

Bearing His Cross

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Preacher: Rev Robert Sinclair

- [0 : 00] I'd like to turn once again to the Gospel of John, chapter 19, and reading at verse 16, verse 15, in fact.
- John chapter 19, at verse 15. They cried out, away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, shall I crucify your king?
- The chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar. So he, Pilate, delivered him over to them to be crucified.
- So they took Jesus and led him away. It's a remarkable fact that the Gospels major and focus on the cross of Christ, more than in any other part of Jesus' life.
- He'd have thought that in trying to propagate Christianity, in trying to bring a good reputation upon Christianity, the Gospel writers would have declared many of Jesus' miracles, many of the good things that he had done.
- [1 : 41] He spent his whole life going about doing good and speaking good to the people, and relieving them from the oppression of the scribes and Pharisees and the chief priests.
- But no, they focus on the cross of Christ. And in doing this, they highlight the reason for the Lord Jesus Christ coming into this world.
- He came, not to set us an example, not to show us how we should live, although these are byproducts of his life here on earth.
- He came to taste death for every man. They highlight the reason for the Lord's coming into this world, was to die the just for the unjust to bring us to God.
- It's not his birth, which the world takes so much of its time and energy in giving itself over to in times of the Christmas celebrations.
- [2 : 47] It's not his birth that the Gospel writers major on. It's on his death and his resurrection. That the emphasis might be on the one who came to this world to die and to rise again.
- To die, to never die again. To rise again, that he might be a prince and a saviour forevermore. The Gospels remind us in all of the force of nature.
- That the road that he walked. But the end of that road was the Lord's death.
- We're reminded of what he did. We're reminded of where he went. Of how he was a man of prayer. Of how he was accused of being a friend of publicans and sinners.
- But most emphatically, they speak of the Lord's trial and death at the hands of the Jews and the Gentiles.
- [4 : 03] One thing we must never forget is that the Lord's death was primarily a spiritual suffering. The spitting, the scourging, the blindfolding, the kiss of denial. All these were superficial. But even as we look at this aspect of the superficialness of this outward suffering.
- We can think of one aspect of it which seems so peculiar in the experience of the Lord. They were spitting at the Lord. Even in today's world.
- We know how much spitting has become turned into a hate crime. Yet here they were, the Lord of glory. And they were spitting at him.

And name calling him. And trying to destroy him in his very being. But all this were really things that, yes, that they affected him.

[5 : 09] Yes, they brought suffering to him on a level whereby his emotions were affected. But the real sufferings were at the hand of his father.

The heavenly father. The spiritual sufferings. Where he suffered on the cross and where he had to cry out, My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me?

None. Or even all of them. Couldn't compete with what the Lord suffered at the hands of his heavenly father.

For it was the Lord who put him to grief. It was the Lord who made his soul an offering for sin. It was the Lord who made him a curse. It was the Lord who offered him up for us all.

The Lord had just passed through a night of continuous trial. He was no doubt exhausted by what he had already suffered or experienced.

[6 : 13] He'd been in the upper room with his disciples initiating the Lord's Supper. He'd left that room and made his way down through the Valley of Jehoshaphat to the Garden of Gethsemane.

On the way there he tells them the parable of the vine and the vinedresser. And all of that means as far as they were concerned.

That they were to bear fruit. That they were to bear his witnesses. And even to the end of his life he was exhorting them and teaching them that their life had to have meaning. As it is for us.

We're not here as Christians on some sentimental journey. To feel warmed by the gospel and simply to enjoy fellowship.

We are to be his witnesses. We are to bear testimony. We are to be as those who speak of the Lord and all that he has done for our souls.

[7 : 19] And so as the Lord had just passed through this night of trial and suffering. He goes to Gethsemane and there again, once again, he falls on his face.

And he prays to his heavenly father. That if this might pass from him, let it be so. Nevertheless, not my will but thine.

