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## *The Gospel of Matthew*

### *The Wickedness of this World*

*August 2, 2020*

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 27

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 27

What is the worst, most evil crime that has ever been committed in the history of the world? We have known many candidates in our own day – the serial killers who terrorized communities for years and years and killed scores of victims. Hitler's slaughter of millions of Jews and others. North Korean tyrants. Genocides in Africa. And no doubt many, many others which *we are not even aware of*. The secret corruptions going on behind the scenes.

But as unimaginably wicked as all of these kinds of horrors are, none of them compare to the depth of evil committed 2000 years ago on the hill called Golgatha. That crime was, of course, the crucifixion of the Son of God. This

is the most heinous sin ever committed in the history of the world. And the people who actually called for it shouted, "Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified! His blood be on us and on our children." They were shouting out in their wicked madness "May God damn us and our children!"

Why would anyone make such a request? It makes no sense at all. Pilate had just told them:

Matthew 27:21-23 ESV The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." (22) Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" (23) And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

Matthew is emphasizing to us *that Jesus was entirely innocent*. Pilate found no evil in him. The Jewish leaders had to make false, twisted charges against him in order to condemn him. In all the history of the

world there has only been one Person who was absolutely sinless and innocent. Only One who had positively done only good. Matthew wants us to know this because:

Isaiah 53:4-5 ESV Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (5) But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Apart from this, the thing makes no sense at all. These crowds and Jewish leaders knew full well that Jesus was innocent. And yet they murdered Him.

John 15:23-25 ESV Whoever hates me hates my Father also. (24) If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (25) But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

Look again at what they did:

Matthew 27:17-21 ESV So when they

had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" (18) For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. (19) Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." (20) Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. (21) The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas."

Do you see the insanity of their raging hatred? When we hate something or someone, we do so for a cause. For a reason. Those reasons may themselves be twisted and evil – though sometimes righteous – yet there is a reason. But here, there is no reason for their hatred of Jesus that could be put into words, because the source of it lay in the evil hearts of those people, just as it does today.

John 8:44-47 ESV You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand

in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (45) But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. (46) Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? (47) Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

This is how it was from the beginning:

1 John 3:12-13 ESV We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (13) Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

This really nails it down, doesn't it? Why did the Jews, by the hands of the Gentiles, murder the Son of God? *Because they were of the evil one. Because Jesus was righteous and they were evil.*

All of this is why the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the most wicked and evil deed in all of history. Jesus was good and perfect and innocent and

righteous. And the world *hated Him for it*. Even Pilate's wife testified to it:

Matthew 27:19 ESV Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.”

From beginning to end, the world hated and continues to hate Christ and all who belong to Him. There is no reason for it except that darkness hates Light. Evil hates righteousness. And this hatred is so intense that it is a murderous hatred.

Now, Matthew's primary purpose in writing his Gospel *is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah King come to establish His kingdom*. And the way Matthew carries out this purpose *is to show us over and over and over again that all of the OT prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus*. Consider what we have just here in this 27<sup>th</sup> chapter alone:

- Judas' 30 pieces of silver and the Jews using the returned money to buy the potter's field. This is a fulfillment of Jeremiah (see 27:9). But it is even more clearly foretold in Zechariah –

Zechariah 11:12-13 ESV Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. (13) Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”— the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

- Jesus silence before His accusers is surely an allusion to Isaiah:

Isaiah 53:7 ESV He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

- And we see Isaiah’s suffering servant in Jesus being beaten and mocked and spit upon.
- The wine mixed with gall –

Psalms 69:21 ESV They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

- Dividing Jesus’ garments –

Psalms 22:16-18 ESV For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— (17) I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; (18) they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

- Jesus’ death on the cross between two criminals –

Isaiah 53:12 ESV Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

- The bystanders mocking him and wagging their heads

Psalms 22:7-8 ESV All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; (8) “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

- The darkness at the crucifixion certainly reminds us of the plague of darkness in Egypt when the

exodus of God's people was about to take place.

