

The Lamb Surrounded by Wolves

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[0 : 00] Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 27, 27. Matthew 27, 27.

Before we read this passage, I just want to remind you of what has happened up to this point. ! Jesus has gone through a sleepless night. And he's gone through the agonies of Gethsemane and the betrayal of Judas.

The disciples deserting him. Then there was a hypocritical trial before the Sanhedrin. He was rushed to another trial, the mockery of Caiaphas' court.

Peter denied him. And Pilate, knowingly, knowing what he's doing is not right, denies him justice. Pilate put him out as a way to maybe possibly rescue him.

[1 : 06] And the crowds choose Barabbas. And then he's flogged. And he's whipped and beaten. And now without a moment to pause, a moment to gather himself, a moment to think, he's rushed off to be crucified.

So all of this in the last ten hours. One thing after another.

Matthew Henry writes this in these just anguished words. When he was condemned, speaking of our Lord, he ought to have had some time allowed him to prepare for death.

But there were scarcely allowed so many minutes to our Lord Jesus, nor had he any breathing time during those minutes. It was a crisis. And there were no lucid intervals allowed him.

Deep called unto deep. And the storm continued without intermission. So that's where our Lord Jesus is. That's what he's already been through up to this point.

[2 : 21] As we come to Matthew 27, 27. There's no time to think. There's no breath. He's in the storm. He has no plank to hold on to.

He's taken off of the stake where he was flogged. And he's now rushed to crucifixion. And this is what it says.

He's taken off the post. And then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the praetorium. The praetorium was the governor's palace. It's where his offices were.

It was where his court was. It was where he kept his personal troops. And so they took him into the praetorium. Probably into one of those open courtyards.

With a colonnade all around it. So there was plenty of room for plenty of soldiers to gather around him. And so there they are. There they all are. They're encircling him.

[3 : 16] He is in the middle. And everyone is laughing. So verse 28. The whole company of soldiers around him.

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. And then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand.

And knelt in front of him and mocked him. Hail, King of the Jews. They said. They spit on him. And took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.

After they had mocked him. They took off the robe. They put his own clothes on him. And then they led him away to crucify him.

So there's the scene. And it's recorded for us. It's recorded for us so that we could see it. So that we could witness it. And so we are in very real way invited into this moment.

[4 : 18] We can take our place with those soldiers. Encircling him. And all eyes are on this one man. And he's bloody. And he's silent.

He's easy prey for violent men. He's a half-devoured lamb before wild dogs. Now the Holy Spirit wants us to see this.

And if you think about it. It is a very uncomfortable scene. But we want to stay a while. We don't want to fly through it. We want to look at what we are to see.

So what do we see? Well, we see a comedic. A cruel comedic coronation. And then de-coronation. Everybody loves a king until they're able to destroy the king.

Until they get a chance to destroy him. Libyan peasants loved it when they found Muammar Gaddafi hiding in a culvert. In this Arab Spring Revolution. And the one that they looked up to.

[5 : 25] They were very pleased to beat. And to brutalize. And to humiliate. While he pleaded with them to stop. Until they shot him. So you finally get your hands on that one that is saying so much.

That's something of what we see here. It's that same cruel spirit. So Matthew paints this picture as a coronation. Where everything goes up and then everything comes down.

It's a coronation and then a de-coronation. So you can't be a king without a robe. And so the soldiers pick up probably an old soldier.

An old trooper's robe that was red. And they said, here's your robe, my king. And you can't be a king without a staff or a crown. And so they weave together a crown of thorns.

And they press it upon his head. And every king needs a staff. And so here's your staff. And it's an old reed. It's a wooden stick of some kind. And so what do you do when you crown a king?

[6 : 29] Everyone says, hail, hail the king. And so they hail him king. King of the Jews. He's a bloody, silent figure standing in front of them all.

Completely helpless. Without a word, he's a victim. Just a powerless victim. And they laugh.

They laugh at him. They laugh at the situations he's in. They laugh at his claims. And you can just imagine.

And maybe it's easier for some of you to imagine this than others. But when men get together. And they're making fun. Great belly laughs and high fives go all around.

And this mockery. And so they're saying, we'll play along with you, King Jesus. Oh, you're the king? Then here you go. A robe. A crown. A staff.

[7 : 34] We'll bow the knee for you, King Jesus. That's what you want. We'll do that. And then the mockery stops. And the comedic coronation takes a sadistic, nasty turn.

And so one was the first one to do it. And so hail, king of the Jews. And then they spit right in his face. And then another.

And then another. Again and again. So mock praise turned to spit. And they grab a staff.

The staff they put in his hands. The staff he didn't ask for. But the staff they gave him. And they struck him on the head with it. And all the time he's silent.

So what do we see? Psalm 22 says, dogs have surrounded me. A band of evil men has encircled me.

[8 : 27] And the. So there's dogs everywhere. There's no escape. There's no running.

He's a cornered deer. And now he's brought to. Brought to bay by the dogs. And the dogs are rushing in one at a time to hit him. To hit him again.

So what do we see? We see. The lamb Jesus. Surrounded by. These dogs of war.

