the other.

"You were a brave man to step in front of those mercenaries," said the officer. "You were lucky they did not kill You." "My friend needed My help, and I always help My friends," I explained. "What, even if it may cost Your life?" he asked. "Yes, even then," I answered, thinking of how this would be fulfilled in the near future.

"That is true friendship then. We are like that in the Roman legions. We help and protect each other even at the cost of our lives sometimes. The mercenaries though, they have no principles. They fight for whoever pays the most or whoever is the strongest," he said, as he looked over at the mercenaries with disgust on his face.

"But you all kill, do you not?" I asked. "Yes, but we only do so to keep order," replied the officer. "I think for those who die, it doesn't matter if it is to keep order or because someone has been paid to kill them. They still suffer and they still die," I suggested.

"Yes, but what would the world be like without order? There would be far more killing than today, every nation would be afraid of its neighbor, and many nations would be at war," he responded. "Order by fear is no alternative to freedom," I said.

"Freedom, what is that? Is it ever achievable, I wonder. There is always someone who wants to be a king, and there are always some prepared to take from others. How can you have freedom with a world like that?" he asked.

WHERE IS LOVE?

"Mankind imprisons itself," I said, "by the way it hates, by its greed, its anger, its selfishness. If mankind would live in love and by love, then it would truly be free."

"There is not much love in the world and I doubt if there ever will be," he stated, with a little smile on his face.

"Love is all around if only you look, but today most are blind to this and only see hate," I said. "Where?" asked one of the two soldiers, with a mocking look.

"Love is in creation around you, the beauty of God's love is everywhere."
~ ~ ~

Love, Not Kill



**Then suddenly around the bend
appeared a troop of Roman soldiers
being led by an officer on a horse.
The troop came to a stop as the officer said
to one of the soldiers at the front,
" We will rest here. See to it."**

Love, Not Kill

from Through the Eyes of Jesus

The silence was broken by a harsh Roman voice snapping out orders and the sound of men marching. Then suddenly around the bend appeared a troop of Roman soldiers being led by an officer on a horse. The troop came to a stop as the officer said to one of the soldiers at the front, "We will rest here. See to it."

The soldier turned sharply to the men, "You heard the officer. Jump to it, set up a camp here," he snapped with authority. Within moments the soldiers were heading towards us.

James looked at Me and said, "Lord they look very fierce. We should go."

I sat quietly and said nothing waiting for the soldiers to come near.

"Move you Jews!" shouted one of the soldiers with a heavy Syrian accent, then he kicked some of My followers' belongings shouting, "Move!"

We began to collect our belongings as more soldiers gathered around us and began cursing us, all with the same Syrian accents.

One of the soldiers hit James, the brother of John, very hard on the back with the side of his sword, almost screaming the words, "Come on, you're too slow!" My follower looked at James who was bent double in pain, unable to move and I saw fear coming into their eyes. I went to James and leaned down and took his hand helping him to his feet. Peter rushed over and picked up James' belongings as I helped James to move away.

YOU ARE WELCOME

The Syrians were laughing and making fun of us and I could still feel the fear in My friends' hearts, so I put James' hand on his brothers, then turned to face the soldiers, saying, "You are welcome to our fire, I hope it brings you as much comfort as it did us."

I smiled gently at them, continuing, "And the water in the stream is fresh and pure." There was silence for a moment as the soldiers were uncertain how to respond. Then one of them raised his fist as if to strike Me, saying, "Get away Jew, we don't need your help."

"Stop it at once," came a sharp order from the officer on his horse, who had two Roman soldiers standing by him. "You are soldiers of Rome, act as such," he ordered. The Syrians stood to attention, aware of the consequences if they did not. The officer jumped from his horse and came to Me.

He was young, maybe only 25 years old, but his face had lost its youth from all the battles he had fought, yet in his voice I could detect a gentle heart hidden within. "I am sorry for the way they treated You. They are Syrian mercenaries and they show little respect to anyone," he said, then turned to the soldiers and ordered, "set up camp over there," as he pointed to a place some distance away. "At least in Rome we are civilized," he said, as he faced Me again. "Is Your friend all right?" he asked.

"He has just had the wind knocked from him; he will soon recover," I replied.

"You may stay at Your fire if You wish," said the young Roman.

"Thank you for your kindness but we must leave soon," I answered, as he stared into My eyes with a look of fascination.

"You seem an interesting Man. I would like to talk with You if You would stay for a while. I do not meet many people I can talk to," he said, with an expression of hope on his face.

"For a little time then," I said, as I smiled gently back at him.

He motioned to the two soldiers standing by his horse to come to him, and as they did, he said, "These two are my good friends who look after me, and like me, they are Romans."

The two men were much older than the young officer and their faces had the intensity of those who had seen many die. They were similar in stature with very powerful bodies that had been shaped by the trade they plied. Both of the men looked at Me and nodded at the same time.

"And these are My friends," I said, as I looked to My followers, who shuffled nervously as I did so.