He realizes that only as he drinks the cup that he is going to be able to fulfill his father's will. Only as he engages with the work that he's been given to do.

That the purposes of his heavenly father will be carried out. And so amidst all the sweat and the tears. And his arrest.

And the mockery of the trial. And the ridicule. There's always this purpose. Always in mind. Nevertheless, unless I drink this cup.

[8 : 22] It will not pass from me. He realizes there. More and more in his own person. That he must fulfill the work. That his father has given him to do.

If he's going to gain the salvation of mankind. Let me find here. Pilate's final abdication. Of the authority.

That has been given to them. He delivered Jesus up to do their will. Remember Pilate had told him. Go and you deal with him.

You punish him as you want. But they say. No, but we have a law. Law whereby. If he should be crucified. Because he made himself to be the son of God.

And he has to die. He has to die the Roman death. And so is fulfilled the prophecy. That our Lord made to his disciples. That he would be handed over to Gentiles.

[9 : 21] And that he would be crucified. And so here's that prophecy being put into effect. By Pilate himself. He delivers Jesus to their will.

He was delivered up. The Lord already knew that he was to go to Jerusalem. The Lord already knew that he would be delivered into the hands of the chief priests.

And the elders. And that he would be condemned to death. How did it begin? Well it began by Judas Iscariot taking the first step.

From there he's taken to Caiaphas' judgment hall. The house of the high priest. And there the ultimate sanction is given to the Jews.

In Caiaphas' own words. It is expedient that one man should die for the nation. And that the whole nation perish not. It was Pilate's part to deliver the Lord into their hands.

[10 : 30] It was the Jews' part to receive him. The Lord tells us. Or John tells us. That the Lord came to his own.

And they did not receive him. There's a play on the words here. In the narrative of John's gospel. We have it there in the beginning. In the passage I read.

He came to his own. But his own did not receive him. And here we have this other word play. That Pilate delivered Jesus to them.

And they did receive him. They wouldn't receive him as Lord and Savior. But they would receive him. That he might be put to death. They wouldn't receive him.

That he might have life. But they did receive him. That they might have put him to death. Not that they would carry it out themselves.

[11 : 35] No, they weren't going to do that. They weren't going to bloody their own hands. They were too cowardly for that. The Romans would have to do it. But the ultimate burden was going to be theirs.

In their own cry. His blood be upon us. And upon our children. They'd laid hands on him in the garden.

Taken him to Annas. And to Caiaphas. Arranged a trial. They mocked him. And when morning came. We're told at the sixth hour.

First thing in the morning. They took him. To Pilate's. Praetorium. There they stripped him. There they scourged him.

There they clothed him. With a robe. And put a reed in his hand. And cried. Hail King of the Jews. Nothing.

[12 : 38] Short of death. Was going to satisfy them. And now the bonds. Were taken from his hand. For a short time. While.

He was given the ability. To carry. The cross. But then as we can state. That was not possible. He spent. A whole.

Day before that. The whole. Mental energy. And the whole night. In the physical energy. Of having to endure. The trial. And the flogging.

And then they try. And put a cross. On him. On him to carry it. And in trying to do that. His body buckles. Under the weight of it. And he falls. To his knees.

His knees. But. Nothing. Short of this.

[13 : 35] Ignominy. And this mockery. Was going to satisfy the crowd. Who were there. And so. They scourged.

They robed him. And. They gave him the cross. To carry. For they didn't believe. That.

He was the son of God. Scriptures say. They would not have done. These things. If they had known. That he was the son of God. Well the Lord gave. Ample evidence. Ample proof.

Of who he was. And the things that. He did. Could only have done. By someone. Who was God himself. Although.

He identified. As the God. Who had spoken to Moses. In the burning bush. As the God. Who. Who spoke. To Abraham.

[14 : 34] Who. Saw his day. And rejoiced in it. He claimed. That he and the father. Were one. The high priest. Had even made him. Confessed in the hearing.

