

And Sitting Down They Watched Him There

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[0 : 00] I'd like to turn again to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 27, and reading at verse 35.

And when they had crucified him, he divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

Especially those words, then they sat down and kept watch over him there. Amen. None of the Gospel writers gives us very much information about what actually happened at the crucifixion.

None of the gruesome details, not even the flogging, are described in any details. It's been left to the imagination of men to write books about them and to describe what happens.

But the Gospel writers themselves don't give us those details. It's not their object when writing these Gospels to provoke an emotional response in us as we read them.

[1 : 22] They are simply telling us the facts as they occurred and as they experienced them during those days and those hours. Although many hymn writers have spoken about these events and have given their own interpretation of them.

See from his head, his hands, his feet. Sorrow and love flow mingled down, that ere such love and sorrow meet, or tones composed so rich a crown.

We get there from the hymn writers these aspects of the experience that they have drawn in to what we understand of the crucifixion.

But they are not what actually happened. They are only the imagination of those hymn writers who have written these hymns for us to sing or to think about and meditate on.

And that's why I personally think that as we read God's word and sing God's word, we have the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

[2 : 37] And it's my preference to engage in such praise of God in his own words and in his own literature.

It's almost as though for the writers of the Gospels, it's too sacred a thing. To talk of what actually happened there at Golgotha.

It's almost as though it's holy ground as when Moses goes and is told to take his feet, choose from us to his feet because he's standing on holy ground.

But here also the Gospel writers seem to have that same feeling. It's holy ground, what they're seeing, what they're experiencing, what they've been told, and they will tell simply the bare facts of what actually occurred.

Matthew is hardly able to write the words as he draws the picture for us. And sitting down, they watched him there.

[3 : 41] Who is he talking about? He's talking about the onlookers. He's talking about John and the women who were there. Mary, Mary Magdalene, Lephydrink, they were there watching.

He's talking about the soldiers at the side of the cross, dividing his garments. Scribes and Pharisees. They all sitting down, watched him there.

This wasn't a short-term event. It lasted from the third hour to the ninth hour. Normally it would have been in the heat of the midday sun, but as we know, for three of those hours there was total darkness and blackness over the whole situation.

The Son of God loving me and giving himself for me.

As someone has said it, it was enough to make the earth tremble. Remember the earthquake that occurred as the Lord said it is finished and dismissed his spirit.

[4 : 51] You remember the three hours of darkness as the sun hid his face from what was happening there at Golgotha.

And we have to ask, who is this they watched him there? Who is this person that Matthew here is talking about?

Once again, we can ask hymn writers, and they will quote at him, Who is this in yonder stall at whose feet the shepherds fall?

Tis the Lord, O wondrous story, tis the Lord, the King of glory. At his feet we humbly fall, crowd him, crowd him, Lord of all. Who is this?

As John says in his gospel, it is the Lamb of God bearing away the sin of the world. They watched him there.

[5 : 58] He came to bear the sin of many. But yet his birth went totally unnoticed in the world in which he came.

The only people who noticed were those whom God had revealed these things to. The shepherds, having the knowledge given to them by the angels.

Herod, who had received a sign far away and had traveled many miles to come and see for themselves.

Herod, who had been advised by the wise men and then spent the next few months trying to destroy every child under two years of age. He came to his own.

He came to his own. And his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the children of God.

[7 : 07] To them that believed on his name. Once again, we see here the gospel is something that is conditional. If you confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive you your sins.

If you believe on his name, he gives you power to become children of God. Ask and you shall receive.

Knock and it shall be opened. The gospel has this condition. All things have been done and are open to us. And yet there remains something that we have to do.

He has made us willing in a day of his power. He has given us the ability to respond to all that he has done. But we have to engage in an activity of response.

During the Lord's life, he went about doing good. He went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

[8 : 22] Healing. Healing. Having compassion. Having mercy on all. And his reward. Hands that have always blessed.

And hands that have always been lifted up in healing. Are pierced. With nails. And.