Cruelly crowning him king. He's mocked. And he spit on. And he struck again and again. And the whole time. He is silent. Before his shearers.

With his head. Bowed. Down. I don't know about you. But it's a picture that makes my heart quake.

[9 : 23] When I thought about it. And when I think about it. We sing that song. Oh sacred head now wounded. With grief and thorns. Weighed down.

Now scornfully surrounded. With thorns thine only crown. Oh sacred head what glory. What bliss till now was thine. So what do we see?

That's what we see. This coronation and decoronation. What else do we see? We see the fathomless humility of the Lord Jesus.

Do you know what I mean by fathomless? When you're out in a ship. And you want to see how deep the water goes. You throw out a line. And you measure it in fathoms.

And we see something here that cannot be measured. It's deep humility beyond any kind of measuring.

[10 : 18] It's the humility of our Lord Jesus. And so as he stands there in abject humiliation. He's a sink for their spit. And as he stands there.

This bloody lamb. We cannot forget. That besides being the lamb of God. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah. With a word he leveled the arresting mob.

Do you remember that? When they all came and they asked him. And he said here I am. And they all fell down. They came upon him and down they went. So he's the son of God. He's God in the

flesh.

Colossians says without him nothing was made that has been made. He stands on another plane completely from these men. He stands on a completely higher plane than angels. In all powers or rulers or authorities. He made them. They are his servants. They are his creatures. They are his handiwork. And so the one who has man's spit.

[11:23] Rolling and leaking down his face. Could wither their bones with a word. He went to that fig tree.

And there was no fruit on it. And he cursed it. And the next day it was withered from the roots up. What could he do to them? He could curse them to oblivion.

He could ruin them. Their families. Their lives. Their bones. Their souls. Their spirits. Until they begged for death.

He could have called their death to them. He's the Lord. And so what are these men to him? They're his creatures.

He's farther above them than you are. Above an amoeba. He's farther above them than the highest archangel is.

[12:27] Above the lowest virus in a dunghill. He is far above them. And so who are these soldiers? They're nobodies. We don't know any of their names.

None of it's recorded. It's all forgotten. They're forgotten in the dustbin of history. And at the same time, he is the lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Lord of Lords. The King of Kings.

He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. Revelation 19 says. And it says his cloak will be red.

Because it's dipped in the blood of his enemies. And the armies of heaven follow him. And his scepter will be an iron scepter. That's a picture of indomitable, unstoppable rain.

Anything and anyone that comes against him in his power will be destroyed. And so Revelation says on his head is not one crown, but many crowns.

[13:28] And yet here he is. That's who he is. And yet here he is now, surrounded by the dogs of war and their yapping and biting.

And I just want you to see his humility. His self-control. His patience. His kindness. His kindness. To let them do this to him.

So. What else do we see? Well, we see our Lord winning his heavenly crown. He he he receives this crown of thorns from the world, but we can't miss that.

This is how our Lord won his heavenly crown. Because the kingdom of God has a certain law, a certain way of doing things. And so who who gets to be king in the kingdom of God?

Who gets the highest place? Is it because you were born in the right family or you have the most money? The one who has the most talent gets to be king. The one with the most confidence. The one with the most the best looking, the best brains.

[14:41] No. In the kingdom of God, the greatest of among you will be the servant, the slave of all. The least will be the greatest.

The last will be first. So he gets to be king of the kingdom of God. He gets a heavenly crown because no one ever went lower.

No one ever endured the same humiliation as he will go through and is going through. He will humble himself even to the point of death.

But here he is now on the way down. And without a word, he bows his head and lets this be done to him. The meek shall inherit the earth.

He's the meekest of them all. So he inherits the whole earth. Now throughout this whole passage, and in fact, the whole book of Matthew, Matthew has this theme that he is interweaving.

[15:48] He's trying to get across a point that he is trying to make throughout his entire book. It's Matthew's constant theme is this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

That's the theme of Matthew, if you could sum it up in one sentence. So the sign ironically put above his head on his crucifixion that this is Jesus, king of the Jews. That's Matthew's point.

The mocking taunt of these soldiers making fun of him. Hail, king of the Jews. That's Matthew's point. And Matthew is saying this is how he becomes the king.

This is why he's the king. And Matthew ends, unlike all the other gospels, with he's not just the king of the Jews, but Jesus says all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

I'm the king of heaven and earth. I'm the king of the kingdom of heaven. Now, why is it just because? No, because no king ever showed himself more willing to serve.

[16:51] No king is more worthy of his crown. No king did more to say, I will serve my people. I will live for them. I will do them good than this king did. No king earned his crown like Jesus did.

And so he does wear his crown. And now he is sitting on a throne. Because when he was mocked, he didn't answer back.

And when they humiliated him, he didn't destroy them. He didn't call legions of angels to save him. He endured it all for the joy set before him. And he did endure. And he won. People have a hard time seeing what you see here in Matthew 27 and these following verses as victory.

But that's exactly what it is. To endure. To persevere. To keep going on all the way through.

