

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 27:27-44 | Mocking The Messiah
Sunday May 17, 2026

WELCOME:

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

REVIEW:

We continue our study of Matthew's Gospel this morning.

For the past several weeks, we have examined the "Passion Narrative."

"The Passion" comes from a Greek term meaning "suffering."

Not only physical suffering, but also emotional and spiritual suffering.

If you've seen the movie called "The Passion of the Christ," then you'll recognize these passages.

Last Sunday, we met a new character in the Gospel narrative—Barabbas.

Or more specifically—Jesus Barabbas, "the son of a father."

Jesus was a popular first name in the first century, which means "salvation."

LW KEYPOINT 1:

The crowd has a choice between two Jesuses: One who was the son of a father and one who was the Son of a Heavenly Father.

We discussed an important theological point— "Substitutionary Atonement" and "The Great Exchange" between one Jesus for another.

LW KEYPOINT 4:

We are Barabbas—guilty, deserving death, and God’s wrath because of our sin.

As we have studied Matthew’s Gospel together over the years, we’ve seen Jesus the Christ not only as the central figure and main character—

But as the prime mover of constant activity: teaching, healing, and arguing with the religious leaders.

However, throughout *Jesus’ Passion narrative*, we see Him become passive. Why?

Jesus has said all He needs to say and done everything He needed to do up until this point.

The last 24 hours of Jesus’ life are absolutely brutal, and He says very little.

When he finally speaks, Jesus addresses the Father.

His statement ignites a flurry of *human* activity, and when Jesus dies, it sets off an eruption of *cosmic* activity.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we’ll examine one of the longest passages that we have ever covered on a Sunday morning.

We’ll witness the Romans prepare Jesus for crucifixion and then the crucifixion itself.

Your Bible may have these passages listed as two separate paragraphs.

The reason that I’m combining them is that I don’t want to drag it out.

The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ is the best-documented and most misunderstood event in history.

But it's also the most emotional.

It's incredibly difficult and emotional to read and study.

As we study this passage, we're not going to dwell on the physical events but rather on the spiritual meaning of these events.

The reason that I want us to focus on the spiritual is because that's what the Gospel writers do.

We'll see a shift from what happens physically to the Lord Jesus Christ—to the spiritual.

Matthew does this because it's easy for us to read Scripture on the surface without knowing what it means beneath the surface.

Even worse, many people take it out of context and make it say what they want it to say.

Today, I hope and pray that we learn a spiritual lesson and apply it to our lives so that we can know what all of this means as Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and for us together as a church.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 27:27—*Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's residence and gathered the whole company around him.*

Matthew 27:28—*They stripped him and dressed him in a scarlet robe.*

Matthew 27:29—They twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and placed a staff in his right hand. And they knelt down before him and mocked him: “Hail, king of the Jews!”

Matthew 27:30—Then they spat on him, took the staff, and kept hitting him on the head.

Matthew 27:31—After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

Matthew 27:32—As they were going out, they found a Cyrenian man named Simon. They forced him to carry his cross.

Matthew 27:33—When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull),

Matthew 27:34—they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink. But when he tasted it, he refused to drink it.

Matthew 27:35—After crucifying him, they divided his clothes by casting lots.

Matthew 27:36—Then they sat down and were guarding him there.

Matthew 27:37—Above his head they put up the charge against him in writing: This Is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

Matthew 27:38—Then two criminals were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

Matthew 27:39—Those who passed by were yelling insults at him, shaking their heads

Matthew 27:40—and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

Matthew 27:41—In the same way the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him and said,

Matthew 27:42—“He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

Matthew 27:43—He trusts in God; let God rescue him now—if he takes pleasure in him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”

Matthew 27:44—In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with him taunted him.

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith 1.1:

“The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God’s former ways of revealing His will to His people have now ceased.”

PRAY:

Teach me, Lord, the meaning of your statutes, and I will always keep them. Help me understand your instruction, and I will obey it and follow it with all my heart.
(Psalm 119:33-34)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 27:26— *Then he released Barabbas to them and, after having Jesus flogged, handed him over to be crucified.*

After the flogging...

