

Scorning the Shame of the Cross

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[0 : 0 0] crucifixion was a most painful death sentence. I could take time, but I don't have the time to give to describe it.

Many authors have done so. It was said that in crucifixion, a man was said to die a thousand deaths.

It was meant to be such. It was not just capital punishment as we think of it, an immediate execution with a firing squad, a guillotine, a hangman's noose or something.

It was meant to be a long, drawn-out, torturous death. And though that is the case, and as painful as it was, when we're told to fix our eyes on Jesus and him crucified, it's not the pain of the cross that is mentioned, but the shame of the cross.

I invite you to open, if you have your Bibles, to Hebrews chapter 12. And we're just going to read a few verses, 2 in chapter 12 and 4 in chapter 13 of the book of Hebrews.

[1 : 2 0] Familiar verses, Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, all those that had been mentioned in chapter 11, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

And then chapter 13, verses 11 through 14. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the most holy place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp.

And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. And so Hebrews 12, 2, when telling us to run the whole of our Christian life with our eyes fixed on Jesus, tells us to think of him enduring the cross, seeing him with the eye of faith, enduring the cross, scorning its shame.

[2 : 5 6] For it was not only the painful death of the cross, but the shameful death of the cross that is won our salvation. We just sang, O sacred head now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down.

So tonight I want us to fix our eyes on Jesus, scorning the shame of the cross. Let's think of that shame that he bore. First of all, crucifixion was so humiliating and debasing that all Roman citizens were exempt from the death of the cross.

It was capital punishment for the worst of criminals, for the worst of crimes. And so when our Savior was crucified between two criminals, one on either side of him, as Isaiah says, he was numbered with the transgressors.

That too is no small part of the shame that he bore. Because by the principle of association, as people saw those three crosses, they thought there are three criminals, three wicked men, and all of them getting what they deserved, not only from men, but from God.

For it was God's law, after all, that said, cursed is anyone who is hung on a tree. And so he hangs there on the tree, under the curse, the wrath of God.

[4 : 25] It was the shame of being under God's curse. And all the while, Isaiah says, we, we Jews, we considered him stricken by God.

We thought he was justly getting what he deserved. Not knowing that it was for our transgressions and not his own. The shame of hanging on a cross between two criminals.

There was the shame of the false accusations that put him on the cross. This is the holy, blameless, and pure one being charged by his own religious leaders with blaspheming the God that he loved with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind, and all his strength.

The Supreme Court of the Jews finding him guilty, worthy of the death penalty. And all the while, he was silent before his accusers.

They spit in his face. I'm told that's the universal, ultimate indignity. But the Jews couldn't carry out the death sentence.

[5 : 34] They had the Romans over them, and so they had to take it to Pilate, the Roman governor. And there, they knew that the charge of blaspheming God would mean nothing to him.

So they changed their accusation and accused him of stirring up rebellion against Caesar. As if he were a violent, evil man set on insurrection. When, after all, he was the most law-abiding citizen in the land.

And the Roman soldiers also spit in his face and made him the butt of their jokes. There was the shame of rejection. Some of you have been rejected in a relationship.

Jesus was despised and rejected by men. And rejected by his own nation.

John, in John 1.10, can't get over that. He mentions it twice in one verse. He came to his own, and his own received him not.

[6 : 39] Those to whom he came with salvation did not receive him, but rejected him. And there, in his trial, when given a choice of who to set free, Jesus or Barabbas, the Jews chose the notorious insurrectionist and murderer instead of Jesus.

Jesus, maybe some of you can remember back to the playground days when two teams were being selected, and the captains went back and forth and back and forth until there were just two of you left.

And then maybe the other guy was chosen, and you were just left standing there. Nobody wanted you. Rejection. Rejection. Rejection. That was the shame that Jesus felt from his own.

And then when Pilate asked, well, then what shall I do with Jesus, your king? He had his own nation that he did nothing but good to for three years of ministry, chanting, crucify him.

