

And They Mocked Him – Mark 15:22-38

A few years ago, in **Manila**, Philippines, a devout **Roman Catholic** named "**Mendoza**" was "**crucified**." He had been **fasting** and **praying** for more than a **week**, constantly **encouraged** by his **priest**. On what is commonly called "**Good Friday**," he was **stripped** down to a loin-cloth, after which he **lay** upon a **freshly painted white cross**. **Two men** from his church **tied** his **wrists to the arms** of that clean, white, almost **sterile cross**. A third man **tied his ankles** to the post just above a **foot-rest** where his feet were propped. The men **lifted** the **cross** to an upright position with Mendoza still tied to it. **Carefully they let it slowly slip** into a perfectly prepared slot in a large piece of concrete. Some of Mendoza's **relatives** and **friends** were **silently weeping**, while hundreds of others looked on **praying** and expressing words of **encouragement**. There was a **doctor standing by**, just in case he was needed, but it was **unlikely** that things would be **taken that far**. There was **no one** there **laughing** at him, no one **mocking** him, no one **spitting** or throwing things. Besides a few photographers, Mendoza had **nothing but support** surrounding him. The **sun was hot** that April afternoon, and **very quickly** he man **began to wilt** under its gaze. In his **weakening condition** it **didn't look** like he would be up there more than an **hour** at most. Quickly his **coaches threw in the towel** on his behalf. When the **ordeal was over**, there was **congratulations** and **praise** for his **devotion** and **bravery**.

Over the years this scene has been **repeated hundreds of times** around the **Roman Catholic world**. But **not very often** here in the **United States**. I **don't wish to sound** like I am **making fun** of Mr. Mendoza. I **wish** that the **saints of God** were **half as dedicated** and **self-sacrificing** as this man was. But the fact is: **this self-crucifixion** was not only **harmful** to his **body**, but it was **even more so** to his **soul**. **Acts** of devotion like this are **usually** presented to God in an **effort to buy salvation** from sin. But all the **preparation** and **pain** were **for naught**; they **produced nothing spiritual**. **Salvation is by grace** through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, **not through any suffering** we might endure in His name.

And besides, it was so **unlike** the **Lord's crucifixion** that it is hard to call it "**crucifixion**." **Where** was the **blood**, the **nails** and the **soldiers** with their armor and their spears? There were **no thorns**, and Mendoza's **back hadn't been ripped to shreds** with whips. **Where** was the **afternoon darkness**, the **earthquake** and **sense of the absence of God**? **O, the God of Heaven** was **not in** any of this, but His absence was **different** on the day Christ died. And where were the **mocking people**, **laughing** and **spitting** on the man? **One** of the **few similarities** between the two "**crucifixions**" was the **gaggle of shameless priests**.

I've **entitled** this message: "**And They Mocked Him**." The **ground beneath Jesus' cross**, stained with divine blood, is **extremely holy**. I know that I'm **unworthy** to tread here. "**Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground**." **Despite the holiness** of **Calvary**, we **need** to visit from time to time. And **despite** its over-all sacred nature, **not everything** about it is holy.

This morning I would like you to **meditate** on the **words** of the **priests** as they **mocked** our **Saviour**. The word "**mock**" means to **make fun of something** in the way that **silly children** might behave. The **night prior** to the crucifixion the **highest priests of Israel** were behaving like **mad-men**. But **at the cross** they were acting like **foolish children**. It is **interesting** that **every branch** of the Jewish religious **leadership** was **involved** in this mocking. **Verse 31** speaks about the **chief priests** – at this time they were all of the liberal **Sadducees**. But the **scribes** were, for the most part, very **conservative Pharisees**. The **elders** were people like Gamaliel, the respected long-time instructor of Israel.

Scripture says, "**Mocking, they said among themselves.....**" These men were **entertaining THEMSELVES** and the people around them with their mocking. They were **through with Christ**; they had **washed their hands** of Him. So they **laughed about Him** and **mocked Him** and the **things** which He had taught them. When a **gang of rowdy teenagers** did the **same thing** to **Elisha**, God sent **two bears to kill them**. But **when His own dear Son was mocked**, He took it in **utter silence**. Is not this holy ground? **Out of all the men of Israel**, it should have been the **priests** who were **most respectful** at a place of execution. If they **really thought Christ** was but a **mere man**, then a mere man was about to go **out into eternity**. If they **thought** that He was a **sinner**, then He was going to **soon face His Judge**. They **should** have been **quiet and sorrowful** – and **respectful**, but **instead** they were the **most disrespectful men** in the whole audience. The **things they muttered** were **basically true**, but they were **spoken negatively** – they were denying them. **The things** that they were saying are things which **I hold precious**.

For example, they mocked the Lord as SAVIOUR.

They said, "**He saved others; himself he cannot save**." The word "**save**" refers to a **deliverance**. Depending on the **context**, it can mean **different things**. We use this word **most often** to refer to the **sinner's deliverance** from the guilt of **his sins**. But the **Bible also** uses it to describe **deliverance** from **disease** or **dangerous situations**. And certainly these **people were not thinking** about **salvation from sin**. **Perhaps** they had **Jesus' many miracles** in mind. There was that **demon possessed man** in the synagogue of

Nazareth whom **Jesus saved**.