Matthew 27:27— *Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's residence and gathered the whole company around him.*

We can see how things are moving very quickly now—"Then and then."

Everything is happening right on schedule according to God the Father's plan of redemption.

Matthew 27:27— *Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's residence*

The governor's residence is probably King Herod's old palace—also known as the Praetorium.

It also included the barracks for the soldiers.

Matthew 27:27—*gathered the whole company around him.*

Whole company— "entire regiment, whole battalion, Roman cohort" — amounted to 600 soldiers.

Although the soldiers were given direct orders to flog and crucify Jesus, they took it upon themselves to go beyond their basic duty of carrying out Pilate's orders.

Why would they go beyond what their Commander-in-Chief has instructed them?

Roman soldiers lived in a world of cruelty.

Brutality was a part of their being.

Being ruthless was their recreation.

Roman soldiers were known for playing barbaric games with prisoners, especially insurrectionists/revolutionaries—anyone who threatened Caesar.

This threat of Jesus being king is possibly why so many soldiers were summoned.

These soldiers heard that Jesus was supposed to be the king of the Jews; however, what's hysterical to them is that Rome rules this king of the Jews.

They would dress the prisoners in costumes and move them around a life-size board game as human “game piece.”

Here we have humanity at its worst—a scene of vicious contempt.

Matthew 27:28—*They stripped him...*

Jesus was either naked or nearly naked for the flogging.

Normally, a prisoner walked naked to his place of execution.

We know that the Roman soldiers gambled for his inner garment, so they must have at least put that back on him after they were done with this scene of mockery.

Matthew 27:28—*...and dressed him in a scarlet robe.*

Why scarlet? Because it was close to the color purple, which is the color of royalty.

Although it was far from the soldiers' intent, the Father uses this moment to remind us of His sovereign plan from the beginning.

Isaiah 1:18—*Though your sins are scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are crimson red, they will be like wool.*

In other words, we cannot save ourselves—our stains of sin and our guilt can only be removed through the King of kings.

Matthew 27:29—*They twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and placed a staff in his right hand.*

The crown of thorns and staff are intended as a vicious parody of royalty.

The soldiers were mimicking the wreath that Caesar wore on his head—and that could be seen on Roman coins.

The staff represented a royal scepter/staff/rod— the symbol of a king’s authority and power.

It’s possible that the royal scepter originated from a shepherd’s staff.

Matthew 27:29—*And they knelt down before him and mocked him: “Hail, king of the Jews!”*

This was the soldiers’ version of the Roman tribute “Ave, Caesar!”

“Hail, Caesar!” Means “long live the king.”

These are words of Roman worship.

Matthew 27:30—*Then they spat on him, took the staff, and kept hitting him on the head.*

The physical savagery continues.

Let’s not miss the spiritual mockery. The game is this—

Where is your divine power? Caesar is a god because he has a royal army. Where's yours?

At this moment, no one on earth looked less like a king, let alone God incarnate.

Jesus' back had been flogged.

Blood would have been running down His head because the soldiers beat the crown of thorns into His skull.

Spit would have been dripping from His face.

Jesus didn't look like a king then.

Nor is He supposed to.

KEYPOINT 1:

At this moment, Jesus the Christ is a portrait of our sin.

Keep in mind, Jesus *became* sin for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21—He (God the Father) made the one who did not know sin (God the Son) to be sin for us,

When Jesus became sin for us, he suffered as our sacrificial substitute—bearing our sins, enduring the Father's wrath.

As awful as this moment is, let us never forget that one day the Lord Jesus Christ will hold a true scepter.

Then the tables will be turned, and the mocking and derision will not be by man, but God Himself.

Let us remember what God says about Himself through Scripture...

Psalm 2:1— *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
Who does the world rage against?*

Psalm 2:2—*The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers
(governors, princes, presidents, dictators) conspire together against the
Lord (God the Father) and his Anointed One (God the Son/Christ):*

Psalm 2:3—*“Let’s tear off their chains and throw their ropes off of us.”*

Rulers of this world (kings, presidents, dictators) not only want political and economic independence, but they also reject God’s sovereign authority over all nations.