And one of the strangest events with an OT background is this:

Matthew 27:51-53 ESV And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (52) The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, (53) and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

This certainly is a reminder of Daniel 12:2 where there is a promise of the resurrection of God's people when the Messiah would come:

Daniel 12:2 ESV And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

As a summary of these fulfillments, follow along as I read the entirety of Psalm 22 –

Psalms 22:1-31 ESV To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of

the Dawn. A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? (2) O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. (3) Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. (4) In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. (5) To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

(6) But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. (7) All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; (8) "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

(9) Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. (10) On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. (11) Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

(12) Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; (13) they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. (14) I am poured out like water,

and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; (15) my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. (16) For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— (17) I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; (18) they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

(19) But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! (20) Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! (21) Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen! (22) I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

(23) You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! (24) For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. (25) From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. (26) The afflicted shall eat

and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live forever! (27) All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. (28) For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. (29) All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. (30) Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; (31) they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

From the cross to the kingdom, you see.

Now, let's turn back to this theme of the depth of the wickedness of man and the cross being the most horrific crime ever carried out because this fact is the emphasis of these OT prophecies.

The innocence of Jesus is emphasized. He was the "Lamb." And yet all the hatred of the world was focused upon Him. Hated without a cause. Sin has made man insane.

More than once I have had people tell me after I taught a Bible study or preached a sermon on sin and the total

depravity of man – “well, you know, there are a lot of good people in this world.” And my answer to that is the Bible’s answer – “no there aren’t.”

Romans 3:9-18 ESV What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, (10) as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; (11) no one understands; no one seeks for God. (12) All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” (13) “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” (14) “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” (15) “Their feet are swift to shed blood; (16) in their paths are ruin and misery, (17) and the way of peace they have not known.” (18) “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

And nowhere is this seen more clearly than at the cross.

Consider this mountain of evidence that Matthew has been pouring out on us all through his Gospel. Think back to chapter one and trace your way through. Think of all the good Jesus did

through His miracles. All of the intricate details of the OT fulfilled in Him. It is a vast catalogue of proof that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah King, the Savior of the world. And yet, the crowd wants Him killed and Barabbas released. When they say “His blood be upon us and our children,” essentially they are saying “we know He is innocent, but we hate Him and we want Him executed anyway.”

And THAT is the very same description we can give to the world today. The world hates Christ because Christ is light and the world is darkness. The world is evil and Christ is righteous.

Just think about the common denominator is all the evil we see in the world today. It is *autonomy*. Self-law. Man hates God because man wants to be God.

Psalms 2:1-3 ESV Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

Man hates God because God is God,

and man is not. That is why they crucified Christ and that is why the world would crucify him today if He were here.

1 John 3:12-13 ESV We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (13) Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

And so you have the proof of it. The Old Testament told us over and over again that the Messiah would be perfectly righteous and innocent, that He would be hated without cause, a Lamb led to slaughter. Why? Because we needed our sins to be placed upon Him so that we could become the righteousness of God –

2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

And so there it is. The most evil, despicable, senseless sin, committed out of pure hatred without cause, became the means by which we are justified before God.

Sin makes the sinner insane. Some of that mob were, by God's grace, brought to sanity and salvation after Jesus was raised from the dead-

Acts 2:36-37 ESV Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” (37) Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

So complete is the mastery of sin over the sinner's heart and mind that no matter how much evidence is given, he will still hate God.

If anyone is listening to this message today who is still dead in sin, separated from Christ and loving the world, consider this:

*Sin has made you insane. Your hatred of God is madness and the height of irrationality. God who is light, who is perfect goodness, who gives you every good thing you enjoy, He is the one you hate and who you spend every day trying to remove any and all of His restraints upon you. You want to be completely autonomous and be your own God. And that is madness, because*



*that...if you ever arrive there...is what  
you will find to be hell.*