From men. A crown of thorns is that only acclamation. In total mockery and mocking of him. And also the cry, crucify him.

Crucify him. There he is. He's dying there with shame. And disgrace. For you. And for me. And so where is he?

What kind of place? Is. Golgotha. This place where the king of glory died. And why did he die. On the cross.

[9 : 28] Well. Crucifixion. As you can imagine. Is a very harsh and. And brutish form of death. In the eyes of both the Jews.

And the Gentiles. They saw it. They saw it. Differently. No Jew could think of such a death.

No Jew could imagine such a death. Without feeling ashamed. Even offended. And yet they crucified their Lord. His offense.

Was so great in their eyes. That they. Gave one of their own. A Jew. To the accursed death of the cross. They knew. The shame and the disgrace.

That such a death. Pronounced upon the man being hung there. And yet. They gave him. One of their own. To that death. It's amazing.

[10 : 26] Something so un-Jewish. Could have been prophesied. Centuries. Before the coming of Christ. It was a Roman. Punishment. Centuries. And yet.

Three. Four. Five. Centuries. Before Rome was ever thought of. It being an occupation. Over Palestine. This was prophesied. That these events.

Would come to pass. And here they are. Coming to pass. In the experience. Of the Lord of glory.

He gave his back. To the smiters. His face.

To scorn. And spitting. And they crucified. Him. In the place. Of the skull. As you read. In the place called. In Golgotha.

It was the rubbish heap. Of Jerusalem. Not some. Sanctified. Calvarios. Calvarios. Is a. Is.

[11 : 23] Is the word that. The. The Latin scriptures use. And we. That's where we get our Calvary from. There's a place of victory. And. And a place of. Of beauty. And. And a place of.

Of something to be. Admired. It's not that. It's just a rubbish heap. And that's where the Lord. Of glory. Is crucified. Gordon's tomb.

And. And. Nearby. Gordon's. Calvary. Are sanitized. And. They're places of beauty. And peace. And. And places where you can rest. And. And meditate. That's not.

What. Golgotha was. And there. They stripped him. Of his clothes. And nailed him. Naked to the cross.

No one. Who was crucified. Could escape. The shame. And the disgrace. Of such a death. And. Yet.

[12:20] To it. Told it. Please. The Lord. To bruise him. He put him to grief. He made his soul. An offering. For sin.

I want to ask it. Why was he there? We've. Asked. Who is the him? Who's there? Speaking of the. Of the verse. We've asked.

What the place was. The place where he was crucified. And. Why was he there? Why was he? On the cross.

There. In Golgotha. Why did the son of God. Have to die on a cross? Two others died there. And they were.

Rightly judged. To have been punished. For. The insurrection. And the murder. They committed. And they were. Committed. To the cross there. And they. Deserved.

[13:17] The wages. Of their sin. But Pilate. Found. No fault. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. The Jews. Couldn't even get.

Two men. To agree. Upon the accusation. That they brought. Against him. We told. Judas. Cried. I have destroyed. I have. Betrayed.

Innocent blood. Pilate. Wife. Called him. That just man. After having. Had experience. Of him. In a dream. Nothing.

Worthy of death. Was found. In him. But yet. He's on the cross. And he's on the cross. On account of sin.

Not his own. But ours. Yours and mine. He's paying. At the wages. Of sin. Not his own. But yours and mine.

[14:16] Moment by moment. The Lord had to withstand. The devil's. Suggestions. And temptations. The whole of that time.

On the cross. As the Lord said. This is your hour. The hour of the power of darkness. And they did their utmost. To destroy the Lord.

Mentally. Physically. Emotionally. Even spiritually. While he was there. He did his utmost. Christ. So the Lord had to summon.

All his own human strength. And choose pain. And continue his own. Journey. Into the terrifying. Unknown.

Of what. Lay before him. Samuel Rutherford. Speaking. Of God's eyes.

[15:11] Being. A purer eye. Than to behold iniquity. Imagines. The Lord Jesus Christ. Crying out. To his father. Is there not a word.

