

## **The Death Of Christ**

### **Matthew 27:27-54**

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Beginning in Matthew 27:27, follow with me. It says, "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spit upon him." You know, so many times when I'm taking communion I'm thinking as I hold the bread that this symbolizes the body of Christ, I think about the fact that not only did Jesus die on the cross to take our sins, He died on the cross to take our place, but He took our shame and our agony as well. Just the suffering that He had to endure, the spitting, verse 30, the crucifixion, and it's just so graphic.

Verse 30, "And they spit upon him,"—spit upon the Son of God—" . . . a crown of thorns,"—platted on His head and now in heaven He's wearing a crown of glory—" . . . and a reed in his right hand,"—He sits next to the Father, of course, in the place of authority—" . . . and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!"

In verse 31 it says, "And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. 33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,"—it's also called Calvary—"They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink,"—it would've deadened the pain, but He did not take it. Verse 35, "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,"—he's going to quote from Psalm 22:18—"They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left,"—so there were three crosses, Christ in the center.

Verse 39, "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And saying, Thou that destroys the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." To think about the fact that He was dying to save us, and they mockingly said, "Save Thyself. Come down from the cross." If He had saved Himself, He could not have saved us.

Verse 42 says, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." We don't have in Matthew's gospel here all of the seven sayings that Jesus uttered from the cross, but about this point in time on His death on the cross, Jesus cried the words, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Verse 44, "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his

teeth.” We know also that one of the thieves became penitent, turned to Jesus and said, “Lord, remember me when You enter into Your Kingdom,” and Jesus said, “. . . today you will be with Me in Paradise.” He’s not only dying for the sins of the world, He’s dying and saving sinners, even His last time on the cross.

Verse 45, “Now from the sixth hour,”—the ‘sixth hour’ was twelve noon, and Jesus was put on the cross at nine o’clock in the morning. He’s been on the cross for three hours. “. . . there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour,”—which is 3 p.m. in the afternoon. “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias,”—Elijah. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias,”—Elijah—“will come to save him. 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,”—and we’re going to come back to this—“yielded up the ghost,”—or dismissed His Spirit. He cried, “Father, into Thy hands I dismiss My Spirit.”

Verse 51, “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened,”—I want you to note, just because I’m not going to go back to this, in verse 51—“. . . the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,”—that was the temple that had the veil between the holy place and the holy of holies, and in the holy of holies was the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat in the presence of God. That veil separated God from man. This tearing of the veil from the top to the bottom was a picture of God making the way now accessible and open for all to come through the blood of Jesus Christ—no longer separation, but we can come boldly into His presence through the blood of Jesus Christ—so the way now is made open.

Also, “. . . and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many,” so there were these three supernatural manifestations. By the way, those that came back from the grave, came back in mortal bodies and had to die again. This is not a part of the resurrection.

Verse 54, “Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done,”—there was also the darkness of the last three hours—“they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” They saw all of these manifestations of God’s righteousness and holiness and said, “This truly was the Son of God.”

Now, there are three things I want to give you, three key words or three facts, about the cross. They’re not new. I’ve shared them with you before, but if you can memorize them, it will help you to be able to tell others about the significance of the cross. How do you convey...how do you tell someone else about Jesus’ death on the cross and what it means for them? Well, here are the words. First, it was “voluntary.” Write that down. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was voluntary. That is significant. He gave His life. Look at verse 50, “Jesus . . . yielded up the ghost,”—or His Spirit. Jesus said it like this, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down

of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Jesus didn’t come from heaven to die on the cross against His wishes or against His will. “God,”—the Father—“so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” but God the Son came willingly and voluntarily. You need to understand that when Jesus came, He came voluntarily. This is what makes the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane so powerful is that He came voluntarily and willingly, but it was still agonizing and difficult for Him. “. . . and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood,”—and He said—“Father, if it be possible, let this cup,”—speaking of His death on the cross—“pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Doing the will of God is not always easy. Doing the will of God doesn’t always come easy, but it is the way that our lives glorify and honor God. Amen? If you want to bless the Lord and honor God and glorify Him, you make the commitment to be voluntarily sacrificing in serving Him.