Psalm 2:4—*The one enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord ridicules them.*

Psalm 2:5—*Then he speaks to them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath:*

God is a God of love, AND He’s also a God of Justice.

If God were not just, His love would not be pure.

Psalm 2:6—*“I have installed my king...”*

The Lord Jesus perfectly displays both love and justice.

He is the most loving king you will ever meet, but He will not tolerate personal sin or national injustice.

The world doesn’t think about long-term spiritual consequences.

No one gets away from disrespecting the Lord Jesus Christ, let alone those who physically tortured him.

One day very soon, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back—it's called the Second Coming.

We don't have to guess what His return will be like.

Revelation 19:11— *Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and with justice he judges and makes war.*

Revelation 19:12 —*His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on his head. He had a name written that no one knows except himself.*

Revelation 19:13— *He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.*

Revelation 19:14— *The armies that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen.*

The Roman soldiers wanted to know where Jesus' armies were.

Revelation 19:15— *A sharp sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty.*

Revelation 19:16— *And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*

The Second Coming is a picture of Christ's actual, unquestionable authority over all nations.

It's a far cry from being born in a barn, from a no-name woman, in a no-name town.

When the Lord Jesus returns as a conquering king, He does so, fulfilling Scripture and crushing all forms of worldly power and injustice.

The white horse, crowns, titles, armies, and military imagery all proclaim that — Jesus is Lord, and Caesar is not.

God is sovereign—He rules and reigns.

We dare not put Almighty God in a box—let alone a soapbox telling Him what He can or cannot do.

Isaiah 45:5— *I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God but me.*

Isaiah 45:7— *I form light and create darkness, I make success and create disaster; I am the Lord, who does all these things.*

God asked Job, “You got a problem with that?”

God’s justice will be vindicated, and the world will see King Jesus as He truly is.

But first, we must see Him on a Roman cross as the sacrificial lamb.

Matthew 27:31— *After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

The soldiers are done with their games, so it’s time to get on with business.

Matthew 27:32— *As they were going out, they found a Cyrenian man named Simon.*

Simon was “a passer-by coming from the country” (Mark 15:21).

Cyrene was a region in North Africa with a large Jewish population.

We know Cyrene as Libya.

Simon was probably a Jew visiting Jerusalem for the Passover. He walked 1,000 miles to celebrate Passover.

If he had walked 15 miles per day, it would have taken him just over two months (67 days).

That's like us walking south and our destination being Guadalajara, Mexico.

So Passover is obviously very important to Simon of Cyrene.

Matthew 27:32—*They forced him (Simon) to carry his (Jesus') cross.*

A condemned criminal normally carried or dragged the cross beam of his own cross, *patibulum* (puh-TIB-yuh-lum), to the execution site.

This was intended to further their humiliation and compound their suffering.

The crossbeam weighed between 30 and 40 pounds.

By this time, Jesus had suffered two ferocious beatings; he was too weak to carry the beam down the road.

It's possible that the Romans chose Simon because he looked like a strong young man.

Simon, like all Jews, hates the Romans.

To be forced into mandatory service by a Roman soldier and carry the crossbeam of a condemned man must have infuriated him.

But something supernatural may have happened to Simon that day as he walked alongside the Lord Jesus.

Simon may have stayed to watch the crucifixion—we don't know.

He would obviously have returned home and told his family about Jesus.

Maybe Simon's family was there and watched all of this happen.

It's possible that Simon and his whole family became Christians through this experience.

Mark 15:21—*They forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by, to carry Jesus's cross. He was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.*

Why would Mark name Simon's sons?

It serves no purpose in the narrative.

It's as if Mark names these men because they are now known in the church.

It's very possible that Simon, Alexander, and Rufus all became Christians and leaders in the church.

Rufus is greeted by Paul in Romans 16:13, "Chosen in the Lord."

Alexander may be the one referred to in Acts 19:33.

Matthew 27:33—*When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull),*

That's quite the name—"the place of the skull."

- It was the place where people were put to death.
- Some believe that the hill itself looked like a skull from a distance.
- Others believe it was named because there were tombs in the area.

