

# Matthew Ch27v11-44 - Jesus Mocked

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[ 0 : 00 ] Matthew chapter 27. As you're turning up your Bibles, I should say a special welcome back to Helen. Helen, it's lovely to see you today. You've been away for a good number of weeks, not because you've been dossing, but because you've been recovering. And we have been praying for you, and we're just delighted to see you again in person. So welcome again, Helen.

Well done for making it. Matthew chapter 27. We're going to be picking it up in verse 11. Just some context before we read. Matthew's Gospel is always heading, as each of the Gospels are, towards the death and resurrection of Jesus. So what's happened just in the immediate chapter before, Jesus has been arrested, and the religious leaders have brought their various charges about him. Basically, the charge that he claims to be God, the Son of God. They don't have authority to punish him or sentence him, so they bring Jesus then before the ruling authorities, which is Pilate, the governor. And that's where we pick up the account. So Matthew chapter 27, starting at verse 11, let's hear God's word. Meanwhile, Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? You have said so, Jesus replied.

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you? But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge, to the great amazement of the governor. Now, it was the governor's custom at the festival, that was the Passover festival, to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time, they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, Which one do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah? For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message, Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. Which of the two do you want me to release to you? asked the governor.

[ 3 : 24 ] Barabbas, they answered. What shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Messiah? Pilate asked. They all answered, Crucify him. Why? What crime has he committed? asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, Crucify him! When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but instead an uproar was starting, he took water, washed his hands in front of the crowd.

I am innocent of this man's blood, he said. It's your responsibility. All the people answered, His blood is on us and on our children.

Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers round him.

They stripped him, put a scarlet robe on him, twisted together a crown of thorns, set it on his head, put a staff in his hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him.

[ 4 : 38 ] Hail, King of the Jews, they said. They spat on him, took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put on his own clothes.

Then they led him away to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

They came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. There they offered Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall, but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head, they placed the written charge against him.

This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself.

[ 5 : 57 ] Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God. In the same way, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself.

He's the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God? Let God rescue him now if he wants him. For he said, I am the Son of God.

In the same way, the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. Well, let's pray. Let's pray. Father, these words, this account can be familiar to all of us as we think about the death of Jesus.

So what we ask for today is that we would have a mind and a heart that comes to this in a fresh way.

That you would help us to see wonderful truth in your word. Truth that helps us see why Jesus died for us today.

[ 7 : 32 ] Help us to believe your word. And may it change us to be more like your Son, Jesus Christ.

We need your help today and that is why we ask. Knowing that you will help and you will give us understanding. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Well, the last time we looked at Matthew's Gospel we were back in chapter 13. But for these next few weeks, for the month of Easter, we're going to be looking at the account of the death and the resurrection of Jesus and then we'll go back again, further back in Matthew.

And today we want to start looking at the events leading up to Jesus' death. So three things we're going to see from the text this morning.

We're going to look at the silence of Jesus, the mocking of Jesus, and the victory of Jesus. The silence of Jesus, the mocking of Jesus, and the victory of Jesus.

[ 8 : 52 ] So first, the silence. There's something extraordinary about the trial with Pilate. And that is, Jesus is strangely silent.

Apart from a question and answer at the beginning, look at verse 11, where the governor Pilate asked, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus replied, You have said so.

That's it. That's all Jesus says through the whole trial. He doesn't even try and defend himself. He stays silent.

In fact, Jesus seems to be accepting what is happening to him. Look at verse 12. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.

Then Pilate asked him, Don't you hear the testimony they're bringing against you? But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge.

[ 10 : 06 ] It's staggering, isn't it? Jesus knows that if he doesn't speak up, it's going to be certain death.

Unlike Pilate at the end of verse 14, we're just amazed, we're stunned. We want to speak up for him and say something like this, Jesus, defend yourself.

Say something. But Jesus just seems to be accepting of what will happen. He remains silent.

But perhaps what's even more amazing is the fact that Jesus is completely innocent. Look at verse 19. While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, so he's the one who's ultimately going to declare whether Jesus is innocent or guilty.

As he was sitting on his judge's seat, his wife sent him this message. Don't have anything to do with that innocent man.

[ 11 : 15 ] For I've suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him. Mrs Pilate has obviously heard about Jesus. She knows the truth. And she's been desperately troubled about a miscarriage of justice.

And it's weighing on her conscience. Pilate, this Jesus person, he's innocent. And deep down, Pilate knows this too.

