**Follow the King to the Cross**

**The Irony of the Cross**

Matthew 27:27-56

April 14, 2019

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We are in a series leading up to Easter, Follow the King to the Cross. Jesus’ life and ministry pointed to his going to the cross and today we look at King Jesus’ own cross. Matthew emphasizes the irony of the cross. Jesus is mocked as King and the Son of God but in the end, the cross most clearly demonstrates his true identity.

**The Mocking of the World (27-44)**

The first scene is the soldiers taking Jesus to the governor’s residence and gathering a whole battalion of soldiers, somewhere between two hundred and six hundred men, mock him as a king. They strip his clothing off and put a cloak over his shoulders, place a crown of thorns on his head, and give him a staff in his right hand. Kneeling before him, they hail him as king of the Jews! Then they spit on him and beat him repeatedly on the head with the staff. After this, they put his own clothing back on him and lead him out to be crucified (27-31). As they leave Jesus is too weak to continue carrying his cross so they force a man from Cyrene, Simon, to carry it for him (32). The whipping Jesus received whipped had weakened him. The whip was lined with metal shards and balls and bone that tore into the skin and muscles on the victim’s backside and the loss of so much blood that they went into hypovolemic shock. Hypovolemic shock is when the heart is unable to pump enough blood to the organs and causing them to fail. When they reached Golgotha, they offered him wine mixed with a sedative to dullen the pain but Jesus refused to drink it (33-34). He did not want to cloud his thinking nor avoid the pain of the cross. After hanging him on the cross, the soldiers divided his garments by casting lots (see Ps 22:17) and then sat guard over him to prevent anyone from rescuing him. They posted his charge over him, this is Jesus, the King of the Jews. The soldiers then hung two other criminals on either side of Jesus (35-38).

The mocking continued. Those passing by, the lookie-loos shook their heads and said, you could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God then come down from the cross (39-40). The religious leaders tell the crowd, he saved others but he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross and then we will believe in him. He trusts God; let God deliver him now, if he desires to do so. He did say, I am the Son of God (41-43). In their mind, that God did not rescue Jesus proves that he is not the Messiah but cursed (Deut 21:22-23).

**The Significance of the Crucifixion (45-56)**

Matthew describes the first sign of judgement, for three hours, darkness covered the land.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the same way that God brought darkness over the land of Egypt for three days as judgement in the Exodus he brought darkness on the land of Israel as judgement for crucifying His Son. Then Jesus cried out some of the most profound and mysterious words in the bible, “my God, my God why have you forsaken me (46)?” The Father could not save Jesus and save others at the same time. He is the Savior who will save his people from their sins (1:21) by giving his life as a ransom for others (20:28). Some think that this forsakenness implies that Jesus was cut off from or abandoned by the Father. But that means that the relationships within our triune God are disrupted and the very nature of the trinity is destroyed. Jesus quotes from Psalm 22 and Matthew wants us to see this psalm as the grid to understanding the crucifixion. Like the psalmist, Jesus was forsaken to death at the hands of his enemies. God did not defend him by rescuing him so that Jesus would escape death for our salvation. Even though God did not protect him from death, Jesus’ union with the Father and the Spirit was never severed. John Calvin said “we do not, however, insinuate that God was ever hostile to him or angry with him. How could he be angry with his beloved Son, with whom his soul was well pleased?” Instead of any notion of a “broken trinity,” Calvin argues that Christ felt, “as it were, forsaken of God,” but nonetheless “he did not cease in the slightest to confide in his goodness.”[[2]](#footnote-2) So, though God forsook the Son to his death for our salvation, God was never against him, the mutual love and trust between the Father and the Son was never disrupted, nor is the trinity destroyed.[[3]](#footnote-3) The cross tells us that God - the Father, the Son, and the Spirit - is for you! The greatest demonstration of God’s love for you is the cross. The cross shouts of God’s great love for us and our great need for forgiveness of our sin. Some of the crowd think Jesus is calling to Elijah, so someone grabs a sponge filled it with cheap wine and gave him a drink but others told them to wait and see if Elijah will come to save him. Finally, Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and gave up his human spirit, his human life (47-50). Jesus’ life was not taken from him, he gave up his life for sin (Jn 10:17-18).

In the second sign of judgment, the temple curtain torn completely in two (51). The curtain was massive, sixty feet high and thirty feet wide and about a hand’s width thick. It was said to take three hundred men to wash it. The veil separated sinful humanity from God’s holy presence. The death of Christ made the temple forever obsolete. Jesus was the final sacrifice for sin who opened direct access to God for us. We can now go directly into God’s presence without fear of death or judgement (Heb 10:19-22; 4:16).