Matthew 27:34—*they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink.*

Gall is a general name for anything very bitter.

Imagine adding a tablespoon of grapefruit juice or apple cider vinegar to your glass of wine.

We don't know its exact nature and purpose.

There are two ways to look at this drink.

First, as a painkiller.

Second, it is not an act of mercy but of mockery.

Matthew's choice of "gall" carries theological significance.

Rather than emphasizing pain relief, Matthew emphasizes the bitterness that the gall represents.

Jesus fulfills Scripture...

Psalm 69:21—*Instead, they gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

Matthew 27:34—*But when he tasted it, he refused to drink it.*

If it were given to dull Jesus' pain, the temptation doesn't work.

Jesus will endure the Father's wrath completely sober.

Matthew 27:35—*After crucifying him,*

Notice that Matthew doesn't glorify the crucifixion itself—it only gets three words.

None of the Gospels describes the actual crucifixion in detail.

Everyone in the first century knew the details well.

Josephus described crucifixion as “the most wretched of all ways of dying” (War 7.5.4).

Cicero (106–43 BC) said that crucifixion so frightened Roman citizens that they refused to speak the word “cross.”

The cross was so offensive to the Romans that they refused to allow their own citizens to be crucified, no matter what they had done.

Explain crucifixion:

Jesus was placed naked on the cross as it lay flat on the ground.

First, His feet were nailed to the upright beam—his legs were slightly bent.

Next, they nailed His wrists to the crossbeam.

The cross was then picked up and dropped into the hole, causing excruciating pain as the weight of His body was slammed down.

And then the Romans would wait for Jesus to die.

Matthew 27:35—*they divided his clothes*

Jesus was crucified naked.

Matthew 27:35—*by casting lots.,*

Matthew now shifts from the facts to people’s reactions—first, the Soldiers.

This is just another day at the office—the soldiers’ sole pastime is gambling.

Clothing was expensive, so they rolled stones, like dice, for His clothes. In doing so, more Scripture is fulfilled.

Psalm 22:14—*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed; my heart is like wax, melting within me.*

Psalm 22:15—*My strength is dried up like baked clay; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You put me into the dust of death.*

Psalm 22:16—*For dogs have surrounded me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; they pierced my hands and my feet.*

Psalm 22:17—*I can count all my bones; people look and stare at me.*

Psalm 22:18—*They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.*

King David wrote those words before crucifixion was invented and a thousand years before Jesus was crucified.

Matthew 27:36—*Then they sat down and were guarding him there.*

The soldiers were required to guard the victim until he died.

They were to make sure that friends or family didn't try to rescue or interfere with the crucifixion.

Matthew 27:37—*Above his head they put up the charge against him in writing: This Is Jesus, the King of the Jews.*

Remember what the name "Jesus" means—"salvation."

This is Jesus! This is salvation!

A wooden placard called a *titulus* (TIT-yoo-lus)—This “title” advertised the cost of rebelling against Rome.

This sign announced the reason for His crucifixion.

Often, this placard was tied around the criminal’s neck and written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

This was for the benefit of people, so they would be warned against committing a similar crime.

When Jesus arrived at Golgotha, the placard was taken from his neck and nailed over his head.

In one of many ironies, the soldiers tell the truth.

They mean to humiliate Jesus, but Jesus is king; He reigns from the cross!

A true king defends and protects his people—regardless of the cost.

A true king doesn’t serve himself—he doesn’t run away when things don’t go his way.

A true king defends his people from all enemies.

King Jesus not only protects, but delivers Believers from our greatest enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Matthew 27:38—*Then two criminals were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.*

Jesus’ crucifixion with criminals fulfills Isa. 53:12.

These men were not petty thieves —they were partners of Barabbas.

Jesus Barabbas—a revolutionary, insurrectionist, and murderer—the real threat to Rome, whom the Jews think is their real messiah.

Matthew 27:39—*Those who passed by were yelling insults at him, shaking their heads.*

Next, Matthew focuses on the Jews' response.

Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, most likely on a main road leading into the city (Heb. 13:12).

Because it was Passover, thousands of people would have been passing by.