Look at verse 23. As the crowds come, or as the religious leaders come to him, calling for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified, Pilate questions them and he says, Why?

What crime has he committed? Of course, the religious leaders have done their very best to come up with a charge. Have a look back at chapter 6 and verse 59.

Chapter 26, verse 59. The chief priests, chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin, so they were the religious authorities, were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

[12:38] But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Not one of the charges stick.

There's no evidence. In fact, the only crime of Jesus is to speak the truth. His claim to be God's son, that he is God in the flesh, that he is God's promised chosen king who will redeem this broken world and restore our disordered lives.

But yet, throughout all this trial, Jesus remains silent. He doesn't open his mouth. Although he's innocent, he's accepting.

And so Jesus is sentenced. Chapter 27, verse 26. Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified.

It's shockingly unjust. The defendant is innocent, while the judge who pronounces the sentence, well, he's guilty for letting it happen.

[13:56] But still there's not a word. There's no last-minute evidence that's brought to the judge's seat that's going to reverse the situation. If that were you or me, wouldn't we be shouting from the sand, I'm innocent!

Stop! You must listen to me! You've got it wrong! By staying silent, Jesus is signing his own death sentence.

Why would he do that? Why does he not defend himself? Why is Jesus so silent? Well, we'll answer that in a minute.

Second, the mocking. Despite the injustice and the innocence of what's going on, there's no one who comes running to Jesus' defence.

In fact, the only person who comes to the aid of Jesus is Simon, verse 32, who came from Cyrene. And they forced him to carry the cross of Jesus.

[15:08] At best, he's a reluctant volunteer. Not only is Jesus silent, but everybody else has gone silent too. Nobody is speaking up for him.

apart from their mocking. Look at how the people respond to this miscarriage of justice.

First, we have the soldiers who see Jesus as irrelevant. Verse 28, they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head and put a staff in his right hand, dressing him up to look like a king.

Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. Hail, King of the Jews, they said. And they spat on him and took the staff and struck him again on the head over and over.

The soldiers knew there was one king and for them their king was the Roman emperor.

[16:20] For them, the only voice that they should be listening and obeying was the voice of the emperor. Why should they listen to Jesus? To him, he was a complete irrelevance.

They had one master. Why would they need Jesus? Then there's the crowd who see Jesus as a fraud.

Look at verse 39. Those who passed by as Jesus was crucified hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, you who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself.

Come down from the cross if you're the son of God. what? Well, they were right, weren't they?

Because Jesus had said, destroy this temple and I will rebuild the temple in three days.

but they were only partially right. Matthew doesn't record it for us but John does. John in his gospel, another eyewitness, tells us what this means.

[17:32] If you just jump forward to John's gospel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. John chapter 2 verse 19. It's the occasion where he overthrows the tables where they were exchanging money because the temple should be open to all people.

In other words, that everybody has a right to go to God. And the Jews, verse 18, chapter 2, verse 18, responded to him, what sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?

Jesus answered them, destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days or I will rebuild it again in three days.

They replied, it has taken 46 years to build this temple and you are going to raise it in three days. But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

And after he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. Go back to Matthew chapter 27.

[ 19 : 02 ] You see, the problem with the crowd is, though they had heard Jesus say these things, they couldn't see it nor understand it. To them, Jesus was a fraud.

He makes these great big promises but he fails to deliver. So the soldiers see him as irrelevant, the crowd see him as a fraud.

And the religious leaders see Jesus as a threat. verse 41. In the same way the chief priest, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.

He saved others, he said, but he can't save himself. He's the king of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross and we'll believe him. You see, they had become envious of Jesus, hadn't they? Because Jesus had come disrupting and disturbing their little religious club and they wanted to get rid of Jesus. And now they see him nailed up on a cross and to them, well, the threat was now eliminated.

[ 20 : 09 ] We've got rid of him. And the rebels, well, they see Jesus as a fool. Verse 38.

Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Verse 44. In the same way, the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Why would anyone who is innocent put themselves through this suffering? That's what they're thinking. They knew their crime and their guilt. They deserved to be crucified.

They understood the horrors of crucifixion. crucifixion. One author described crucifixion like this and the suffering that takes place.

Crucifixion was unspeakably painful and degrading. The victim endured countless moments of physical shock and surging pain as he pulled with his arms, pushed with his legs to keep his chest cavity open for breathing.