The next sign of judgement was an earthquake (Isa 29:6; Jer 10:10; Ezek 26:18) that split rocks. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,[[4]](#footnote-4) and coming out of the tombs after the resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many (51-53). But when were they raised? The best way to read these verses is, “And the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised. And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Matthew merges the earthquake on the day of the crucifixion with the resurrection of the saints on Sunday with Christ’s resurrection. He understood the death and resurrection of Jesus as a single event because together they broke the power of death ([1 Cor 15:3–5; 14–17, 52–57](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Cor+15%3A3%E2%80%935%3B+14%E2%80%9317%2C+52%E2%80%9357&version=NIV)).[[6]](#footnote-6) These Old Testament saints testified to the effect of Christ’s resurrection which all believers anticipate ([John 5:25–29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5%3A25%E2%80%9329&version=NIV)). Those living before the time of Christ are as depend upon Jesus death and resurrection as those after the time of Christ. It is like an enormous explosion created shock waves in all directions. When Jesus rose from the dead, that earth-shattering event affected everything in the universe. Both the past and the future has been forever changed by the cross ([John 8:56–58](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+8%3A56-8&version=NASB)).

Then Matthew gives us the punchline, the response of the soldiers, at least some, that displays the irony of the cross. When the Centurion and those with him saw all that happened, they were filled with awe and said, this really was the Son of God! Though Jesus was rejected and mocked by Israel, a Roman Centurion and others in his detail saw that this man really was the Son of God. The cross becomes the definitive event which proclaims Jesus’ true status as the Son of God. Jesus the Messiah and Son of God is most clearly seen in his crucifixion and death.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why was the world mocking Jesus?
2. Why did they offer Jess wine mixed with gall?
3. How was Jesus forsake in the crucifixion?
4. How was Jesus not forsaken in the crucifixion and why is this important?
5. What is the significance of the veil being torn in two?
6. What is the significance of the Old Testament saints being resurrected?
7. Why did the Centurion acknowledge that Jesus really was the Son of God?
8. How do the events in this text speak to you?

**The Light of the World**

**The Glory and Grace of the Incarnation**

**John 1:14-18**

December 22, 2013

**The Incarnation is Glorious (vs. 14-15)**

**The Incarnation is Gracious (vs. 16-18)**

**Take aways . . .**

* Have you experienced new birth?

**Follow the King to the Cross -The Irony of the Cross**

Matthew 27:27-56

series lead Easter, FK 2 Cross look themes life & ministry of J which lead 2 miss 2 go 2

Today look at KJ cruc– J mission

Ie irony ~ story

M emph irony cross – while J mock S of G; ult cross most clearly demon J is S of G

**Mockg of World (27-44) -** soldiers tak J 2 gov resid mock him K & then lead 2b cruc

as leave J 2 weak carry cross so forc man fr Cyrene, Simon

J weakened ~ whipped (26) – tore up skin & muscle loss blood & hypovolemic shock

When reach Golgotha, J refus wine mixd w/sedat – not cloud mind or dull pain

Then hung & soldiers div garments & they sat guard > him

charge posted > him, this is J, King of Jews.

soldiers hung two > criminals either side of J

mock by looky loos/pass shuk head & said, destroy templ & rebuild it 3 days save self!

If u r S of G then come down fr cross

Mockd by Rel leaders, 41-43

In mind, G not rescue J proves he not Messiah but cursed (Deut 21:22-23).

Even mocked by other criminals

**Them Mtw descr Sign of Crucifixion (45-56)**

1st sign judgmt ~ 4 3 hours, darkness covered land –

same way G dknss > land Eg 3 day jdgmt in Exo brought jdgmt on land Isr 4 cruc Son

Then J cried out most profound & myst words in bible, 46

J not save self & save > same time - Savior will save his people by giv life ransom

Some think – J was cut off fr or aband by F - But means relat w/in triune G r disrupt

J q Ps 22 & Matthew wants us 2 C psa as grid 2 understandg cruc

Like ps, J was forsaken 2 death at hands of enemies.

G not defend J by rescu him so J would escape death 4 r salv

But even tho G not protect him fr death, J union w/F & S never severed.