Yelling insults is an allusion to...

Psalm 22:7—*“Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer and shake their heads.”*

The soldiers may be indifferent, but the Jews are rabid—mocking Jesus as they watch or pass by.

They think that no Messiah, no true king, would ever be crucified!

As they see it, Jesus' crucifixion proves He is a liar, an imposter, and a fake.

Matthew 27:40—*and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself!*

Note the irony. Jesus will return after three days and “rebuild” the temple of His body (John 2:19–22).

They mock Jesus—“save yourself.”

What does the name “Jesus” mean? “To save/ salvation.”

Precisely because He is the savior, He will not come down from the cross.

From the cross, Jesus fulfills a king's central duties, protecting his people and delivering them from harm.

Matthew 27:40—*If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!*"

This is Jesus' final temptation.

Who do these people sound like?

"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (Matt. 4:3)

"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." (Matt. 4:6)

They were asking Jesus to do the same thing Satan challenged Him to do.

Jesus said of these people, *"You are of your father the devil."* (Jn. 8:44)

Matthew 27:41—*In the same way the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him*

Matthew moves from the responses of the Roman Soldiers and Jews to the Jewish leaders.

These men are a strange group of bedfellows, since scribes normally hang with Pharisees, not with priests and elders.

Just as Pilate and Herod were united by hating Jesus, so are the VIP's of Israel.

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders represented the entire religious leadership of Israel.

Matthew 27:42—“He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

This is another lie—these men refuse to believe, and it doesn’t matter how many miracles Jesus does.

The religious leaders do not address Jesus directly, but turn to one another as they mock him.

Of course, Jesus could come down, but then He could not save anyone.

KEYPOINT 2:

To save others, Jesus will not save Himself.

It doesn’t matter what people do or say.

Jesus loved His people too much to defend Himself.

Matthew 27:43—*He trusts in God; let God rescue him now—if he takes pleasure in him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”*

Jesus is on the cross because He does trust His Father.

The Father will “deliver him” —not at that moment, but three days later.

God the Father is the creator of time—everything runs on His schedule.

Matthew 27:44—*In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with him taunted him.*

The mood was so vicious that the other crucified men joined in.

How is that possible?

Everyone's mockery had the same theme—if Jesus was the Savior, He should prove it.

Jesus will prove it—in three days, just as He promised.

APPLICATION:

KEYPOINT 1:

At this moment, Jesus the Christ is a portrait of our sin.

2 Cor. 5:21—He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us,

- Have you ever dwelt on this divine reality?
- Have you ever asked yourself,
 - “What kind of love is this?”
 - “What kind of God does this?”
- Have you ever considered how bloody your sins are?
- Have you ever pondered the actual price that Christ paid?
- Do you now live as the most grateful and thankful person on the planet—regardless of your circumstances/how you feel?

When we have a bad day and forget the Gospel, let me encourage you to run to the empty cross.

When we lose our cool and burn another bridge, let me encourage to run to the empty cross.

When we lose hope, and we feel like life is not worth living, and nothing will ever change— let me encourage you to run to the empty cross.

Second, don't forget about your church—

The church is God's ordained means to worship—these people, hopefully, are your friends and family who are physically with you.

The Christ-centered life is not only vertical, but horizontal—that's the cross!

We need one another, just as the church in the first century needed one another.

They didn't do life alone, and neither should we.

Lastly, let me encourage you to take my notes home and read through those questions during your devotional time and then discuss them with your spouse, kids, and grandkids.

You have everything you need to start a small group in your own home.

POP QUIZ:

1. In the sermon, what is the primary reason given for focusing more on the *spiritual meaning of the crucifixion rather than the physical details*?

- A. Because the physical details are not historically reliable
- B. Because the Gospel writers themselves emphasize the spiritual meaning
- C. Because early Christians did not know how crucifixion worked
- D. Because physical suffering is unimportant in Scripture

Correct answer: B

2. What key doctrine is highlighted using the story of Barabbas?

- A. Justification by works
- B. Annihilationism
- C. Substitutionary atonement and the Great Exchange
- D. Open theism

Correct answer: C

3. When the soldiers dress Jesus in a scarlet robe and crown of thorns, what is the deeper theological point made in the sermon?