Crucify him. The shameful death of the cross. That's all he's good for. Crucify him. Crucify him. And then when he's hung up on the cross, the shame of being lifted up, hanging naked, exposed before the world.

[8 : 02] And there he had been betrayed by one of his own close disciples.

We think of his rejection. Not just the crowd, but his own disciples. They all forsook him and fled. But one of them betrayed him. One of the inner band.

And then one of his closest friends, Peter, denied him. Again, it's the shame of being left all alone with no one to stand up for you and to speak up for you.

Nobody wanted him. The shame of rejection. The shame of apparent failure in his mission to earth. Have you felt the shame of failure?

Where you've poured your life into something and only to see it go up in smoke? And it fails. And you're ashamed. Well, after three years of ministering up and down Palestine, pouring his life out in service to others, what did Jesus have to show for it?

[9 : 05] Next to nothing. We hear the suffering servant in Isaiah 49.4. It looked like he labored to no purpose and spent his strength in vain and for nothing.

The shame of apparent failure. As he dies alone. On the shameful cross. There was the shame of his claims being mocked and laughed at his his threefold offices.

He was anointed the anointed prophet, priest and king anointed by his heavenly father. And so you remember how they mocked his his office of being the prophet, the great prophet that was to come.

And they blindfolded him. And then they'd strike him and say, prophesy. Oh, prophet. Who struck you? Jesus could have called out every single one of their names.

But he was silent. A priest. A priest. A priest is to offer a sacrifice that will atone for the sins and save the people. And they mocked him in his priestly office.

[10 : 16] He saved others. Ha! He can't even save himself. King. He's the king of Israel. Oh, let him come down from the cross and we'll believe him.

Oh, a king should have a crown. And they found some thorns and wove it into a crown and pounded it onto his head. A king should have a robe.

And they dressed him in a purple robe. A king should have a staff. They gave him a stick. And above his cross, the sign, Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews, a mockery.

They laughed at him. The shame of it all. And then there was the shame of being abandoned by his heavenly father in the time of his greatest need. We spoke of his rejection.

But to have to cry out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And they just ate it up.

[11 : 17] They loved to see him rejected. Enjoying his shame as he cried. The son of God that had as his soul's chief treasure, knowing the special love and approval of his heavenly father.

You remember his father spoke those words to him at his baptism and again on Mount of Transfiguration. This is my son whom I love. With him I'm well pleased.

And that's the love that Jesus thrived on. The love of his father. And now even this is being mocked as they shouted. He trusts in God.

Let God rescue him if he wants him. For he said, I am the son of God. And as he dies and hangs there, it looks like and it felt like God didn't want him.

For God didn't rescue him. Looked like he didn't love him. Felt like he didn't love him. He was treating his son as sin rather than as a beloved son.

[12 : 18] And how that cut the deepest to our Savior. The shame of being abandoned and cursed by his own father. And then finally the shame of death itself.

Which is the wages of sin. For him to be dying. In apparent weakness and helplessness before this enemy sin.

I'm sure there's far more shame than this than what I've touched upon tonight. But I trust it's enough to cause us to appreciate those words in Hebrews 12 too. That he endured the cross scorning its shame.

And to know that it was no small thing. And why did he suffer such shame? Well, because the punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

And part of that punishment was to bear our shame. The shame of our sin against God. And just as we tend to think more of the pain of the cross.

[13 : 24] And not so much about the shame of the cross. I think we also tend to think more of the pain of hell. Than the shame of hell. The humiliation of hell.

The Bible speaks of both. Jesus said, A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done good will rise to live.

And those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. John 5, 28 and 29. 600 years earlier, Daniel spoke of this same event at the end of time.

Daniel 12, 2. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. Some to everlasting life. Others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Everlasting scorn. Humiliation. Hell is a place of everlasting shame and contempt. For having lived for the wrong world.