Jesus, “. . . yielded up the ghost,”—which means literally, verse 50, He dismissed His Spirit. When we say, “Jesus was crucified,” He voluntarily gave His life. He could’ve come off the cross. He could’ve called ten thousand angels. He could’ve called fire down from heaven and roasted them all on the spot. It’s a good thing I wasn’t on the cross, right? “Father, roast them right now,” (sound of fire ball). “Father, forgive them.” He willingly, voluntarily...so when we take communion tonight and you hold that bread, symbolic of His body broken for us, and you drink that cup, a picture of the new covenant in His blood, He loves you.

I’m going to have three key words for each one of these points. The first key word is “love.” He loves you. Not only does the Father love you and gave His Son, Jesus loves you and gave Himself. His death was voluntary, He gave Himself. In 1 John, this is how we know the love of God, that He gave His only Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the,”—another big theological word on the cross—“propitiation”—the atoning sacrifice that He paid—“for our sins.” The greatest demonstration, manifestation, or display of God’s love is—catch this—that God gave His Son and that Jesus came and gave Himself voluntarily for me on that cross.

The second point I want to make is that it was, the death of Christ, vicarious. This is a word you don’t hear as frequently, but He gave His life for us. He gave His life out of love, He gave His life because it was for us. Look at verse 46. When Jesus cried, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,” it is interpreted, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” That was a direct quote from Jesus’ own lips from Psalm 22:1. Jesus, as He hung on the cross, cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And here’s the answer, He was forsaken by God the Father because He became a substitute for man, the creature’s sin.

The first key word that I gave you was “love” under the idea of voluntary. The second key word, if you’re taking notes, is “substitution,” and perhaps one of the most important words in understanding the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Have you ever seen a crucifixion and thought, I wonder what people think when they see that and wonder what is that all about? Why did this Man die? Who was that? It was a substitution. He died for me. He actually took my place on the cross. He gave Himself for us. When He cried on the cross, “My God, my

God, why hast thou forsaken me?" the psalmist says because God is holy.

When our sins were placed upon Jesus on the cross, there was a moment, that is one of the greatest mysteries in all of Scripture, when the Father had to turn His back on the Son. I know that some people get real freaked out by that and think, How can you divide the trinity, and How could a Father forsake His Son? Do you know what my answer is? I don't know. It's a mystery. Trust me, I've done my best to do my homework and study this subject, and I don't think anyone really knows. I've heard some eloquent sermons preached and read some by Charles Spurgeon, but there was a separation between the eternal Father and the eternal Son. I can't fathom or comprehend or imagine that.

When you take communion tonight, He loves me. When you take communion tonight, He was separated from God the Father so that I would never have to be, so that I could spend eternity in His presence. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." All through the Bible there are pictures of this, Genesis 22, when Abraham was instructed by God, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him . . . upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of," and he raised the knife and was going to plunge it into his son and God stopped him and showed him there was a ram in the bushes and substituted the goat or the ram for Isaac. He took Isaac off the altar and put the ram in his place. That is one of the clearest pictures of substitutionary atonement. And, believe it or not, it's so essential and so fundamental yet there are branches of Christians today that are denying this essential doctrine—the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for our sins. It was a sacrifice where He took my place.

Jesus was sinless, but He took my sin on Himself and then Jesus takes His righteousness and imputes it to me when I put my faith and trust in Him, so there's a switch. God the Father takes the righteousness of Christ, imputation is the word, gives it to me, I stand clothed in His righteousness; and He takes my sin and then He pays the penalty. You know, a holy, righteous, and just God cannot just turn His back on sin, it must be paid for. The penalty must be meted out. This is why it's called the "propitiation"—He took our punishment, He took our penalty. It was a substitutionary death.

When you take communion, remind yourself, "I'm taken off the altar, He's placed in the place of sacrifice, and the knife was plunged into Him. He died." Isaiah 53, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . with his stripes we are healed." Write down 1 Peter 2:24, "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree,"—which is a reference to the cross.

