

A Meditation On Christ's Work

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Date: 20 October 2013

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] We know the cross should have more of an effect on us than what it does. That's one reason for communion.

We need this picture. We need to take the time to think deeply, think thoroughly through what Jesus did for us on the cross.

And so tonight is not so much an exposition, but a meditation. A meditation, a slow digestion of what our Lord did.

Please turn in your Bibles to John chapter 19. John chapter 19. Let's read God's word beginning in verse 1.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

[1:01] They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again saying, hail, king of the Jews. And they struck him in the face. Once more, Pilate came out and said to the Jews, look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.

When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, here is the man. As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, crucify, crucify.

But Pilate answered, you take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him. The Jews insisted. We have a law.

And according to that law, he must die because he claimed to be the son of God. When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. And he went back inside the palace.

Where do you come from? He asked Jesus. But Jesus gave him no answer. Do you refuse to speak to me? Pilate said. Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?

[2:21] Jesus answered. You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But the Jews kept shouting. If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement. Which in Aramaic is Gabbatha.

It was the day of preparation of Passover week about the sixth hour. Here's your king, Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, take him away.

Take him away. Crucify him. Shall I crucify your king? Pilate asked. We have no king but Caesar. The chief priest answered.

[3:18] Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

Here they crucified him. And with two others, one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross.

It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Many of the Jews read the sign for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. And the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.

The chief priest of the Jews protested to Pilate. Do not write the king of the Jews, but that this man claimed to be the king of the Jews. Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written.

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes. Dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining.

[4:21] This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. Let's not tear it, they said to one another. Let's decide by lot who will get it.

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled, which said, They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. So this is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Dear woman, here is your son.

And to the disciple, here is your mother. From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, I am thirsty.

A jar of wine, vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, It is finished.

[5:35] With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. We'll stop there. At the cross, you see many things.

Tonight, I just want to notice three points for us to ponder. First is the evil of sin. Second is the end of sinners.

And third is the greatness of the love of Christ. So first, we see the evil of sin. We see what our sins deserved.

We do not read the cross correctly until we read ourselves into the story. Until you read yourself into the story. Until we read it and see that we should be where Jesus is.

Because he is where we should be. He dies in our place. But it is rightfully our place. It is rightfully our place.

[6:37] And it should terrify us that it could have been us. The story should have been and it could have been so different. So read yourself into the story.

Even as I read myself into the story. Then Pilate took Jason and had him flogged. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

They clothed him in purple and went up to him again and again saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And then they struck him. And as soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, Crucify!

Crucify! Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him! And so the soldiers took charge of Jason carrying his own cross. He went out to the place of the skull. And here they crucified him with two others.

It could have been us. He was in our place. He was getting what we deserved. And that shows us how truly evil sin is.

[7:38] The law shows us the width and the breadth of our sin. It shows here you're out of bounds. Here you've transgressed.

You've gone too far. It shows us where we've fallen short. It shows us where we've gone above the law. Where we've gone past the law is what I mean.

And we've transgressed it. And it shows us the width, the breadth of our sin. But I think the cross begins to show us and it shows us the depth of how evil our sin is.

It shows us the sinfulness of sin. So how evil is sin? How evil are we? We cannot consider sin apart from ourselves because it is we who do it.

So how wicked. Well, look at the Son of God paying for it. The perfect one must die. Nothing less will do.

[8:38] The perfect one. The prize of heaven. The joy of angels. The center of heaven's glory. The apple of the Father's eye. Heaven's glory. Heaven's joy.

He's the one who's torn apart. Naked. Naked. Ashamed. Abused. Mocked. In agony. Crying out to God. What? My God. My God.

Why have you forsaken me? And heaven turns away. From his cry. That's how we see how evil sin is.

That's how we see what our sin has done. We don't read the cross rightly until we read ourselves into the story.

Until we see that it wasn't Pilate. And it wasn't the chief priest. It was me. It was my sin. It was my hands.

[9:33] So you can see. Look at what I have done. And as soon as Jason saw him. He shouted. Crucify. Crucify. Take him away.

Crucify him. Shall I crucify your king? I have no king. And ashamed I hear my mocking voice crying out among the scoffers. And so I was the chief priest.

I was the Jew. I was the soldier nailing him to the cross. I was the soldier striking him. I was the soldier mocking him and spitting on him. It was my sin. It was my sin that brought him there. And it was your sin. You see the evil of sin. We tortured the Lord of glory.