[14 : 25] Having come up empty at the end of it all. Having sinned against God. Fought against him. Eternal loser. Eternal loss.

What a fool. Living for the passing things of this world. Entering eternity. Not rich toward God. But bankrupt toward God. And so for all eternity.

Hell will be a place of shame and everlasting contempt. And our Savior was bearing that shame that we would have borne forever. That's what I deserve for my sin against God.

And that's what I would have experienced. But Jesus suffered not only the pains of hell for me. But the shame of hell for me. He bore my shame and eternal embarrassment there on the cross.

That I might enjoy everlasting life and praise and glory and honor from him in heaven. So as we fix our eyes on Jesus tonight.

[15 : 30] We see him enduring the cross. Scorning its shame. That word scorn means that he treated it with contempt. With disdain. He despised it.

Treated as nothing worthy of consideration. Not in and of itself. It was huge the shame he bore. But nothing to take lightly when compared with the greater joy that was set before him.

The joy of returning to his heavenly father. Saying, father I've completed the mission that you gave me to do. And bringing many sons and daughters to glory with him.

That was the joy that was set before him that caused him to treat this shame that is so great. As if it were nothing. And just go on enduring the cross.

Nothing, not even the shame of the cross could turn him away. As he set his eyes on bringing many of us to glory. Now, we're ready to turn the page over to chapter 13 then.

[16 : 39] And verses 11 through 14. And as we do, let's remember the reason this letter was written in the first place. It's written to first century Hebrew Christians.

Just some 30 years or so after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. And these Hebrew Christians were now being persecuted by the unbelieving Jews who had crucified Jesus as a false Messiah.

They were cast out of their synagogues. They were cast out of the temple in Jerusalem. They were shunned by Jewish society. And very often by their own family and relatives.

They were viewed as unclean, unholy. Despised, rejected followers of Jesus the Nazarene. And then they were mocked as if your worship is nothing.

You have no temple. You have no altar. You have no priests in their flowing robes. And all that we have to show in our gaudy and golden temple.

[17 : 49] You're missing out on it. You're not even part of the people of God. There's no salvation for you. And so in short, they were bearing a lot of shame and disgrace for identifying as followers of Jesus.

And the effect of it all was that they were being tempted to turn back. To turn away from Jesus and to go back to a Christless Judaism. So this author of the letter takes them to the cross of Jesus.

And he reminds them of the shame and the disgrace that he bore for them. And then he urges them to go and bear the disgrace that he bore.

In identifying with Jesus. Now, in these four verses, 11 to 14, we have the word outside mentioned three times.

And each time it's associated with shame. To be outside. I mean, we have that. To be on the in group. That's where respectability and popularity is.

[18 : 58] But to be outside. That's to be despised and disdained and shamed and humiliated. And that's how it's used in these three times. Let's notice them.

First of all, verse 11. Speaking of the day of atonement. We're told the high priest carries the blood of animals into the most holy place as a sin offering.

But the bodies are burned outside the camp. Now, these things were symbolical types. And what they said was that God's holy presence inside the camp, in the most holy place in the temple, in the tabernacle, at the very center of the camp, made the whole campground holy.

But outside the camp, oh, that's unholy turf. That's unclean. Such is where the lepers must go. Which was another type of our spiritual disease of sin.

That it makes us unfit for the presence of God. We must go outside. And outside is where the lepers are and the unclean things are. And so on the day of atonement, there's two things that are spoken of in verse 11.

[20 : 13] There's the blood and the bodies of these sacrificial animals. Notice, first of all, what's done with the blood. The blood of the sacrificial animals was brought into God's presence, into the most holy place as a sin offering.

And so that's telling us that we deserve to be shut out from the presence of the Lord forever and ever. And it's only through the blood of an innocent substitute that we can be brought near to God, into his holy presence.

Only through this blood, only through the blood of the sacrifice, can we be made clean and ready for the presence of God. So the blood was brought into the most holy place where God was.

