

Matthew 27: Good Friday 2024

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Date: 29 March 2024

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[0 : 00] Verse 1. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor. Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. They said, what is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed and he went and hanged himself.

But the chief priests taking the pieces of silver said, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury since it is blood money. So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers.

Therefore, that field has been called the field of blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah saying, and they took the 30 pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel.

[1 : 27] And they gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me. Now Jesus stood before the governor and the governor asked him, are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus said, you have said so. But when he was accused by the chief priest and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, do you not hear how many things they testify against you? But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted.

And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, who do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ?

For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, have nothing to do with that righteous man.

[2 : 43] For I have suffered much because of him today in a dream. Now the chief priest and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

The governor again said to them, which one of the two do you want me to release for you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate said to them, then what shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?

They all said, let him be crucified. And he said, why? What evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, let him be crucified.

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd saying, I am innocent of this man's blood.

See to it yourselves. And all the people answered, his blood be on us and on our children. Then he released Barabbas.

[3 : 52] And having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters.

And they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him. And they put a scarlet robe on him. And twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his hand.

And kneeling before him, they mocked him saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spit on him. And took the reed and struck him on the head.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put it on his own clothes on him. And led him away to crucify him.

And as they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. And they compelled him to carry the cross.

[4 : 54] And when they came to the place of Golgotha, which means the place of a skull, they offered him wine to drink mixed with gall.

But when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them, casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head, they put a sign, a charge against him, which read, This is Jesus, King of the Jews. Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads 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. So also the chief priests with the scribes and the elders mocked him, saying, He saved others.

[6 : 06] He cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God.

Let God deliver him now. If he desires him. For he said, I am the Son of God.

And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lemma sabachthani? That is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And some of the bystanders hearing it said, this man is calling Elijah. And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.

[7 : 20] But the other said, wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And the earth shook and the rocks were split.

The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, truly, this was the Son of God.

There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

[8 : 27] When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

And Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock.

And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day, that is, after the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, after three days I will rise.

Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, he has risen from the dead, and the last fraud will be worse than the first.

[9 : 31] Pilate said to them, you have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can. So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Today marks Good Friday.

And the question before each one of us this evening is simply this, what will we make of the day? Clearly, Matthew framed the death of Jesus in terms of a day by literary design, no less.

Did you catch the opening phrase? When morning came. Or the one that comes toward the end when it was evening?

Or how about that final climactic temporal marker square in the middle of midday, where we read, Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the land until the ninth hour.

[11 : 06] And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? What will you make of the day?

Perhaps by exploring the responses of the many characters who he has framed in the text, who were present on that day, we might receive some help.

It was the chief priests and the crowds, I believe, that comprised Matthew's first collective response to our question.

He has them appearing when it was morning. And both the chief priests and the crowds wanted nothing to do with this day.

The text opens, When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. Later, in verse 20, Matthew shows this mutual desire, this collaborative effort between the chief priests and the crowds, when he writes, Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

[12:29] And they all said, Let him be crucified. And Pilate said, Why? What evil has he done? But they all shouted, That is, the chief priests and the crowds, Let him be crucified.

That's one response of what some made of the day. Crucify him. Do away with him.

I hope that's not your response this evening. Certainly, the country and the world is filled with people who do view Jesus as the source of our global problem.

They do view what he has put on edge to lead to conflicts everywhere. He, in some sense, for many, is in the way of our ability to shape the world in ways that we would consider best.

Perhaps we want to play the part of the activists and rid the world of him. Is this what you would make of the day? I hope not. I hope not. There are certainly reasons to look elsewhere.

[13:45] The text provides other options. Others emerged on that same morning. Take Judas and Pilate.

This odd pairing in the text. These two, unlike the chief priests and the crowds, who would rid the world of this day, simply regret being forced to answer the question on what you will make of it. At first glance, these two are separated in the text, but Matthew brings them together under identical language. Judas regrets having decided against Jesus with the words, I've betrayed innocent blood.

And Pilate voices his regret on having to make a personal decision on Jesus with, he took water, washed his hands before the crowd, and said, I am innocent of this man's blood.

Both of these men agreed on something of significance, that Jesus was no longer threatening in a way, just in the way.

[14:56] He was innocent. But they both regretfully decide in the text to move on in life without him.

Judas was dissatisfied with the spiritual work of Jesus. That's what led him to betray him. Judas wanted a gospel that was nothing more than social.

And so he regretfully betrays him. Pilate wasn't concerned of the social interface that Jesus would bring.

He wasn't even concerned with the societal disruption. He didn't consider him a threat. He would rather have left Jesus alone if on that day, Jesus simply would have left him to himself.