Of all. That he was. The son of God. It's not as though. They were ignorant. Of these claims. It's not as though. He hadn't made them.

In their own hearing. It was the. The main reason. That they had come. To accuse him. Before Pilate. And. To have him crucified.

And it was something. They could not forget. It was something. That was in the forefront. Of their mind. Even on the cross. He made himself. The. The son of God.

They threw this challenge. At him. Well let God deliver him. If he will have him. For he said. I am. The son of God. They had refused.

[15 : 31] As I said earlier on. To see. That what he had done. Could only have been done. By God himself. In the walking. On water. In the healing. In the healing.

Of. The blind. The deaf. And the lame. In the raising of the dead. All ample evidence. That here was somebody. Who was.

Who was more than man. Here was somebody. Who was. Engaging. In a ministry of mercy. And good. To the people. Who would not receive him.

And so. They led him away. I was. It was common practice. In that. Era. For the man.

To carry his own. Punishment. His form of death. To carry it himself. And so they laid the cross. On Jesus. But the Lord. As I said. Was so exhausted. He sank.

[16 : 26] Under his weight. And so they found another. Simon of Cyrene. To carry. The cross. After him. And so they led him away.

To die. For the sins. Of the world. Led like a. A lamb. To the slaughter. But in spite of the. The mass. Of hostility. That. Surrounded him. And was directed at him. Some lamented. Sometimes we think.

That. This might have been. The Lord's. Followers. Or. It might have been. The people. Those who had. Been following him.

While he was giving his. His. His testimony. The women of Galilee. It seems much more likely. That these were the women. Of Jerusalem. The daughters. And wives. Of the.

[17 : 24] Of those. Who had been crying out. Crucify him. Crucify him. It was those. Who had lamented him. And he turns to them. And says. Weep. Not. For me.

But weep. For yourselves. And weep. For Jerusalem. Because. He knew. Exactly. What was going to happen. To Jerusalem. But in.

A.D. 70. There would be not. One stone. Left upon another. He told his disciples. That already. On one occasion. When they boasted. Of all the stones. And the buildings.

And Jesus said. They shall not continue. But they shall be. Removed. One from the other. And he's saying. The same thing here. To these women. Weep. Not for. For me.

But weep. For yourselves. And for the city. For it shall be destroyed. And you will be destroyed. And you will be cast out. From your inheritance. And your house.

[18 : 20] Will be left. Unto you desolate. And so they led him away. Outside the. City gate. To a place called.

Golgotha. The law of Moses. Didn't. Permit. Men. To be put to death. Inside. Jerusalem.

They had to be removed. Outside the gate. If you remember. What happened. In the death of Stephen. The crowd. Who were accusing Stephen. Dragged him outside. The city wall.

And as there. They stoned him. And put him to death. And so also here. In the experience of the Lord. They took him. Outside. The city gate. To put him to death.

It was the same. For the Lord. They led him out. To a place. Called. Golgotha. The place of the skull. A hill.

[19 : 18] Not far away. From Jerusalem. Where. The weather. Has gouged out. The rock. To make it look like. Two eyes and a mouth.

Just outside. The city wall. Not far. From. The Damascus gate. Going north. Towards. Samaria.

And so it's there. They took him. It's there. They crucified him. And all this.

Was. In. Keeping. With the ancient ceremony. Which took place. On the day of atonement. When. The animal.

That was offered up. Was taken. Outside. The gate. The letter to the Hebrews.

[20 : 13] Tells us. Wherefore Jesus. Also. That he might. Sanctify the people. Who with his own blood. Suffered. Without the gate. So scripture.

Again and again. Is being fulfilled. In all that Jesus. Accomplishes. In all that he has done. For us. And for our salvation. This was the way.

The Lord. Had to walk. If his dying. Was to atone. For the sins of the world. This is what he had to do. If he was to finish. The work that his father.

Had given him to do. If he could. Go to his father. With the high priestly prayer. Which said. I have finished the work. That you have given me to do. Therefore. Glorify thou me. He was already.

