

THE BULWARK

THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY

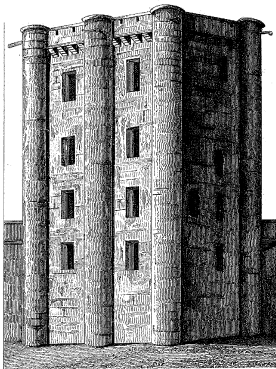
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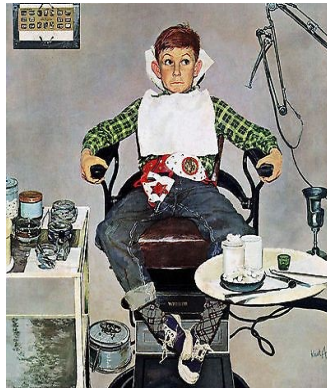
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*“Mark well her bulwarks,
consider her palaces, that
you may tell it to the
generation following”*
Psalms 48:13

Life lessons surround us day by day. Some are subtle, while others are quite profound. In the Norman Rockwell painting seen below, which appeared on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post magazine in the late 1950's, it triggers any number of memories. One of which centers itself on the necessity to make an emergency trip to a dentist following an ill fated snowboarding accident. Our son had a snowboard, some how kick up on him and caught him squarely in the teeth. By the time he had gotten home from the ski slope, he was in dire pain.



X-rays were taken and the dentist came into the room with a somber look on his face. Our son's teeth were broken below the gum line. The teeth would have to be removed surgically and right now! Being a teen-ager at the time, he through a swollen mouth asked, "isn't there another way?" It broke our hearts to have to agree with the doctor; there was no other way. We couldn't take away the pain, yet we could be with him through the ordeal.

Seeing the painting by Rockwell and thinking back to that awful incident, so many years ago, a thought came to mind. Imagine how the Father must have felt when Jesus prayed to Him in the garden. Jesus told His disciples, Peter, James and John, *“My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.”* (Matthew 26:38) Moving a

little further away He fell on His face and prayed. *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will but as Thou wilt.”* (Matthew 26:39) Luke in his account notes, *“Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.”* (22:43) In essence the Father was saying there was no other way.

Can you imagine the anguish felt by the Father with each lash Jesus received. Each blow from the hammer as the spikes were driven into His hands and feet. The agony hour upon hour as Jesus writhed to gather another breath, while experiencing waves of unspeakable pain. Then the final piercing of the spear with the issuance of blood and water. Take also into consideration what Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth, in chapter five and verse twenty-one. *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

There was no other way. Out of an abundance of love for mankind, God sent His Son to pay the price for sin. Out of love for mankind Jesus laid down His life. All of which was done because as Paul would write, *“For while we were still helpless at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”* (Romans 5:6) *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8) The issue now is if we love God? (see 2John 6) (wbe)