

## **“What Nick Berg’s Life and Death Can Teach Us”**

**Luke 23:32-34**

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Communion Devotion

A few days after Nicholas Berg was executed in Iraq, I saw his high school science teacher interviewed on television. Mr. Best said he has never had a student with the social conscience of this young man. Whenever an experiment would be conducted in the lab, Nick would ask, “How can this be used to help people that are hurting in our world?” According to Mr. Best, Nicholas loved life and people and was a bundle of energy and good will.

This spirit of compassion compelled him to go to Iraq to help rebuild that war torn country. His primary purpose was to get radio and television signals working again so people could be connected to one another and informed about their conditions.

Mr. Best was not surprised that Nicholas went to Iraq. A few years earlier, he interrupted his college study to go to Africa where he taught villagers how to make bricks so they could have safer and better homes. He came home from that trip much thinner because he shared his food with a family of five with whom he stayed while there.

At the age of twenty-six, Nick had his own communications business, working sixty to seventy hours a week. In December, 2003, he attended a seminar in Arlington, Virginia on business opportunities in Iraq. In January, he went to Iraq to form a business partnership with an Iraqi citizen. In April, he was captured by terrorists and executed a month later.

Nick’s science teacher said something the day he was interviewed that impressed me. **“The Iraqis killed their best friend and did not know it.”**

Immediately, I thought about another man of Jewish origin that was crucified at a young age. The same could have been said about his captors. “The religious authorities killed their best friend and did not know it.”

Best friend? Without a doubt. Jesus came to reveal who God is, who we are and how life should be lived. He came to heal wounds and restore relationships. He came to liberate the oppressed and lift up the downtrodden. He came to instill faith, hope and love in the hearts of all people. He came to forgive sins and take away shame and guilt. He came to give people new dreams and the confidence to accept and achieve them. He came to do good, only good, and yet they killed him. They killed their best friend and did not know it.

Perhaps this was what Jesus meant when he said while hanging on the cross, **“Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”**

As we celebrate communion today, let me encourage you to do three things. Thank the Lord for the good work he did while he was here and continues to do in the hearts and lives of his followers. Ask him to help you continue his good work. And ask him to help you recognize those that have been sent into your life to assist you so that you will not reject or harm them, but embrace them with open arms.