Glorified. As the second person. Of the Trinity. But having engaged. To finish the work. He had to finish it. To continue. In his.

[21 : 13] Enhanced. Elevated purpose. On the right hand. Of the most high God. He had to. Finish the work. Not only. For us. But also. For himself.

That he might receive a name. That is above every name. That at the name of Jesus. Every knee might bow. And every tongue might confess. None of the twelve.

Had to die the same sort of death. As Jesus. None of the twelve were. Led. To die with the Lord. Their time. Had not yet come.

And the Lord. Said to his captors. If you seek me. Let these go their way. Remember in the garden. They came to.

To take them all. And the Lord said. If you seek me. Let these go their way. And so it is. For us. And our salvation. If you seek me. Let these.

[22 : 13] Go their way. And so the Lord. The heavenly father. Accepts Jesus. And what he does. And what he accomplished. For you.

And for me. He dies. He dies. So that we might. Never have to die the death. He dies. He comes to be. Separate from God. So that you and I. Might never have.

To be. Separate. From God. God. If you seek me. Heal at these. And go their way. But no servant is.

Above. His master. And the Lord made it clear. That they were to follow. In his steps.

If any man. Will follow me. Let him take up his cross. And follow me. Such an image.

[23 : 13] Was all too familiar. With. The disciples. Of that era. They had seen. The persecutions. Of the Galileans. And the way. The Romans. Dealt. Dealt with all those.

Who. Rose up against them. And the hills. Around. Jerusalem. Were studded. With. With crosses. And. They knew exactly. What it meant. When the Lord said to them.

Take up your cross. And follow me. He was. Saying to them. I want you to give. Everything. Even your life. For me. And the gospel sake.

And. To become. My witnesses. And so the call. To take up. The cross. Was. A vivid picture. Of the ultimate nature.

Of the discipleship. To which you. And I are called to. But the Lord. Was not asking them. To do something. Which was. He was not willing. To do.

[24 : 09] Himself. He would go forth. Outside the camp. Bearing their approach. All this. May seem.

Very. Remote. From us. Here in the 21st century. But it should speak to us. Of the love. And the passion.

And the mercy. That there is in Christ Jesus. And it's not only. These wonderful facts. Concerning. The Lord Jesus Christ.

That should. Captivate us. And draw us to him. In the words of. Of Peter. There are some great. And precious promises.

promises. Given to us. By. Them. You might be made. Partakers. Of the divine nature.

[25 : 06] That all things. Work together. For good. To those. Who love God. That nothing.

Shall separate us. From the love of God. Which is in Christ Jesus. All these. Are wonderful. And great. And precious promises. To all those. Who are in Christ. And who love Christ.

And whose lives. Are hid with Christ. In God. God. Another of the precious promises. That are given to us. Is that when we die.

We shall be. With Christ. Which is far better. That death. Is not the end. But.

That beyond death. There is the promise. Of eternal life. In Christ Jesus. Death. Is like a.

[26 : 04] A going home. A going home. To be. Reunited. With those. Who have gone before us. And there the blessing.

God commands. A life. That shall. Never end. It is said.

Goodness. And mercy. All our lives. Have surely. Followed us. And in God's house. For whatever more.

Our dwelling place. Shall be. Looking back. On the life. Of the Lord. Has given us. And goodness.

His mercy. Has followed us. In this life. And the promise. Of the life to come. A dwelling place. Shall be. With him. Then also.

[27 : 03] Because of what. Christ has accomplished. For us. One day. Our dead bodies. Shall rise. And.

We shall be forever. With the Lord. Our dead. Body shall rise. Death. Shall not have. The final word. Death.

Is. Swallowed up. In victory. Then it shall be said. As Paul says. In Corinthians. Death. Is swallowed up. In victory. Death.

Where is your sting? O grave. Where. Is your victory? The Lord's resurrection.

