

# His Suffering Was Your Salvation

Matthew 27:26-30; 1 Peter 2:21-24

May 13, 2018

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As Christians, you are told in God's Word that you will unjustly suffer for the Lord Jesus. You will be maligned not for a lie, but for telling the truth. You will be hated because you stand for Jesus Christ and His truth. Your jobs will be threatened or taken away because you will not desecrate the Lord's Day by unnecessary work. You may suffer certain physical afflictions from Satan (as did Job), not because you are living in some unrepentant sin, but because the devil hates your love and obedience to God's holy commandments. Before you can wear a crown of glory, you must first take up the cross, deny yourself, and follow Christ. There is humiliation before there is exaltation. The Lord's own example reminds you of the cost of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Dear Christian, has some form of suffering wearied you to such an extent that you have forgotten Him, who suffered not for Himself but for a Barabbas like you and me? There may not be a better remedy to the pain or exhaustion of suffering than to look in faith and in love to your suffering Savior, who endured the injustice, the stripes, the mockery, and the cross for the joy that awaited Him in purchasing everlasting life for rebellious sinners like you and me. Christ overcame, and so shall you who belong to Him. For, dear child of God, by His stripes you were healed.

Let us consider the following main points from our text in regard to the suffering of Christ: (1) The Scouring of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 27:26), and (2) The Mockery of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 27:27-30).

## **I. The Scouring of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 27:26).**

A. It was the envy and evil desires of the chief priests that moved them to condemn the sinless Son of God to a cruel death upon the cursed cross (Matthew 27:18). They hated the Lord Jesus because His sermons

were faithful and true and because His miracles demonstrated that He was divine.

B. Before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus endured one of the most dreaded means of torture known in the ancient world: scourging. Let me describe for you what our Savior suffered in being scourged, in order that you might see with a fresh love and appreciation what it cost Him to redeem you from the guilt and condemnation which we deserved.

1. The Roman scourge consisted of a wooden handle to which several leather cords were attached. That would have been painful enough, but there was tied to the end of each strand of leather some sharp and jagged piece of bone or metal that made it not merely a tool of torture, but often even a tool of death.

2. For once the victim was tied securely to a pillar or post and his body made bare, the scourging began. With each stroke of that object of agony, flesh was ripped from the body with the most intense pain. Nor were the strokes of the Roman scourge limited to the bare back, for as the whip was applied it also wrapped around to the front of the body as well. There was no specific number of strokes that the Roman law stipulated could be applied. Thus, men literally bled to death at times and were often rendered unconscious. There are reports by various witnesses of bones and organs being literally exposed by the Roman scourge.

C. Our Savior bore this punishment without a word of complaint as to the injustice or as to the severity of that which He received (Isaiah 53:7). No doubt He expressed the intensity of pain and agony as would any man. But He did not yell out for this injustice to stop. He did not cry out that they were scourging an innocent man. He did not change His mind about enduring such suffering and call for Barabbas (who deserved to be there) to be brought to the whipping post. He did not supernaturally break those cords that bound Him (as did Samson) and turn the scourge upon those who mercilessly beat Him. Why?

1. Because He was not suffering for His own sin or guilt, but for the sin and guilt of an undeserving and unlovely bride whom God had chosen for Him to save from all eternity. He was bearing the punishment which His elect deserved. For Christ did not come to save the innocent or the righteous. No, He came to seek and to save sinners and to justify the ungodly (Romans 4:5). Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah uttered some 600 years before Christ suffered the agonizing stripes of the Roman scourge (Isaiah 53:4-5). By His stripes you, dear Christian, are healed of all your guilt before a holy God, so that you can know the God's amazing forgiveness for all your sin. By His stripes you are healed of the just condemnation which you deserved in hell. By His stripes there is purchased for you the sonship of God, so that you are given the right of adoption and life forevermore (and by His stripes you receive even the redemption and resurrection of this frail body at the final resurrection).