*Calvin said “we do not, however, insinuate G was ever hostile 2 him or angry w/him. How could he b angry w/his beloved Son, w/whom soul well pleased?” Instead of any notion of a “broken trinity,” Calvin maintns X felt, “as it were, forsaken of God,” but nonetheless “he did not cease in slightest 2 confide in his goodness.”*

So tho G 4sook S 2 deth, never ag him, mut luv & trust bw F & Son never disrupt

cross tells us G, whole trinity is united 4 us.

gr8st proof of G luv 4 u is cross - cross reminds G gr8 luv 4us & r need 4 forgivenes

Then J cried out again loud voice & gave up human spirit, ~ human life

J life not taken from him, he gave up life 4 sin (Jn 10:17-18).

2nd sign jdgmt on Israel, temple curtain torn completely in 2 (51).

curtain massive ~ 60 x30x mans hand’s width & said take 300 men wash it.

veil sep sinful humanity fr holy G pres

death of X made temple 4ever obs bc J final & pfct sac 4 sin opened direct access 2 G

we can go direct into G pres w/o fear death or jdgmt (Heb 10:19-22; 4:16).

Next strangest event in NT 51-53

best way 2 read vs is, “& bodies of many holy people who had died were raised.

And coming out of tombs after his res, they went in2 holy city & appeared many.”

Mtw merges earthq on day of cruc w/res of saints on day of J res

Saw D & R of J as single event bc 2gether broke power of D

These OT saints test 2 effect of X res which all bel anticipate ([John 5:25–29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5%3A25%E2%80%9329&version=NIV)).

Those liv bf time of X r as dep upon J D & R as those > time of X.

Ie like enormous explos send chock waves rippling in all direc.

When J rose fr dead, earth-shatt event affected everything in universe.

Both past & future, been forever changed by the cross.

Then Mtw punchline – descr resp of soldiers, climctc resp display irony cross. 54

While world rej & mocked J as King/S of G –

Cent & some men filled w/awe & confessed really was S of G

In cruc - Jews C J cursed while they saw J as S of G

cross bc defin event proclaims J true status as S of G

Jas S of G most clearly seen in cruc & dth

Next step?

Come to Faith – Gods love

Come back

FJ is only done in community – called to Jesus community of J

 I had taken a bus to Chicago to visit my friend who lived an hour from Chicago. I had a three-hour wait until the bus to her town arrived, so I walked around looking for food. There was a McDonald’s, so I went inside to eat.

The first thing that surprised me was the long line for food. I had never seen such a thing in the small town I came from. In addition, no one got their table to themselves. A complete stranger would come up and sit at any empty seat available. I was very uncomfortable once I noticed this, because I was a teenage girl alone.

I bought a sandwich and some cookies and was able to find an empty table. I sat there self consciously and began to eat my sandwich. A man in a suit came shortly, and sat across from me. Fortunately, he did not talk to me, so I could pretty much pretend he wasn’t there.

After I finished my sandwich, I began to nibble on the cookies in front of me. Suddenly I noticed that the man reached over and helped himself to my cookies! I couldn’t believe it! How rude! I said nothing, but did move the box closer to me when I got the next cookie.

That made no difference to him, he just reached farther for his next cookie. I shot him a nasty look, but said nothing as I ate the next cookie. He sort of smiled a little bit, maybe he was embarrassed for having just helped himself to someone else’s cookies. Well, he should have been embarrassed.

He took yet another cookie, and I decided that was really the last straw so I grabbed the box of cookies and left. I felt justified in my outrage. Why would someone think they could just help themselves like that? Because I was a girl alone? Big tough man stealing the young girl’s cookies?

I walked briskly down the sidewalk toward the bus station, just furious over the nerve of that guy. I stopped to put the cookies in my large bag, and noticed, with a falling heart that my cookies were already in my bag! Oh no gosh, I had stolen *his* cookies!

1. This is not from an eclipse. [Passover](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passover) always occurs during a full moon ([Lev 23:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5&version=NIV)) and [eclipses](https://blogs.nasa.gov/Watch_the_Skies/tag/solar-eclipse/) can appear only during new moons. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Calvin, *Institutes* II.xvi,11-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The gospel writers describe Jesus’ confidence and trust in God rather than abandonment. He is triumphant (Jn 19:10); has confidence that he will be in paradise (Lk 23:43); commits his life into the Fathers hands (34:46). None of these statements reflect separation or rejection by the Father or a disruption of their relationship. See excellent article on this topic, https://www.catalystresources.org/authors/thomas-h-mccall/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. An allusion to Ezek 37:12-13. The Jews interpreted this prophecy as a bodily resurrection of the faithful in the last days (Osborne, *Matthew*, 1045). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Wilkins, *Matthew*, 906. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hagner, *Matthew 14-18*, 850. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)