Is the reason. That we hope. For. Resurrection. And that the command. Of Christ. And the graves. Shall give up their dead.

- [28 : 02] So when we sorrow. As we do. Over those. Who have gone before us. It's not as those. Who have. No hope.
- We've just been. Remembering. The dead. Of the two world wars. And other wars too. In Korea. Syria. Iraq. Afghanistan.
- And others. 54,000. Whose. Bodies. Were never found. Remembered. At. The men in gate.
- Those lost to sea. Bodies. Torn apart. By bombs. Or birds. In ashes. Remember Paul's words to us.
- In. First Corinthians. Four. Verse 16. For.
- [29 : 05] The Lord himself. Will descend from heaven. With the cry. Of command. With the voice. Of an archangel. And with the sound. Of the trumpet. Of God. And the dead.
- In Christ. Will rise first. Then. We who are alive. And who are left. Will be caught. Up together. With them. In the clouds. To meet the Lord.
- In the air. And so. We will. Always be with the Lord. Therefore. Encourage. One another. With.
- These words. And so. Molecule. By molecule. Atom.
- Atom. By atom. The God. Who created. Our individual. In DNAs. When he created us. Will recreate us.
- [30 : 02] And we will be able to. Say words. Like Job did. With these eyes. I shall see the Lord. With these hands.
- I shall. Handle him. And so he will. Recreate us again. Even out of the ashes. And the dust of death.
- And as someone has said. What an example. Of. The flash. Of the will. That can. And so.
- We shall ever be with the Lord. But until then. There are these. Promises. Of God's. Faithfulness.
- And grace. Towards us. In this life. In Christ Jesus. An assurance. Of his love. Filling us.
- [31 : 02] With the knowledge. That he loves us. With an everlasting love. With a peace of conscience. In this world. Which seeks to disturb. Our conscience.
- And seeks to. To bring us down. And the devil himself. Trying to convince us. That we are not. The Lord's people at all. The Lord will. Give us that peace.
- And the courage. To withstand that. By increasing. Our faith. Day by day. He brings us to know. More. Of the faith.
- That he has given us. To stand more and more. In that faith. And not to. Reject it. Or not to turn our backs on it. A joy.
- Which will fill us. In the knowledge. That. Here we have. The prospect of a life. That shall never end. And. The. Guarantee.
- [31 : 59] That. We shall persevere. To the end. Not because. We will. We will persevere. In our own strength. The Lord himself. Who will persevere.
- With us. He will. Bring us. To the end. He will. Perfect. That work. Which he. Began. In us. And so that one day.
- He will be able to present us. Faultless. In his own presence. With. Exceeding joy. May these thoughts. And these encouragements. And these promises.
- Encourage us. As we. Go along. Life's journey. To know. That we are here. Not alone. But truly. That our lives. Are ahead. With Christ.

In God. May the Lord then bless. These thoughts to us. Let us then conclude our worship.
Singing to God's praise.

[32 : 56] In Psalm. One four five. Sing Psalm's version. On page one eight nine. The tune.
Eventide. I will exhort you.

Oh my God and King. Forever. I will praise. Your holy name. I will extol your name.
Forevermore. Day after day. Your praise.

I will proclaim. To the end of the verse. Marked seven. Four stanzas to God's praise.
Amen. Amen. I will exalt you.

Oh my God and King. Forever. I will praise.

refrigerate. I will exalt you. Forevermore. If after day. Your praise.

[34 : 02] I will proclaim. Greatness the Lord holds for thee always.

His greatness none can search or comprehend. Each generation will return to peace.

And to the next you're writing us, amen. They praise the splendor of your majesty.

The power of the works that you have done. I do imagine, take upon your knees.

And your majesty, I will make gold. It will be joy, Savior, yet all ends.

[35 : 26] And your abundant grace will celebrate. The righteous hands that you have shown to
them.

In praise and joyful song they will be laid. And now may grace, 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.