“The fame of (Christ) went out into every place of the country round about” – Luke 4:37. In **Matthew 8:3** Jesus saved a **leper** and told him to report his cleansing to the priests. With these two events these **priests definitely knew** about him. There was **paralytic** man who was first saved from his sins, before being saved from his palsy. That miracle caused a real uproar in the synagogue office. Jesus performed **miracle after miracle**, saving probably hundreds of people from various afflictions. **John** says, *“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”* These were **probably** the **things** the priests had **in mind** when they said, *“He saved others.”*

I have noticed that **different commentaries differ** on whether or not the priests **really BELIEVED** that Jesus **actually** saved anyone. **As we read** the black ink on the onion skin paper of our Bibles **we can't hear tone** of their voices. So **some** people **think** they were **acknowledging** the Lord's **abilities** over **disease** and **disaster**. **But I agree** with the **majority** who say that **this** was a **part of their mockery**. **Those priests didn't believe** that Jesus had really **delivered anyone**. They believed that it was **all illusion** – just **smoke** and **mirrors**. They believed that **sometimes** Jesus was working through the **power of Beelzebub** – Satan. When the Lord healed **the man** who had been **born blind**, these same priests **cross-examined** him again and again, **trying to prove** that this was an **hoax** designed to **trick** the **gullible**. These people **did everything** in their power to **excuse** the **miraculous** and **deny** the **obvious**. They were **mocking** when they said that **Jesus had saved others**.

And **yet now** they **demand** that Christ **save Himself**. That is, they were **daring** the **Lord Jesus** and **taunting Him** to work just **one more miracle**. It would **take a mighty miracle** for Jesus' **hands to pull free** from those **well-practiced nails** – the iron which had held other victims to other crosses. **Could** He have saved Himself? **Without** the tiniest **doubt**. But **the question** was **not** whether or not He **COULD**, the question was whether He **WOULD**. **In the garden** when they came to arrest Him, not only did he say that he **could call** ten thousand **angels**, but He also **knocked** the whole **crowd** to the **ground** – like mobile homes in a tornado. The Lord clearly proved that He **could save Himself** if He wanted to.

They mocked the Lord as Saviour, and they mocked Him as KING.

“If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross.” It was **not uncommon** for a **crucified man** to have the **charges** against him **posted** on his cross. And as we see in **verse 26** this was **done for Christ**. **Matthew** tells us it was done **at the order of Pilate**. *“And the superscription of his accusation was written over, ‘the King of the Jews.’”* At first the **priests argued** about the **wording**. The **implication of the statement** was that Jesus **really was the King** of the Jews and the **priests denied it**. **Those liars** had said to governor, *“We have no king but Caesar,”* but actually they **hated him**. It is the **nature of dishonest** people to **say or do anything to augment their case**.

Something students today need to **keep in mind**, is what the term **“king”** generally implied to the Jews. **John 1** describes the **Lord's conversion** with **Nathaniel**. **Philip found Nathaniel** and said, *“We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write.”* In other words, Philip said that the long-awaited **Messiah had come**. But **Nathaniel** was **properly skeptical**, until he actually met Jesus. The Lord then **proved** that he **really was the Messiah**, by revealing some things that only Nathaniel and God could have known. When Nathaniel **eventually realized** who this Man was, **he said**, *“Rabbi, thou art the Son of GOD; thou art the KING of Israel.”* As far as this devout Jew was concerned, the **King** of Israel was **also** the **Messiah** of Israel. And when the Lord Jesus was **being interrogated** by the priests, **they asked** Him whether or not He was the **Christ**, the **Messiah**, the **Son of God**, and eventually the Lord replied that **He was**. **So** when they took him to Pilate, **they accused Him** of claiming to be **“King Jesus.”** When the Lord **returns** to this earth in His ultimate glory, **He shall rule** over Israel as her **Messiah**, her **anointed one**, her **King**. It would be **permissible** for us to **substitute** **“Messiah”** or **“Christ”** for **“King”** in these verses. These priests were **mocking the Kingship** of the **King** – that He is **the Messiah**.

And we **remember** that He had **already been mocked** by the **soldiers** in this same regard. The **Romans** had dressed him in a **scarlet robe** and platted a **thorny crown**, giving him a **reed for a scepter**. They **danced** around him **like children** and bowed their knees before Him, saying, *“Hail, King Jews.”* **Now** those **Jews** were doing the **same thing**, but with a **more vicious sneer** in their voices. *“If you are really the Messiah, come down from that cross and we will believe you.”* **I am convinced**, based upon other scriptures, that **if the Lord had** somehow **descended** from the cross, they **would NOT** have **believed**. As a whole, they would have **come up** with some sort of **explanation** – some **excuse NOT** to believe. And then there is a **sense** in which the **Lord did exactly** what they **demand**ed, and they still **did not** believe. **Following** the **Lord's death** that Wednesday afternoon, he was **lovingly taken down** from the cross and **entombed**.