What about the bodies? Well, the bodies of the sacrificial animals were taken outside the camp and burned. Why? Because they were unholy. From the moment that the hands were laid upon the head of the sacrificial animal and spiritually transferring the guilt of the nation onto that animal.

It became, that innocent animal became guilty. It became sinful, unholy, and was treated as such. And so its blood was taken into the most holy place, but its body was taken out into an unclean place outside the camp and burned.

[21 : 41] Where unclean things are meant to be. Well, outside the camp, ceremonially unclean, unfit for God, the place where the cursed, sin-bearing animals were to be burned.

All right, that's the day of atonement. And it was looking forward to this day of atonement that we're talking about tonight when Jesus went to the altar of Calvary.

Now, verse 12 talks about that. And so Jesus also, since this is the way it was on the day of atonement, Jesus also suffered, notice, outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.

So there's a shift here. Instead of the tabernacle inside the camp, back in Moses' day in the desert, now the most holy place is in the temple in Jerusalem.

And so outside the camp is now referred to as outside the city gate, but it's still outside. And now we're no longer dealing with types and shadows, but now with the real sacrifice that can really take away sin.

[22 : 51] The blood that can really atone and make us right with God, fit for his presence. The blood of the sinless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

And what we learn is that only through his blood offered up on the cross for us have we been made clean, holy, acceptable to God.

And notice where this was done. Outside the city gate in an unholy, unclean place, the place of the skull. Why?

Because he became sin for us when the Father laid on him the iniquities of us all. And he became the accursed thing for us, unfit for God's presence.

And so he must suffer God's wrath outside the city gate to make us holy by his blood, to make us fit for God's presence. But there's something else being typified here by suffering outside the city gate of Jerusalem.

[23 : 58] And it speaks again of the rejection of the Jews. Inside is the temple. The Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin, the respectable practice of Judaism, the temple worship.

And they had no place for Jesus in their city. They had no place for Jesus in their temple. He was to be the cornerstone.

And they looked at the stone and they rejected it. They cast it out. You don't belong inside. You don't belong in here.

You're unclean. You're a blasphemer. You're a false messiah. And so they would not have him in the city. He's taken outside the holy city as an outcast who doesn't belong there.

And to be cursed and killed out on unholy ground. That's where he belongs. With the unholy criminals. Just as they would later drag Stephen outside the city gate and stone him there.

[25 : 04] He doesn't belong to the respectable religion of the Jews. He's an outcast. And that's where he was killed as well. So it's outside the city gate that Jesus bears the shame of the cross as they mocked and ridiculed him.

So now we come to the application to these early Hebrew Christians. It's verse 13. And the writer says, let us then.

Since that's where Jesus went, outside the city gate, let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. Jesus has been rejected and cast out of Jerusalem.

Bearing its shame on the cross. And now the unbelieving Jerusalem is casting out his followers as despised and rejected as well.

Heaping shame on them. So what will they do? What will we do? Would they return to their synagogues inside the city? Return to the temple inside Jerusalem to escape the stigma of Christ and the cross?

[26 : 21] The temptation was great to go back to a Christless Judaism. Just to be respected and accepted again within the family, the Jewish society, the temple, the worship that they had known for all their lives.

And all the way back to Abraham, Father Abraham. They were the odd ducks out. And so they wanted to be accepted and avoid the shame of Christ and the offense of his cross.

And if we're honest, we too feel that same pressure to want to belong to this society, to this world. The world that hates Jesus, his followers, and his word.

So let us then. Let us then. Then, because he went outside the city gates to bear the shame for us.

Let us then. Let us then. Go to him outside the city gates. Bearing the shame. The disgrace he bore. Let's leave the world side. That crucified our Lord.

[27 : 28] This unbelieving world has already made clear what they think of our Jesus. Just look at the cross. The one place when they could get their hands on God. They did so. And they nailed him to a tree.