Dear father. Is there not a look. And imagine the father. Saying no. Not a look. For a world.

So that's why he's there. He's there for the world. So above all. The Lord had to taste death. For every man.

Not simply die. But taste death. He came into this world. To taste death. For every man. And that's why he took.

So long dying. That's why he had to. To die. Without that. Mixture of gall and vinegar. That he was offered to drink. When he tasted it.

[16:07] He realized. It was a sedative. And which would. Which would. Calm his mind. And his feelings. And enable him. To go through the whole experience. Without pain. Perhaps even without thought.

And yet that wasn't. What his intentions were. He had to experience. He had to experience it.

From the inside. In the same way. That we have to. Experience death. He had to die. Without the help of. A. Deadening.

Drink of sour wine. He had to walk. As we do. Through the valley. Of the shadow of death. Tasting death. Savoring. Savoring.

All the fear. Savoring. All the. Agonies of death. Tasting his power. He told that.

[17:03] No one. Could take his life. Away from him. He had to lay it down. Of himself. And it wasn't until. He cried. It is finished. That he dismisses.

His spirit. And also. As we think. Of this. Aspect. That he. Actually.

Dismisses his spirit. He could have come down. On the cross. Off the cross. We told that. He could summon. Twelve legions. Of angels. From his father. And they would come down.

And release him. And. Restore his life. To him. He knew that he could have. Saved himself. But. Where then. Was the work. That his father. Had given him to do. What a cry. From the pit. That must have been. When.

[18:00] He heard. The cry. Come down. Off the cross. Remember he has. All power. To come down. Off it. He could have saved himself. Then. He wouldn't have been able.

To save others. And that's. The consideration. That has to go through. His whole mind. And his whole emotions. As he's there. On the cross. Knowing. This. This word of temptation.

Is coming straight. From the pits. Scribes. The Pharisees. The people crying. He saved others. Let him save himself. Come down. Off our cross. He has full power.

To do so. So. He said. Where then. The salvation of mankind. He had a choice. To save himself. Or to save others. So. He had a choice. He had a choice. He had a choice. He had a choice. So. How did the cross. Enable.

[19:00] Him to save others. From. An accursed death. A death. Without God. And it had an effect.

Upon sin. The sin you commit. If I commit the sin. Of all those. Who have come before us. I'll commit it. Paul's sin.

Your sin. My sin. All of us. It frees us. From the punishment. Of sin. It frees us. From its curse. From the kingdom. Of darkness. And open. A new. And living way. Into the life. That Christ. Has purchased. For us. For us. Philipians.

Tells us. That he became. Obedient. Into death. Even the accursed. Death of the cross. Your. Cursed to death. And my. Cursed to death. He took on himself.

[20:08] He died. To make. Reconciliation. For the sins. Of his people. And so. The cross. The cross. Has an effect. Upon God. And that's where.

The real. Godward. Effect. Has to. Has to. Have some bearing. In our thinking. Upon. What Christ. Is doing there.

On the cross. concepts. Of his people. As a sacrifice. As a sacrifice. As a sacrifice. To satisfy. Divine justice. he pays all our debts it's by the cross that you and I are redeemed redeemed from sin, redeemed to God now to redeem implies cost I'm sure you've all heard about the fact that when slaves are redeemed it has to be a purchase price well, we were slaves to sin and we have been redeemed redeemed by the precious blood of Christ it's by the cross that he dies for us we're told that grace is extravagant wasteful but it's free but it's not cheap grace is never cheap it's always costly we are saved by faith alone but not by faith which is alone because we're saved by a costly grace

God willing to go to the cross for us we ourselves must live sacrificial lives so often we forget that aspect of the demands that are made on us we forget the responsibility responsibility and response that we're supposed to carry as we as we go through this journey of salvation God is willing to go to the cross which is costly on the other hand cheap grace is non-costly grace on God's part and on ours from a non-holy God who loves and accepts us just as we are and our response in living a life just as we want to live without any corresponding thought or acceptance of what God requires of us there's a man some of you will know called James Montgomery