Then **72 hours later**, he **came out** of Joseph's tomb as much alive as He had ever been before. Sure, there was a **three day delay** between their demand and His resurrection, but **in effect He did come off the cross**. **There were scars** in his hands, in his feet, scalp and side, **BUT he was alive**. The Lord was **undoubtedly alive** after being **undeniably dead**. The **nails didn't melt**, nor did He **pull those nails** through his hands or feet, but **He was alive**. **And how many** of those mocking priests **believed on Him** when that evidence was made plain? Those men had **no intention of believing** that He was the Messiah no **matter how much miraculous evidence** there was.

Those men mocked at Him as the Saviour, as the King and even as a BELIEVER.

"He trusted in God" they said. **Perhaps** they **folded their hands** together in front of them, as in **mock prayer**, when they said this. Perhaps they used **other gestures, glances, sneers** and **words**. They were **implying** that the Lord Jesus **only pretended** to trust the Father in Heaven. Or perhaps they were saying that **He was deluded and befuddled**.

Those Jews displayed a **characteristic of a faulty faith** which is very common. It is a general idea that **unless God blesses me right now**, He's **not worthy of my trust**. But true **submissive faith** doesn't have to have an **immediate answer**. **Godly faith is persistent** despite any and all negative circumstances. Did the Son have **any reason NOT** to trust the Father? **Had the Father ever let the Son down?** It might be **argued** that **since** He was **bearing the sins of God's elect** that Christ really **should have feared** the **Father**. But I believe that **despite those imputed sins**, He was still **the infinitely holy Son of God**, with absolutely **nothing to fear**. And **besides**, the Lord **knew** how the **last chapter** of the book was going to be **written**. He, Himself, **had prophesied** that he would be **entombed** in the heart of the earth for **three days**. **He knew** that there would be a **resurrection**, an **ascension** and a complete **glorification**. **His trust** in the Father **wasn't abated** an ounce, despite the pain or the darkness of the sky. There was **no reason to doubt** the **Father's will**, the Father's **love**, or the Father's **omnipotence**, despite the circumstances of the moment.

Why do so many think that **when the Lord permits** them to be run through the **milling machine**, it must be because **the Lord no longer loves them?** **Why** is it that **trouble whispers** in our ear that **God hates us?** As I said last Wednesday, **"All things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to his purpose."** And remember that **our trials** and **problems** are all **minor compared** to what the Lord endured. Yet He believed God and **continued to trust** in His purpose and power.

Those priests also mocked Him as the SON OF GOD.

"Let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God." **One** of the **words** used to describe the taunting these people were throwing in Jesus' face was **"revile."** **Verse 32** – **"Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him REVILED him."** The English **dictionary defines** the word – **"to criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner."** The **Greek** word is **"blas-fay-meh"** or **"blasphemy."** Literally, it means to **"speak evil of someone."** But in its true context, **it was the Jews** who were **blaspheming** by claiming **the Saviour** had been blaspheming God. They said that **His blasphemy** was that He **claimed** to be the **Son of God**. The **priests were sure** that this was the **highest heresy**, and that this was would hang Him. **"Let God save him, if he will have him – despite calling himself God's own Son."** But of course, **Jesus Christ IS** the eternal **Son of God**, the **Second Person of the Trinity**.

There are **multitudes** of people today who **refuse** to accept the truth of the **deity of Christ**. They deny that He is the Son of God, **BUT** they will still permit him to be a **good man**. **But if Christ was a good man**, then he **must** have been the **Son of God as well**, because that is what He said. It is **impossible** in Jesus' case to have **one without the other**. The **Jews** were **quite correct** in saying that He **claimed** to be **the Son of God**. **If Jesus of Nazareth claimed** to be the Son of God **without that being true**, then Jesus was a **liar** and therefore **NOT a good man**. And then obviously, **if he was the Son of God**, there **could have been no gooder** man than He.

Everything about which they mocked Christ was ABSOLUTELY TRUE

He is the Saviour, He is the **Messiah**, He did **trust the Father**, and He is the **Son of God**. **And all** that they **wanted Christ to do** that awful afternoon, **He could have done**. But it would have been **contrary** to everything that **Jesus is** and what He **came to accomplish**. He could **not come down** from the cross because He was **completing the salvation** of His people. **If he disobeyed** the will of the Father, then he **would never sit** upon the throne of His father David.

It is because he **did not come down** that the **saints** of God **believe** on Him. It is **because He died** for our sins that **we love Him** and **lean** upon Him. **And** it is **because** those priests **rejected and hated Christ** that they are in **Hell today**.

THEIR futures are established, but the question remains – *“Where will YOU spend eternity?”* Are there **any of these five points** of the priests to which **you do not agree?** Do you say, Jesus is **not the Saviour**; He is **not the King**; He is not the **Son of God?** Oh, **you agree** with them all? **Good** for you, that brings you **up to the level of a demon** – an angel of Satan. *“The devils also believe”* such things.

The question is: do you **love** and **trust** this One whom the Jewish priests hated and denied? **Is your faith** in Jesus Christ, as the **Saviour** and the **sacrifice** your sins require? **Repent** and **believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **thou shalt be saved.**