I suppose some here might want to make that of the day. Do you regret even being asked to answer the question, what will you make of the day?

[16:05] Do you wish you could simply respond to Matthew's gospel the way we would to an invite that would come to us online?

Just hit not attending. Maybe adding a note. Regretfully, I'm unable to be there.

I have other commitments that require my attention. Innocent? Yes. But I'm moving on. I hope you don't decide for this response.

Jesus is too important simply to regretfully decline. And no response given.

Perhaps here there are some who feel differently. For while some are ready to get on with life without him, or regret the thought of having to deal with him, others in the text have weighed the message of Jesus, and especially the cross.

[17:08] And they found it to be inadequate, weak, and wanting. Matthew presents you with just such a collection of people. They come to us at midday when the sun is up.

The morning is past. The day is underway. And they begin to publicly mock him. The soldiers are said to have stripped him, put a scarlet robe on him, twisted a crown of thorns on him, knelt before him, and mocked him.

Hail, King of the Jews. And to the soldiers, Matthew adds the robbers and the passers-by who deride him, revile him, and mock him.

If you were as powerful as you say you are, then do something for yourself that would demonstrate strength, and perhaps we will follow you. But this weakness, this meekness, this dying, this gospel that entails a suffering.

Mockery. So far in the text, three answers to our question. Some want to rid the world of Jesus.

[18:20] That's what they make of the day. Others regret having to make a decision on Jesus. And now we find those who mock the thought that a dying Jesus could save anyone.

And yet there is another set of characters, more promising than those three, that emerges not in the morning or the midday, but according to the text, when it was evening.

I've been preaching to get to these two. The women and Joseph of Arimathea. Notice how Matthew connects these two with the idea of following.

We read in verse 55, Did you see how he links these two together in the evening light?

I love the pairing. The women who all outlasted the men who had fled and disappeared from their following.

[19:40] But the text says very clearly that they were there and sitting opposite the tomb, lingering, as it were.

And then Joseph, a rich man, willing to spend liberally of his resources in order to provide a place for the body of Christ.

Followers, perhaps you're here tonight and you answer the question in this way. I'm not here to rid the world of him. I'm not here to regretfully elude him.

I'm not here to mock him. I'm privately here, personally here, as a quiet follower of him. If that's the case, then you would begin to believe that something of incredible spiritual significance happened at the climactic moment of the day when from noon to 3 p.m., darkness is said to fall upon the land and Jesus cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Perhaps then you would know that Jesus is borrowing from the words of King David in Psalm 22.

David, the anointed king of whom it was prophesied, would suffer in advance of his glorification and his ability to bring people back into a relationship with God.

[21:11] This lamb of God, this substitute for sins, is it possible that the father turned his face away from his own beloved son?

The wounds which mar that chosen one bring many sons and daughters to glory, blood, payment, made, now God, able to turn and say to you, to me, come freely, take the wine of my kingdom, buy without money, enter into relationship with him.

Well, there it is. Matthew 27, these four responses on what people who were there made of the day, but I return to you and to me.

What will you make of this day? May you not vigorously try to rid the world of Jesus.

May you not regret the notion that you need to decide something on Jesus. May you not mock Jesus as weak and incapable of bringing salvation through suffering.

[22:39] May you, like some, already have found your way here who are following. But what if you're here tonight and you go, I'm not in any of the categories yet. Anybody in the text for me?

Well, there are. Simon of Cyrene who was compelled to carry the cross and the centurion who professed this is the son of God, one who was just going about his day, not thinking of making a decision, but compelled to be a model in Matthew's gospel of all who take up their cross and follow him.

The centurion just going about his day, but recognizing that in the manner in which he died, something triumphant had taken place, and indeed this was no ordinary death, this is the son of God.

I invite you to make that of the day. I compel you to embrace Jesus.

I call upon you to confess that he is the savior of sinners. Crown Jesus as king and do it today.

[24:12] your sin-stained hands on the head of Christ will take them away.

Your faith, your trust, your resting on him can take it away. today. If this is something that you need to do today, then please speak to the person who brought you and say, today, I decide for him.

Today, I ask him to wash my sins away. I'm compelled by the inner movings of the Holy Spirit to confess his name today.

And if you do that, from your very seat, he promises to enter in, make you clean, provide you with his spirit, so that you'll be ready to worship him in joy come Easter morning.

You know, we've got a number of pastors who have participated in the service tonight, three congregations joining together. If you have made a profession of Christ today in your heart, please speak to your pastor.

[25 : 44] Please speak to the one who brought you. What will you make of the day? Choose wisely, friends, for of this one thing I am sure, the day will make something of you.

God you to you have to you have to!