a. Dear ones, there is physical healing in the atonement of Christ when properly understood and not abused as is done by many today, who believe immediate physical healing is guaranteed. Immediate physical healing is not guaranteed to the Christian. But all physical healing that God gives to His people is due to the stripes of Christ. And if the Lord does not heal an infirmity in this life, you are assured that you shall be finally healed at the resurrection (and until such a time, God will provide the grace we need to endure all bodily afflictions for His glory). For it is by the suffering of Jesus that your soul and body have been redeemed. However, you will not know the full application of that redemption in every respect until that final day when the dead in Christ shall be raised with glorified bodies from the dust and when those who are alive are immediately changed into those glorified bodies.

b. Thus, you can appeal to the stripes of Christ for both your spiritual and physical healing, for all temporal and eternal benefits have been purchased for God's children by the meritorious suffering of your Savior. So although you may stand in utter horror at the bloodied

body of your Savior, as you consider that's what you deserve (and more) every moment without any relief (due to your sin), you at the same time cannot refrain from fleeing with open arms to Him in faith whose body was made raw for you, for by His stripes you were healed.

2. But consider secondly that Christ did not complain about this unjust scourging, nor break the cords by which He was bound, in order that He might set before you an example in which to follow when you are unjustly afflicted by others according to 1 Peter 2:21-24. If He who was absolutely holy and sinless in every respect committed Himself to God who judges righteously, then how much more should you who sin daily follow His example? What are the benefits of suffering in this life?

a. First, although Christ's stripes are alone meritorious in securing your salvation (and your stripes are never meritorious), forget not that God uses your suffering to draw His elect unto Himself (2 Timothy 2:9-10). Has your suffering drawn people to Christ or pushed them away because they have grown tired of hearing you complain day in and day out about your misery at home or at work?

b. Second, God uses your suffering for your own sanctification (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). He disciplines you as beloved children (Hebrews 12). Has your suffering had the effect of bringing you to Christ to humble you and find grace in the time of need, or has it rather had the effect of driving you away from Christ and resisting Him? Samuel Rutherford included the following nugget in one of his sermons:

There be two herbs that grow quickly in our souls in summer weather—security and pride. Humility is a strange flower. It grows best in winter and under the storms of affliction (“The Spouse's Longing for Christ”).

c. Third, God uses your suffering to prepare you for the glories of heaven where all suffering and sorrow will be forever removed (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). Has your suffering caused you to look with greater anticipation to the wonders of heaven, which have been prepared for you by the stripes which your Savior endured, or has your

suffering turned you to the pleasures of this life to find some relief?

d. Fourth, your sufferings for Christ (whether in body or in mind) demonstrate to you that you are Christians because you are partaking of Christ in His sufferings (1 Peter 4:12-13). Dear ones, are you willing to suffer with Christ? Are you willing to pick up your cross and follow Him? There are times of severe persecution that may not be too distant in the future for you who follow Jesus Christ. Many professing Christians today want to know Christ and His resurrection power (and that is good), but all too few Christians want to know Christ and communion with Him in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10). Dear ones, if you would be exalted with Christ on that final day, you must first suffer with Christ in this present day (2 Timothy 2:12).

## **II. The Mockery of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 27:27-30).**

A. The suffering of Christ was not finished with the Roman scourge, but continued from that point to the point of Roman mockery of Christ and finally the crucifixion. Here we see that once Christ was scourged to a bloody pulp, He was led away by “the whole band” (or cohort) of Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:27). It would appear that the same band of soldiers that had arrested Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane were now mocking Him and being entertained at His expense. There were several aspects to this abominable mockery of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Christ said that He was the Messiah who would reign over His people, so these Roman soldiers decided they would poke fun at the Lord Jesus declaring Him to be a big joke.

1. First, we see in Matthew 27:28 that instead of a royal robe, the soldiers clothed Christ’s bare and bloody body with a scarlet robe, which they found nearby (most likely one of the robes that the Roman soldiers wore).