So it was voluntary, He loves me; it was vicarious, He substituted Himself for me; and here's the third key word, it was "victorious." Amen? Jesus died on the cross victoriously. He gave His life to rescue me. He gave His life, He gave His life for me, He gave His life in order to rescue me. Look at verse 50, "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,"—you know what He 'cried again with a loud voice'? Tetelestai. You say, "I don't know what that means." "It is finished!" Amen? That would make a cool t-shirt, by the way, a cross with just the words,

“Tetelestai,” or “It is finished.” Jesus died and paid for my sins. The penalty has been paid, “It is finished!”

This is why you don't need to work to save your soul. You can't work to save your soul, but you can accept what Jesus did for you. The fact that He was the perfect sacrifice, we could not pay for our sins because we're sinners, but He died in my place as the righteous sacrifice so that He might impute His righteousness to me. His finished work on the cross, it's done. Never again does Jesus need to die. I don't need to go through all these rites and rituals and works to try to work my way to heaven. Communion does not save you. You can eat all the little crackers you want, it won't get you to heaven; drink all the little cups of juice, and whatever you want to use, it's not going to save you. You can be baptized, you can be christened, you can be confirmed, you can go through catechism, you can try your best to live a good life, “For all have sinned, and come short. There is none righteous, no, not one,” so Jesus actually died to pay for all of our sins. It is a done, finished work.

What was the work He came to do? Here's the key word, “redemption.” So, the key word, “love;” the key word, “substitution;” the key word, “redemption.” Jesus died to redeem us from sin—our Redeemer. Do you know what it means? It means that He bought us. The word “redeem” means to purchase by paying a price. We were slaves to sin. He comes in that slave market. He paid the price of His own death, His own blood, to buy us (which means as believers we are now His property, by the way, we're bought and purchased, our bodies are not our own), then He sets us free. The whole meaning of redemption means to buy by paying a price. The word actually carries the idea of taking out because the idea was that you would buy in the marketplace, you would take out of the marketplace, and then the release and set free. It's all taken from the slave trade. So, you'd buy a slave, take the slave out of the market, you release them and set them free. That's an awesome thought.

When you hold the bread, when you drink the cup, when we take communion tonight, remember He bought you. He loves you. He died for you. He died to redeem you by His precious blood.

When we get to heaven, do you know what the number one theme of our song is going to be? Redemption. We're going to be singing about the cross! We're going to be glorying in the cross for all eternity! Listen to Revelation 5:9. It's a picture of the Church in heaven victorious. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Praise the Lord!

I love the songs that we sing about redemption, Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child, and forever, I am. So, I've been bought and purchased and released and set free. He loves me, He died for me, and He died to redeem me and save me.

The picture of that redemption is given in the story of the Exodus in Egypt when the children of

Israel took the blood of the lamb—remember that?—and they slayed the lamb and took the blood and put it on the doorpost of their homes. They took the hyssop branch and got it all full of blood and put the blood on the house and on the lintel, the top beam of the doorpost where they put the blood. That night, when the Angel of the Lord came through the land of Egypt, all the firstborn in the Egyptians' home, where there was no blood applied, died. But in the homes where the blood was applied...you think about, "Why are we doing this? How bizarre is this we put blood on our house," that God passed over that and they were spared, the blood of Christ applied to our lives.

You take the cross out of Christianity, there is no Christianity. You take the death of Christ out of Christianity, there's no Christianity. The cross is central to God's message of the Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere, it bleeds with redemptive truth from Genesis to Revelation.

Tonight, as Jesus instructed us, we take the bread, we remember His death on the cross; we take the cup, the symbol of the new covenant in His blood, we remember that He died to give us a new covenant—write His laws on our hearts—and we look forward. So, we look back at the cross, we look forward to His coming again, but we also look within and say, "God, forgive me." It's a great time to ask God to forgive you. "If we confess our sins," the Bible says, "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and to forgive others who have sinned against you. How can you take communion, celebrating God's forgiveness, if you are unwilling to forgive someone else that has wronged you or hurt you? So, release that tonight. Ask God to forgive you, ask God to give you a heart of forgiveness toward others, and be restored into an intimate, beautiful, wonderful fellowship with Christ.