[ 21 : 19 ] The victim would then collapse in exhaustion until the demand for oxygen renewed the physical shock and surging pain. This cycle could go on for days ending at last by suffocation, cardiac arrest or loss of blood.

So, the rebels as they're hanging there, they're thinking why would you willingly accept such punishment if you're innocent?

The rebels thought he was a fool. It's astonishing, isn't it, as we think about the mocking that takes place. No one stands up for Jesus.

No one. Instead, they all join in the mocking in one way or another. But what about you? What about me?

How do you see Jesus as he hangs on the cross? Yeah, I know what the right answer is, but how do you treat him? Is he in irrelevance to you?

[ 22 : 32 ] You have your own way of living and your own way of doing things. Why would I ever listen to Jesus? Why would I bother listening to his word? Or maybe Jesus is a fraud to you.

He makes great claims about establishing an eternal kingdom, but you all find it rather disappointing and demanding because it's about serving and sacrifice.

Maybe you see Jesus as a threat to your own life. You prefer to believe your own truth and don't like the claims that Jesus makes on you, so you intentionally block him out.

Or maybe you just simply see Jesus as a fool, a good person who said and did some great things, but then it just got a bit out of hand. He got a bit ahead of himself and it all ended badly.

He's just a fool. Well, as much as we like to think of ourselves as better than any of these things, the truth is we have all joined in the mocking.

[ 23 : 48 ] You see, none of us naturally side with Jesus. We don't like to stand up for him. We prefer to keep quiet, don't we?

We want to stay silent. That is, apart from the mocking. Okay, we might make jokes, we might be laughing, we may never verbalise it, but don't we live at times as if Jesus is a complete irrelevance to our life, a fraud, a threat, and a fool.

Look at those surrounding the cross as Jesus is crucified. Look closely at all the people are there, look closely and you'll see me and you'll see yourself.

So we have the silence of Jesus and the mocking of Jesus. But then there's the victory. As Jesus silently goes to his death, as the people mock and insult him, it all seems to be a tragic and painful defeat.

After all that Jesus has done and all that he claims, it ends in a rather disappointing way, doesn't it? Look at the cross, naked, bloody, grasping for breath.

[ 25 : 22 ] Jesus is hanging as a condemned criminal. death. Yet what appears to be a crushing death is a life saving victory.

Well, where's the victory in this mess on a cross? Well, let's think about this together. First, we've got to know that this was a planned death.

You see, Jesus' silence before his accusers may seem strange to us. But Jesus doesn't need to defend himself.

He knows he must die. Leading up to these events, three times, Jesus had made it explicitly clear to his disciples, I'm going to Jerusalem and I'm going to die.

Have a look back at chapter 20. chapter 20, verse 18. So this is the third time Jesus has spelt it out in simple terms.

[ 26 : 36 ] Chapter 20, verse 18. We are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man, remember that's his title for himself.

The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified and on the third day he will be raised to life.

You can't get more simple than that, can you? You see, Jesus' death, before it happened, before his crucifixion, was all planned and purposed by God.

It's not a mistake. The events surrounding the trial of Jesus may have been orchestrated by religious rulers. The final sentence may have been pronounced by Pilate.

The soldiers may have nailed him to the cross, but all of their actions and all of their deeds have all been woven together into God's foreordained plan.

[ 27 : 52 ] The writers of Scripture won't let us off the hook. Over and over again they want this point to be clear to us. Luke, the author of Acts, tells us this, you can read on screen.

This man, speaking of Jesus, was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Jesus may die, but let's be absolutely clear on this, he is sovereign over his own death.

He is God's chosen king with absolute power and supreme authority. Nothing is taken Jesus by surprise and no one has control over the life of Jesus.

He deliberately and intentionally goes to his death. He goes silently. He endures the mocking because that is his purpose for coming to earth.

[ 28 : 58 ] He came to die. He came to die. But why did he die? Well, it was a substitutionary death.

A terrible injustice takes place at Jesus' trial. Look back at verse 15, chapter 7, verse 15. It was the governor's custom at the festival at the time of Passover to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. So obviously the prisoner is a criminal, he's done wrong, he's been imprisoned. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas.

So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, which one do you want me to release to you? Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who's called the Messiah? The one who claims to be God, to be king.

For he knew it was out of self-interest or envy that they had handed Jesus over to him. Pilate knew their schemes. They wanted Barabbas freed.