- A. Jesus is secretly plotting a military revolt
- B. God is reminding us of His details within His sovereign plan of redemption
- C. The soldiers are trying to comfort Jesus
- D. The robe symbolizes the Old Testament priesthood only

Correct answer: B

4. According to the sermon, what does 2 Corinthians 5:21 teach about Jesus on the cross?

- A. Jesus became a sinner in His own nature
- B. Jesus became sin for us as our sacrificial substitute, bearing God's wrath
- C. Jesus never truly suffered as a human being
- D. Jesus temporarily ceased to be God

Correct answer: B

5. Why does the sermon connect Psalm 2 with the mocking of Jesus by rulers and nations?

- A. To show that only Israel rejected Jesus, not the nations
- B. To prove that the Old Testament is primarily about politics
- C. To show that the world's rulers rebel against the Lord and His Anointed, but God will vindicate His King
- D. To argue that Jesus never claimed to be King

Correct answer: C

6. What is the significance of Simon of Cyrene in the sermon's exposition?

- A. He proves that only Romans followed Jesus
- B. He is an example of how unexpected events are used to bring people to faith
- C. He was one of the original twelve apostles
- D. He shows that carrying the cross is merely symbolic, not costly

Correct answer: B

7. Why do the Gospel writers, according to the sermon, give very few details about the *mechanics* of crucifixion?

- A. They did not understand Roman execution methods
- B. Crucifixion was too unimportant to describe
- C. Everyone in the first century knew the details; the writers wanted to emphasize the meaning rather than the method
- D. They were forbidden by Roman law to write about it

Correct answer: C

8. The mockers say, "*If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!*" How does the sermon relate this to an earlier event in Matthew's Gospel?

- A. It parallels Jesus' baptism
- B. It echoes Satan's temptations in the wilderness, "If you are the Son of God..."
- C. It fulfills John the Baptist's prophecy
- D. It repeats Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi

Correct answer: B

9. What key truth is captured in KEYPOINT 2: “To save others, Jesus will not save Himself”?

- A. Jesus lacked the power to come down from the cross
- B. Jesus was overpowered by Rome and had no choice
- C. Jesus *chose* to remain on the cross in obedience to the Father so that He could accomplish salvation for His people
- D. Jesus wanted to prove the religious leaders right

Correct answer: C

10. According to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith 1.1, as quoted in the sermon, what are the Holy Scriptures?

- A. Helpful but non-binding traditions of the church
- B. A partial record of God’s will that needs modern revelation to be complete
- C. The only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience
- D. A collection of inspiring stories with no doctrinal authority

Correct answer: C

REFLECTION & SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

Big Picture

1. In what ways is the crucifixion of Jesus “the best-documented and most misunderstood event in history”? How have you seen it misunderstood in our culture or even in churches?
2. The sermon emphasized focusing less on the physical details and more on the spiritual meaning of the crucifixion. Why is that important? What might we miss if we focus only on the physical suffering?
3. How does the 1689 Baptist Confession 1.1 (Scripture as “the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience”) shape the way we study a passage like Matthew 27:27–44?
4. When you personally read the Passion narrative, what emotions do you feel?

Jesus Mocked as King (Matthew 27:27–31)

1. The soldiers go beyond their orders in cruelty. What does this reveal about the human heart apart from God’s grace (cf. Romans 3:10–18)?
2. The scarlet robe and crown of thorns were intended as mockery, yet they underline Christ’s true kingship. How does God’s sovereignty turn human evil into displays of His plan (cf. Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23)?
3. Read Isaiah 1:18. How does the image of scarlet sins becoming white as snow connect to Jesus wearing a scarlet robe and becoming “a portrait of our sin”?
4. The soldiers ask, in effect, “Where is your power? Where is your army?” How does Revelation 19:11–16 answer that question? How should that future vision shape our present faithfulness?

5. What does it mean that, Jesus “did not look like a king, nor is He supposed to”? How does this challenge worldly ideas of power, success, and victory?