We took what was innocent and sacred and undefiled. And we put him to shame. That's what our sin did. We hung him up to die.

[10:33] Peter cried to the Jerusalem crowd on Pentecost. You crucified him. And you have to beat your breast and say, look at what I have done.

So let me ask you, how much do you hate your sin? How much do you hate your sin? What's your attitude toward your sin? Do you play with your sin? Do you say, oh, he'll forgive me?

He's a God of grace. He'll forgive me for what I've done. If that is your attitude, you have not understood grace. You might have gotten a hold of grace.

You might understand the doctrines of grace. You might have your Calvinism all lined up. You might have gotten a hold of grace. But grace has never really gotten a hold of you. If that's the way you act.

What is your attitude towards sin? Is it a problem to overcome? A personal setback? Do you say, well, I'm better than this. I need to straighten up and fly right. Is sin just a personal setback to you?

[11:33] Or is it vile? Do you ever say, do you ever scream? I hate it. I hate it because what it did to Jesus. I hate it because of what it did to him.

My savior suffered to it for it. And every time I sin, I say amen to the chief priests. When they said crucify him. And every time I sin, I say amen to the soldiers.

Who nailed him to the cross. Because it was my sin that put him there. Do you hate it? Sometimes I wish it could have been me.

Because it's what I deserved. He didn't deserve it. So do you hate your sin? If you don't, meditate on the cross.

Read yourself into the story until you do. See the evil of sin. You also see the end of sinners. The end of sinners.

[12:36] Some of you are spiritually asleep. Spiritually asleep. Spiritually dead. I speak and you do not hear.

The gospel goes out. And you're deaf. You're so secure. You're so confident. And I would ruin your security. Do you see the end of sinners?

You can see the end of sinners when you look at the cross. Because we've seen what could have been. It could have been us. But now we see what will be.

What will be for all those who die apart from Christ. If you are apart from Jesus. Look at your future. And weep.

When they led him away. A large number of people followed him. Including women who mourned and wailed for him. And Jesus turned and said to them.

[13:33] Daughters of Jerusalem. Do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves. If they do this. When the tree is green. What will happen when it is dry? If this happens to a green tree.

What will happen to you? Dead tree. If this happens to God's son. When sin is found in him. What will happen to you?

When you are nothing but sin. When you are born in iniquity. And you've spurned grace all your life. What will happen to you? If you go on. If the son of the principal is caught.

Committing vandalism. And his father the principal expels him. What will happen to you? If you are caught with the spray cans in your hands. If God did not spare his own son.

Will he spare you? So you see your future. You don't read the cross rightly. Until you read yourself into the story.

[14:31] Because for every nail that pierced his hands. A thousand nails will pierce your soul. God's judgment came to the cross. The day of judgment came early.

It broke into history. And what was it like for the person who was found guilty? What was it like for our Lord when he was bearing our sin?

He was abused. He was abandoned. He was alone. He was ashamed. What will happen to you on the day of judgment? On that day Christ will look at you and say.

What do you have to say for yourself? And you will have nothing to say. Your lies will be found out.

And your self delusions will be seen as the thin transparent veils that they are. You thought you were covering. You thought you were excusing. You thought you had good reasons for what you were doing.

[15 : 29] But you will have nothing to say. And then the angels will look at you and utter disdain. And they will see you for what you are. A self-deceived evil fool.

Weighed and found wanting. And in Christ's glorious presence you will be seen for what you are. And that will be the worst of it all.

You will know yourself. You will know yourself just as you are known. And conscience will turn against you. Your own conscience will not defend you.

Instead it will turn all of its swords and all of its knives against you. And every evil thought will come crashing down into your own soul. And you will know that what you are getting is what you deserve. And the whole world will come in upon you. And you will cry, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And heaven will push you into outer darkness.

[16 : 40] The sun refused to shine. Sometimes I think we miss the point of that. The sun wasn't sympathizing. The sun in the sky wasn't sympathizing with our Lord.

He wasn't hiding his glory. Because of Jesus, the glorious one was now. His glory was hidden. The sun refused to shine because Jesus was cursed.

And he was cursed. And God said, not a drop of sunshine will come on him. And you will be cursed into outer darkness.

See the end of sinners. Read yourself into the story and weep. But we can't end there until we see what it does say.

We've seen what could have been. We see what will be. But look at what it says. Look at what happened. Jesus was there.

[17 : 49] And in that we see his great love. And in that we see the only hope of sinners. The only way you're going to escape that day.