[17:52] That's what victory is. And he did win his crown. It wasn't freely handed to him. He won it through what he was enduring. And so he qualified himself to take the highest place.

To sit at the right hand of the majesty on high. And to rule in the midst of his enemies. So we see his false coronation.

We see his humility. We also see him earning his crown. What else do we see? We see him receiving what we were due. What we have and had coming to us.

We can't miss this either. Because all of this humiliation is part and parcel of what sin is due. What judgment is about.

The punishment that our sins deserve. This is what all sinners have coming to them. Either in their substitute.

[18:56] Or upon themselves. So what did the soldiers see when they looked at him? What provoked their mockery? Why? What did they see?

Well they saw someone that was too big for his britches. They saw someone deluded. Claiming to be clean. Claiming to be something.

And someone that he wasn't. Claiming to be clean. Claiming to be clean. Someone insane. With his own delusions of grandeur. Of his sense of greatness.

They saw someone that was so full of themselves. His claims were stupid. They were unwarranted. King. Sure. Uh huh. Son of God.

Sure. Got it. Right. What they're saying is you aren't anything. You're nothing. And so they treated him that way.

[19:51] They sought to humble the proud. To make it crystal clear. To everyone watching. That this person saying he was somebody. Was really a nobody. You aren't anything.

You are terribly. Terribly. Self. Deluded. To humble. The proud. But to humble the proud. Is exactly what God has promised.

To do. Psalm 94. Rise up. O judge of the earth. Pay back the proud. What they deserve. Matthew 23.

12. Whoever exalts himself. Will. Be humbled. Isaiah 2. The Lord almighty. Has a day in store. For all the proud. And the lofty.

For all that is exalted. The arrogance of man. Will be brought low. And the pride of men. Humbled. Now Jesus had. Rightful claims.

[20:50] He had rightful claims. That's why he doesn't deserve. This kind of mockery. He had rightful claims. But. Friend. We certainly don't.

We don't have rightful claims. Of this sort. And. And in sin. We have claimed. Our self. Independence. In claim. In our sin.

We have claimed. I am king. I will do what. I want. We've rebelled against God. We live for our own kingdoms. And isn't that what we do in sin. Instead of living for God.

And his big kingdom. And in submission to his king. We live for ourselves. We set up little kingdoms. And we put ourselves on their thrones. And we punish.

And we make laws. And we're proud. In our kingdoms. So who is God that he should rule over me? I'll do what I want. My way.

[21:44] Be done. It's our warring madness. It's madness. We act like we're God. We do it with the people around us.

We do it with the created world. We're so surprised when everything doesn't bend to our will. It's a delusion to think that we are these kings. So I'll set the rules. I am worthy.

Bow before me. Don't do what I want. And there's. I'll punish you for it. And so here we are. We're these little. Petty. Pretend.

Tyrants. Filled with delusions of grandeur. And Jesus here. That's what sin does. And Jesus here is taking the humiliation. That is coming.

To every arrogant person. To the high and the mighty. To every high and mighty thought. That's what he's taking. This humiliation. The payback for all of our arrogance. So.

[22 : 40] When you're reading this. You're seeing your pride. Punished. In him. You're seeing your own arrogance. Punished.

Every spit in the face. Is what you deserve. Every laugh. All the helplessness. All the claims. Mocked. Is what you have coming. Or had coming. Every jeer. Is what. You deserve. In your sin. And. Jesus takes it all for us.

He absorbs it. And so in those moments. In the praetorium. Jesus was saving. Our soul. Because. He was saving us. From the wrath.

To come. And part of that wrath. To come. Is exactly what we are talking about. It's humiliation. For the day of the Lord. Is coming. When every mountain.

[23 : 40] Will be laid low. And every high hill. And lofty tower. And fortified wall. Every trading ship. Every stately vessel.

All. The pride. And men. Will be brought low. And the Lord. Alone. Will be exalted. In that day. That day.

That coming day. Leaped backwards. Into history. And found its way. Into the praetorium. With Jesus. That humiliation. Leaped backwards. Into history. And found Jesus.

In an open courtyard. Surrounded by. Jeering. Mocking. Ruthless. Heartless. Men. And he took it all.

He absorbed it all. To save. Me. Because I've been proud. I lived as God.

[24 : 36] Or as king. And you have too. Someone will be humbled. For your sin. Here Jesus is. Is taking the humbling.

Now. How do we respond. How do we respond. To this. Well. Very simply. Brothers and sisters. They.

Crowned his head. With thorns. They crowned his head. With insults. Let's crown his head. With praises. Let's crown his head.

With love. With fervent. Heart. Love. Because they treated him. That way. Let us. Do the exact opposite. They crowned him.

With insults. Let's crown him. With loving praise. Let's crown him. With love. Even as you are. Meditating. Now.

[25 : 32] As we get ready. To take communion. As you are. Meditating. He is worthy. Of our praise. He is worthy. Of our thanksgiving.

He endured that. For us. If they gave him insults. Let's give him praise. If they. Piled hatred on him. Let's pile love.

Upon his head. Even now. As we take communion.