6. Scripture says God “made him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). What does this *not* mean and what does it *positively* mean? How does this verse capture the heart of the gospel?

God’s Justice, Wrath, and Sovereignty

1. Psalm 2 portrays God laughing at rebellious nations and warning them of His wrath. How does this balance with “God is love” in a Biblically faithful way?

2. Why is it good news that God is not only loving but also just? How would the Gospel be distorted if God’s justice were minimized or denied?

3. How does the Second Coming of Christ as conquering King (Revelation 19) complement the picture of the suffering Servant on the cross? Why must we hold both together in our theology and preaching?

4. In what ways do individuals and nations today say, “Let’s tear off their chains and throw their ropes off of us” (Psalm 2:3)? Where do you see this spirit of rebellion most clearly?

5. How does God’s absolute sovereignty (Isaiah 45:5,7) comfort you? How does it confront you?

Simon of Cyrene and the Unexpected Disciple (Matthew 27:32)

1. Consider Simon of Cyrene: a Jewish pilgrim, forced by Roman soldiers to carry Jesus’ cross. How might this “inconvenience” have become God’s means of saving him and his family?

2. Mark names Simon’s sons, Alexander and Rufus. Why is it significant that their names appear in Scripture and possibly in later church life (e.g., Romans 16:13)? What does this teach about generational impact?

3. Where has the Lord used unwanted interruptions or painful providences in your life to bring you closer to Christ?

4. Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24). In what concrete ways is your life currently reflecting cross-bearing discipleship?

Gall and Refusing the Drink (Matthew 27:33–34)

1. Matthew notes that Jesus is offered wine mixed with gall and that He refuses it. What is the spiritual significance of Jesus choosing to remain fully sober while bearing the wrath of God?

3. Read Psalm 69:21. How does Jesus’ experience on the cross fulfill this verse? How do such specific fulfillments strengthen your confidence in Scripture and in God’s plan of redemption?

Crucifixion, Nakedness, and Fulfilled Prophecy (Matthew 27:35–37)

1. Matthew is very brief about the act of crucifixion itself. Why do you think the Gospel writers do not dwell on the physical method of execution? What are they emphasizing instead?

2. Jesus is crucified naked while soldiers gamble for His clothes. Read Psalm 22:14–18. What strikes you about how precisely this psalm anticipates Christ’s suffering?

3. How does the shame of Jesus’ nakedness on the cross relate to Adam and Eve’s shame in Genesis 3 and to our own guilt before God?

4. The sign over Jesus reads: *“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”* In what sense is this sign both mockery and profound truth? How does it preach the Gospel even as it condemns Him?

5. The sermon said, “Jesus reigns from the cross.” How is the cross a throne of victory rather than a symbol of defeat? How does this shape our understanding of Christian leadership and ministry?

Christ Between Criminals and the World’s Response (Matthew 27:38–40)

1. Isaiah 53:12 says the Servant would be “numbered with the transgressors.” Why is it significant that Jesus dies between criminals associated with Barabbas?

2. Many Jews passing by mock Jesus: “*You who would destroy the temple...save yourself!*” How were they misunderstanding Jesus’ earlier teaching about the temple (John 2:19–22)?

3. How do people today repeat the same mockery: “*If God is real, why doesn’t He...?*” or “*If Jesus is Savior, why doesn’t He...?*”? How would you respond to such objections using this passage?

Temptation to Come Down and the Necessity of the Cross (Matthew 27:40–44)

1. Discuss KEYPOINT 2: “To save others, Jesus will not save Himself.” Why is it theologically necessary that Jesus *stay* on the cross? What would be lost if He had come down?

2. The religious leaders promise, “*Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.*” Why is this not true saving faith, even if they had believed after a miracle?

3. Both criminals taunt Jesus at first (Matthew 27:44), yet Luke tells us one later repents (Luke 23:39–43). What does this teach about conversion, even at the last hour, and about the sheer grace of God?

Trust in the Father and God's Timing

- 1.. How does the truth that God works on *His* timetable, not ours, challenge our expectations in suffering and prayer?
3. Where are you currently tempted to demand that God act “now or else”? How does the cross call you to deeper trust and patience?

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