[ 30 : 14 ] But he also knew that this Jesus was innocent. So what was he going to do? Verse 20, the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

Which of the two do you want me to release to you? asked the governor. Barabbas they answered. What shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Messiah?

Pilate asked. They all answered, crucify him. Why? What crime has he committed? But they shouted all the louder, crucify him.

Pilate knows what he has to do. He just needs to be the honourable faithful judge, do what's right and free Jesus. Jesus. But, verse 24, Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that instead an uproar was starting, literally a riot was beginning to take place.

So he took water, washed his hand in front of the crowd. I am innocent of this man's blood, he said. It is your responsibility.

[ 31 : 32 ] All the people answered, blood is on us and on our children. Then he released Barabbas to them, had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

It's a travesty. But yet if Jesus has control over his death, does he not have control over the circumstances of his death?

You see, the prisoner exchange that is taking place, the setting the guilty prisoner free and sentencing the innocent one, is exactly what Jesus' death means for us.

It's a substitutionary death. What happened at the trial is what happens at the cross for all who would believe. Jesus comes to exchange places with us.

He is treated as guilty for us so that we might be declared innocent like him. It's a staggering reversal of our situation.

[ 32 : 40 ] We're the guilty mockers. We've rejected Jesus as king. We've shut him up. We've shut him out. We want to be the king.

It's us who deserve to die. But Jesus dies as our substitute in our place. Do you see what Pilate does?

He knows Jesus is innocent. But what does he do? He takes a bowl of water and symbolically washes his hands as if to say, well, I know what the truth is, but I'm taking no responsibility.

I'm not going to be guilty in any of this. Well, the point he is guilty. And no washing of water could ever wash Pilate's guilt away.

But that's why Jesus has come. You see, this is what's happening. Think of the shame of your past. Think of the secrets that we bury deep down in our life.

[ 33 : 50 ] the ones that keep us awake at night. Or the guilt that weighs upon us, the sins that people know and it holds us back from entering into service or getting involved a bit more.

Well, Jesus is the one who's come to take my guilt and your shame so that we can be declared innocent. Innocent.

set free to live a new life as members of his kingdom. It's a planned death, a substitutionary death, which makes it a victorious death.

You see, if we're to know this true life, this new life, this innocence that Jesus gives, we must see that Jesus must die for me.

He doesn't die for other people, he must die for me. Look at how the people respond as Jesus is crucified. Do you see what they're all saying in verse 39?

[ 35 : 03 ] Save yourself. Come down from the cross if you're the son of God. He saved others, he can't save himself. If he's the king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, then we'll believe him.

They're all demanding that Jesus would save himself. If we're to believe you, Jesus, you've got to do something great. Come down from the cross right now, do some miracle, show us your power, give us what we want, and then we're going to believe.

But they're all blind. they can't see that Jesus is doing the greatest thing possible. He is displaying his power.

Something supernatural is taking place as he hangs on the cross. Jesus doesn't give in to their demands. He does what they need.

He stays on the cross. and as he gives of his own life, he is saving your life. I wonder what is it that you demand of Jesus?

[ 36 : 23 ] What do you want Jesus to do for you so that you will believe him? What are you shouting at Jesus?

What are you asking for him to do? so that you will trust him with your future and that you will follow him absolutely.

Jesus, give me that secure job and then I'll commit. Jesus, if you would sort out the mess of my life and just make things a little easier, then I'll start making it regular that I come to church.

Jesus, you do this and then I will do that. Just think about that for a moment and you fill in the blank.

Jesus, you do this for me and then I will do that for you. God God will do that.

[ 37 : 31 ] No, don't demand. Make no demands. Instead he says I want you to look at the cross and see Jesus who submits to death for you.

Jesus stays silent. He endures the mocking. He stays on the cross to save you. He does the greatest thing so that you can trust him with everything.

His death is enough. It's a victorious death and it's a death for you and it's a death for me.

Let's pray. Father, we are stunned and amazed that your silence the way you take your mocking the way you make no defense and you humbly walk to the place where we deserve to go.

You stay on the cross and you die for me. thank you Jesus.

[ 39 : 21 ] Thank you for what you have done. Help us to entrust our life, our future, our dreams, our plans to see that all that you have done is enough.

We could never ask of you to do more. and because you have given us the very best, help us that we might walk with you and follow you and trust you.

Help us, we pray. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing.

We're going to sing about how deep the Father's love for us, the second verse, brings it home and brings it personal. Behold the man upon the cross, my sin, my sin, my sin, my sin, my sin,