This cancel culture that has already canceled Jesus. Canceled his laws. Canceled his gospel. And if we're his followers, they'll be coming for us as well.

Well, that's the world. That's the inside. The respectable religion of the day. The world's thought. So let us then. Stop courting their smiles.

Let's stop seeking their acceptance. Let's stop being too ashamed to stand up for the despised and rejected. Jesus. Too proud to be counted a fool for Christ's sake.

And let's go to him. Let's go to him. The world behind us. The cross before us. And identify with Jesus in his disgrace.

[28 : 29] Standing up for him. Speaking up for him. Willing to bear shame for him who bore the shame for me. And who is still not ashamed to call us brothers.

Now, the people of God have ever had this spirit within them. And we have examples. Just in chapter 11, verse 25 and 26. We find Moses.

And he's the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He's got a lot of perks in Egypt. But verse 25 of Hebrews 11 says, By faith, Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.

He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ. There it is. 1500 years before Christ. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as a greater value than the treasures of Egypt.

These are the people from which the Messiah would come. And he'll identify with them and with Christ's disgrace and shame rather than to take all the pleasures and treasures of Egypt.

[29 : 40] And why? Because he was looking ahead to his reward. There's that spirit. Go to him outside the camp bearing the shame he bore.

Or think of that sight there at the cross. And there's Nicodemus that came to Jesus earlier by night in John chapter 4 or 3.

And there's Joseph of Arimathea. The two of them. They're on the high court. The Sanhedrin of Israel. And they had come to believe in Jesus.

But secretly for fear of the Jews. Fear of the shame. The disgrace. Can you imagine someone on the high court of Israel? A follower of Jesus.

John chapter 7. You see Nicodemus warming to Jesus. Do we condemn a man before we try him? What are you his follower too?

[30 : 38] He got the retort from the high priest. Look it up in the scriptures. This is not the Messiah. And so they were ashamed to confess Jesus.

Oh but now they see him. They see him in his greatest shame. There's no life left in him. He's dead. What kind of savior is he?

But Nicodemus was told by that savior. That just like Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. So that whoever looked lives.

So the son of man must be lifted up. That whoever believes in him should not perish. But have everlasting life. And Nicodemus sees him lifted up. A corpse hanging lifeless on the tree.

And he says this is my coming out day. And he and Joseph go to Pilate and ask for his body. And take down.

[31 : 36] They go outside the city gate. And take down the body of Jesus. And give him an honorable burial. You see they went outside to Jesus.

Bearing the shame that he bore. And then there was the apostles. Arrested by Jewish leaders months later. For publicly preaching the gospel of Christ.

Put in prison. Commended not to preach in his name anymore. And yet they continued to do so. And so they're brought in and warned again. And when the Sanhedrin found them unmoved by their threats.

They were furious and wanted to kill them. It was only by the persuasion of Gamaliel that they didn't kill them. But they flogged them.

And ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus. And let them go. And then we read in Acts 5 verse 41. The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing.

[32 : 35] Because they had been counted worthy. To suffer disgrace for the name. They went outside the city. To Jesus.

Identified with him. Preached his gospel. Told what a savior he is. And they wore as a badge of honor.

The disgrace. That he bore. I say that's the spirit. Of the followers of Jesus.

Oh there's not enough of it in us. But that's why we're here tonight. To get more of it. Peter says if you suffer as a Christian. Do not be ashamed. But praise God that you bear that name.

Well let us then. Go to him outside the camp. Bearing the disgrace he bore. There's one more word of encouragement. And motivation to do so. It's not only by looking back.

[33 : 32] To the shame that Christ bore for us on the cross. It's looking forward to what's coming. The honor from Christ. Christ. It's found in verse 14. Hebrews 13 14.

For here we do not have an enduring city. But we're looking for the city that is to come. And all the people of God have this forward looking faith.

That was Moses. We just read of him. Why do you ever choose disgrace for the sake of Christ over the treasures and pleasures of Egypt? Because he was looking forward to his reward.

