

The Passion of Jesus

Jesus' Crucifixion

Matthew 27:32-56

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Scripture

After Jesus' last Passover, which became the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives. Jesus then took Peter, James, and John to Gethsemane, a garden area where oil from the olives was pressed, to pray. Eventually, Judas arrived and betrayed Jesus to the authorities. Throughout the night and early morning, Jesus endured a religious kangaroo court hearing, a civil court hearing, a scourging, and received a death sentence. Weak and bloody, Jesus then carried his cross to die.

Let's read about Jesus' crucifixion in Matthew 27:32-56:

³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from

the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.' ” ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

⁵¹ 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. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

⁵⁵ There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, ⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. (Matthew 27:32-56)

Introduction

The San Pedro Cutud Lenten Rites are an annual re-enactment of Jesus' passion and crucifixion held in Barangay San

Pedro Cutud in the Philippines. It includes a passion play, culminating in the actual nailing of at least three penitents to wooden crosses on top of a makeshift Calvary. Penitents do this horrific re-enactment to seek forgiveness for their sins, to fulfill a vow, or to express gratitude for favors granted. The person most famous for being crucified is Ruben Enaje, who has been crucified 33 times as of 2019. He has four-inch nails driven into his hands and feet, and is then lifted on the wooden cross for about five minutes. Ruben began this yearly rite after surviving a fall from a three-story billboard in 1986.¹

This bizarre re-enactment demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of Jesus' crucifixion.

Lesson

Jesus' crucifixion in Matthew 27:32-56 teaches us what his death accomplished for sinners.

Let's use the following outline:

1. What Happened at Jesus' Crucifixion? (27:32-56)
2. What Does Jesus' Crucifixion Mean for Us?

I. What Happened at Jesus' Crucifixion? (27:32-56)

First, what happened at Jesus' crucifixion?

Jesus' crucifixion and death is described in each of the four Gospels (*cf.* Matthew 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-37). Jesus first carried his cross but then Simon the Cyrene was compelled to carry his cross (Matthew 27:32). When they arrived at Golgotha, Jesus was crucified, along with two robbers, one on the right and one on the left.

¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion_in_the_Philippines.

While on the cross, Jesus spoke seven times. Matthew records the fourth of Jesus' seven words. It was a word of anguish. **About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (27:46).** Just a short while later, **Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit (27:50) and died.**

Matthew also records several remarkable incidents in Matthew 27:51-54:

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

So did Jesus die by crucifixion.

II. What Does Jesus' Crucifixion Mean for Us?

Second, what does Jesus' crucifixion mean for us?

The meaning of Jesus' crucifixion is given to us by the other New Testament writers. I want to mention two truths.

A. Jesus Is Our Propitiation

First, Jesus is our propitiation.

Paul wrote to the Romans in Romans 3:23-25a, "For all

have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a *propitiation* by his blood, to be received by faith.” What did Paul mean?

A Jew reading Paul’s letter would recall the annual Jewish Day of Atonement. On that day, the high priest offered a blood sacrifice for himself and also for the people of God. He would take some of the blood and go into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it on mercy seat (Leviticus 16:11-22).

The mercy seat was regarded as the throne of God. It was a golden lid on the ark of the covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments. By sprinkling blood on the mercy seat, the high priest was satisfying the justice of God. Blood had been shed to pay for sin. Propitiation properly signifies the removal of God’s wrath by the offering of a blood sacrifice.

In our culture, people think of God, if they think of him at all, as a God of love. He is like a grandfather who loves his grandchildren, no matter what they do. God freely forgives sin.

But, that is a misunderstanding of God. God never merely forgives sin. His wrath must be satisfied. His justice must be satisfied. The penalty for sin must be paid. The beauty of the gospel is that God provides Jesus as the one who pays the penalty for sin so that his wrath is propitiated. D. A. Carson writes, “In pagan propitiation, . . . *we* offer the sacrifices and the gods are propitiated. By contrast, in the Bible God is both the origin and the object of the propitiating sacrifice. He provides it by sending his Son to the cross; yet at the same time, the sacrifice satisfies his own honor, and his righteous wrath is turned away without his holiness being impugned.”²

² D. A. Carson, *Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 38.

So, by his death, Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

B. Jesus Is Our Redeemer

And second, Jesus is our redeemer.

Paul also wrote that we “are justified by his grace as a gift, through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).

Redemption means “deliverance from some evil by payment of a price.”³ It is more than simple deliverance by the payment of a price. Prisoners might be set free by the payment of a price. Or slaves might be set free by the payment of a price.

What makes redemption more than deliverance is that it involves God taking the initiative to send his own Son, Jesus, as the payment to deliver us from sin, Satan, and hell. And that payment is Jesus’ very own blood, which he shed on the cross. That is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “...for you were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

All the hundreds of thousands of animals that were killed in the Old Testament could not redeem a single person. They simply pointed to the blood of Jesus who is the one who is the redemption for every believer, both in the old covenant and now in the new covenant as well.

So, by his death, Jesus is our redeemer.

Conclusion

Jesus’ crucifixion teaches us that he is our propitiation and our redeemer. Let us thank God for Jesus’ crucifixion on our behalf. Amen.

³ L. L. Morris, “Redeemer, Redemption,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1003.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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