Is if you have Jesus here for you on that. On this day. On John 19. On that day. And so instead of us, it's him. And instead of us, it's the Lord of glory.

And he stands for us. Why? Because he loved me and gave himself up for me. What was the torrent? What was the flood that pushed Jesus into this ditch?

Which? Well, it was his own heart. It was his own love. Having loved his own. Now he showed them the full extent of his love.

He was here willingly. You read through this passage. And Pilate is giving him every time. Every opportunity to get out. Don't you know? All you have to do is talk to me. I have the power to set you free.

[18 : 47] And Jesus doesn't say anything. To defend himself. There's no charge. You know how wise and good and intelligent Jesus was? When he wanted to get out of a situation, he always had the right words.

But here, he says nothing. Why doesn't he say anything? Why doesn't he stop it? Why doesn't he talk his way out of it? It's because he has a different agenda than escaping.

His agenda is to go right through it. His agenda is to suffer for his people. And so, he was there because he set his affection on his bride.

And he is going to pay for her release. So what's the cost? Is it my life? I'll pay it. Does it mean my pain? Then I'll suffer it. Does it mean my humiliation?

Then Jesus comes out wearing the crowns and the purple robe. Does it mean rejection? Then they shout, take him away. Take him away. We don't have any king but Caesar. Is my death their life?

[19 : 45] Then I'll die. Is my body their bread? Then I'll be broken. Is my blood their drink? Their life? Then I'll spill it. And so, what is offered to sinners?

Life. Life. What is offered to sinners? Pardon and forgiveness. Mercy. A fountain flowing with blood to wash away every sin.

And what was the wrench? What was the spike that opened this fountain? It was his love. A bright, fierce love.

God will have blood for sin. And he will give it. You see Christ's love. And we see God's own heart. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

Or God demonstrates his own love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The cross is the megaphone. That shows us, that helps us to hear the greatness of God's love for

us.

[21:00] Why do you doubt God's love? Why is it so dim in your ears? Why doesn't it affect your days? Why aren't you different because he loves you?

Isn't it because you're not listening close enough to the cross? Why do you doubt that he will accept sinners who come? Look at what he puts his son to.

Look at the lengths he goes to rescue us, to reconcile us, to make us his friends. See, behind Christ's love is the love of the Father. And the cross opens up to us vistas and views of his love and of his heart toward us.

So he's a fierce mother that will do anything and everything to save her children. He's this love-consumed father who will sacrifice his most precious treasures in order to have his children in his arms.

He's the kindest host who will reach as far and as deep into a cellar to bring out enough food for us. He will give the very best of his house that his children will not go hungry.

[22:12] And in the cross we see this burning, passionate love. And it's God's love. It's Christ's love. It's a love that rivers of water cannot put out.

And we see it here. We see it here. We see a body broken. We see blood spilled. And by faith we take it to ourselves.

We say, Christ is my life. If I'm going to have life, I must have him. Christ is my food and my drink. He is everything. And I bring nothing to the table.

And I come needy. And I come to take because he says, come. I come empty. Because you say, be filled.

And so I depend all on his love. I know his love and I rely upon it. His love is better than life. And so I come boldly to take what he has given.

[23:11] But God only takes us as we are. He only takes us as we are. As long as we come with masks and costumes.

Pretending to be someone and something that we are not. He won't have us. He barter. He barter. He barter. And he trades. And he deals with people as they are.

With our full sinful faces showing. And so we come as sinners. With blood on our hands. With poison in our mouths.

And saying, in me, no good thing dwells. And to that person. God makes only one deal. His trade is simple.

Your sin. For my grace. Your failure. Your ugliness. Your weakness. For Christ's righteousness. Christ's glory.

[24:16] Christ's holiness. God only gives. When he can give all. And so are you hungry? Then come and eat. Are you thirsty? Then come and drink.

And if you've never come to Christ. You've never come to Christ. Owning your sin. But hating your sin. Saying this is what I've done. And I hate it.

And this is who I am. And I hate it. Then don't come to the table. But come to Christ. Come straight away to Christ.

So let the bread and the cup pass. But don't let Christ pass. Take a hold of him. Seize him. And be saved. And the promise is.

That if you do it. You will be saved. It's the wonderful word of the gospel. Instant forgiveness. For faith. You believe.

[25:11] And he will forgive. Well come to Christ. Let the bread and cup pass. But don't let Christ pass tonight.

Thank you.