2. Secondly, instead of the laurel wreath of an emperor, these soldiers wove together a wreath of large thorns and placed it upon

Christ's head (Matthew 27:29).

3. Thirdly, instead of a royal scepter, they placed a wooden reed or rod into Christ's hand (Matthew 27:29).

4. Fourthly, instead of sincere acclamations of reverence due to the King of the universe, they mocked the Lord in derision by exclaiming, "Hail, King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:29).

5. Fifthly, instead of placing themselves under the scepter of God's anointed King, these ungodly men took the wooden rod from the hand of Christ and began to strike Him violently upon the head beating that crown of large thorns deep in the skull of our Lord (Matthew 27:30).

6. Sixthly, instead of kissing the Son as He deserved, we are told that these men shamefully spat upon Him, as if we were but dirt (Matthew 27:30). They sought to dehumanize Him.

7. Finally, instead of humbling themselves before Him who had the power to open the earth that it might swallow them alive, they taunted and teased Him by bowing before Him with (no doubt) all theatrical gestures becoming royalty (Matthew 27:30).

B. What is amazing is that this Roman band of soldiers that mocked the Lord and further added to His suffering by beating Him with a rod upon the head and driving the thorns deeper into His precious skull had just a few hours earlier been supernaturally laid flat on their back side when Jesus declared Himself to be the Great "I AM", Jehovah God, in John 18:6. Furthermore, this is likely the same Roman band of soldiers that witnessed Jesus miraculously heal the ear of the servant, which Peter had cut off with his sword (Luke 22:50-51).

1. These soldiers who now mocked the Lord did not do so in ignorance. They did so denying what they knew to be the truth. They had witnessed the demonstration of His royal power, and they had heard His testimony that He was God's anointed King, and yet they did not take Him seriously because they did not yet see Him exalted upon some royal throne. What they saw with their eyes was not a king upon a throne, but

a bloodied man, whose back was cut to shreds, blood poured down from His head. He was in chains. He had been made to look like the worst of criminals. This is all they saw, and they denied the truth and mocked Him.

2. What about you? Does the humiliation of Christ and His suffering lead you to conclude that He was a mere man? Does the fact that you do not presently see Him with your eyes seated upon the throne of His glory lead you not to submit to Him? Do you simply go through the motions of your worship, acting and pretending to bow before Him? I pray not. For there is coming a day when the curtain will be rolled back, and it will not be a King wearing a crown of thorns that you will see. It will not be a King with a bloodied soldier's robe, or a King with a wooden scepter that you will see. There will be no one spitting in His face any longer. But rather there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth for all who have not trusted alone in Christ alone for their eternal salvation and have not bowed the knee to Him as Lord of their life and as Lord of all creation.

3. The crown of thorns which Jesus wore point to Him as the second Adam. It was the sin of the first Adam that brought the curse of thorns and misery into this world. It is the obedience and suffering of the second Adam (Jesus Christ) that deliver you from the curse of that broken covenant.

Dear ones, the sight of the bleeding and suffering Jesus caused those soldiers to turn away from Christ and to mock Him. Have your eyes been opened to see that the stripes of Christ and the bloodied skull of Christ are the salvation for all who will trust Him? Jesus did not suffer for any wrong that He had done. He suffered for what sinners like you and me have done. Will you not flee to Him today and embrace Him as your only Savior from sin and condemnation?

If you have already received Christ by faith alone, will the stripes of Christ not cause you to realize what your sins deserve, what obedience these stripes of love call you to. Were there ever stripes and wounds so

beautiful? For, dear ones, by His stripes you are healed. Stop trying to be healed of your sin and misery by your own methods. There is only one divinely appointed means of healing. By the stripes of the Lord Jesus you are healed. Despise not, ignore not, forget not Jesus because of His stripes, but rather in faith kiss the blessed wounds of Jesus Christ. For by His stripes you are healed.

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