And by faith even Jesus on the cross was looking ahead to his reward. Who for the joy set before him. The joy of bringing many sons to glory.

Endured the cross scorning its shame. And so here we too are encouraged to bear the disgrace he bore. As we're looking forward to the city that is to come.

[34 : 29] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were looking forward to the city with foundations. Whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11 10. There was no place here on this earth for them. They were aliens and strangers and confessed themselves so to be. Instead they were longing for a better country.

A heavenly one. And therefore God's not ashamed to be called their God. For he has prepared a city for them. A city. And here in this world at present we have no enduring city.

We have no place to call our own where we belong. Even Jerusalem was no enduring city to cling to. They had become a den of robbers and murderers of the son of God.

And in just a few years would be totally destroyed in 70 AD. No enduring city. The people of God don't belong here.

[35 : 30] And we have no city here. But we are looking for the city that is to come. Where we are accepted. Loved, esteemed, and welcomed, and praised.

Where we belong. Hebrews 12 right there in front of you. Verse 22. We've come to this heavenly Jerusalem. The city of the living God. Joyful assembly of it.

Multitudes of angels. Perfected souls of saints. Where Jesus is. The mediator of a new covenant. And the blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. This heavenly Jerusalem.

John describes it to us. It's this enduring city that will last forever. I saw the holy city. The new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem.

Coming down out of heaven from God. Prepared as a bride. Beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying. Now the dwelling of God is with men. And he will live with them.

[36 : 31] And they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. And be their God. So that's the city that we long for. That's the city that we're looking forward to.

Where we do belong. So let's go to Jesus. And let's go outside the city of this world. Bearing the disgrace he bore. And let the world deride or pity.

But let's glory in Jesus. Who bore the shame for us. And who is preparing a city for us. He went. Well I'm not sure which is the greater wonder.

That Jesus is not ashamed of me. Or that I am sometimes ashamed of him. Him who bore the shame for me. Well let's find fresh motivation tonight.

As we remember our Lord suffering our shame on the cross. And all for the joy of bringing us to his city. To be with him forever. In that enduring city.

[37 : 42] He went outside. To bring us inside. He went outside to be cursed. To bring us inside. To be blessed. What do we read?

About the new Jerusalem in Revelation 22. That there is no more curse. No not in this city. The city that Jesus has won for us.

And these verses bring us right to what we're about tonight. Revelation 22. 14 and 15. Blessed.

Blessed. Are those who wash their robes. That they may have the right to the tree of life. And may go through the gates. Into the city. That new Jerusalem.

That new city of God. Outside. Are the dogs. Those who practice magic arts. The sexual immoral. The murderers. The idolaters. And everyone who loves and practices lies.

[38 : 43] But those who have washed their robes. And where do you wash your robes? In the blood of Christ. Have a right to go in. Into the city. The new Jerusalem.

Where flows the river of life. And grows the tree of life. And where the throne of God and the lamb is. And where we enjoy fellowship with him forever. That's what he was about on the cross.

That's the joy that kept him going. That's the joy that when he bore all that shame. He says it's worth it. This is as nothing. Compared to the reward. That I will have when I return to my father.

And say here I am father. And the children you have given me. You. You. To bring you there. Let's love him tonight. And receive his love.

If you're one of his disciples. Who are his disciples? Well Jesus said it best. And he said. If anyone would be my disciple.

[39 : 44] He must deny himself. Take up his cross. That instrument of shame. And death. And follow me. You following Jesus? Is he your Lord and Savior?

Is he your only hope? Are you trusting and having your. Your sins washed away in the blood of the lamb. This. This meal is for you. And it's. It's for you to be reassured. Of how much he loves you.

And how much he. He wanted to bring you. Home to be with him. I'm going to ask Max Rarick. And Nate Blair. To come at this time. And to help distribute. The bread and the cup.

As we remember the Lord's. Table.