Boyce he was to America what Lloyd-Jones I suppose was to this country and he writes very insightfully these words that's the fatal defect in the life of Christ's church in the 20th and 21st century a lack of true discipleship it means forsaking everything to follow Christ but many of today's supposed Christians perhaps the majority it's the case that while there is much talk about Christ and even much furious activity there's actually very little following of Christ himself and that means in some circles there's very little genuine Christianity almost as the Lord is saying there many will say a few will say unto me Lord Lord and I will say

[24:24] I love in you this I have done for you what have you done for me Christ Christ was once crucified for sins just for the unjust that he might bring us to God and so these words of Matthew's gospel bring us face to face with these two words him and they we cannot but be overwhelmed

when we think of the Lord Jesus Christ and all it meant for him to be there what must I asked earlier what must of the onlookers thought the soldiers probably unthoughtful the priests and the scribes vengeful full of hate the people looking on wondering what they had been accomplices to the mother and her sisters and the beloved disciple

John seeing him and weeping over him on the cross dying in agony and yet not fully understanding the reason why in my place condemned he dies on the cross he had so set his heart to redeem the children of men that there was no price he was not prepared to pay he took our place he bore our debt he took our guilt he bore our punishment dying the death that you and I deserve to die so what's the consequence of the Lord's death for you and for me what response should there be in you and me as we hear the most wonderful story ever told he died to die no more never again would he know suffering and shame ever again would he be the despised

Nazarene the next time we see him he will be surrounded by all the insignia of the Godhead the honor the power the authority the glory of the triune God because he was obedient unto death even the accursed death of the cross he is crowned with glory and honor and God's right hand he ever lives to make intercession for us at God's right hand a prince and a savior forever more but he died so that we will never die the curse that was pronounced on Adam in the first commandment he was given in the garden and the day that you eat of it you will surely die didn't come to pass upon him as he looked forward and anticipated the death of Christ and it won't happen on any who today look to that death and place their trust and confidence in it receiving and resting upon him alone for their salvation he died so that we never die he comes to be without

God so that we will never be in that situation we will never be without God if we are in Christ Jesus when the Lord Jesus Christ made himself nothing he came to the situation at the end of his life when there was nobody there was nothing no no favour no comfort no fellowship no even knowledge of his own church that will never happen to those who are in Christ Jesus if you and I are a son or a daughter that experience will never be out but there's more than that the reason the Holy Spirit came is because he is the Lord purchased possession the reason today that the Holy Spirit indwells all those who are Christ is because that he purchased it by his death but his words I could prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself go not but if I go away I will send him to you just a few words in conclusion the one who was as no other man ever was had come to the place to which no other man ever came and the reason why that he might die for the sin of the world surely that's good news surely that's the news that you and I can carry out of this place into the needy world outside surely it's the news for all those who are yet without Christ here and who need a saviour may the Lord then bless these thoughts to us we shall conclude now singing to God's praise in Psalm 150 second version of that psalm which you'll find on page 196 praise God in his holy temple praise the Lord in heaven's high praise him for his acts of power praise him for his majesty we'll sing these three stanzas to God's praise praise God in his holy temple praise the Lord in heaven's high praise him for his works of power praise him for his majesty praise him praise him praise him praise him praise him praise him for his majesty praise him with that sounding trumpet praise him praise him and dancing [32 : 38] Praise him with the strings and flute Praise him Praise him Praise him Praise him Praise him with the strings and flute Praise him with the clash of cymbals with the clash of cymbals Praise our Lord Praise him everything that's breathing Hallelujah Praise the Lord Praise him Praise him Praise him Hallelujah Hallelujah Praise Praise the Lord And now may grace and mercy and peace in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit one God rest on you and abide in you now and always

Amen amen to the Son behold friendships in the Lord and lift on going to the Lord and also many and God to know the Lord and pray and amen if to the Lord have in the Lord came to the Father and He ah whatever He has His MC and these