

# Let Me Stand at Your Side

by Basilea Schlink

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus' suffering and humiliation, and of confessing our own sinfulness and responsibility for his suffering.*

**Duration:** 1:14:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:11

**Topics:** "The Suffering of Christ", "Injustice"

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## Description

Basilea Schlink preaches on the trial of Jesus before Pilate, emphasizing the injustice and brutality He faced at the hands of His enemies and the crowd. She laments the wickedness of the human heart that prefers a criminal like Barabbas over the innocent Son of God, highlighting how this choice reflects our own sinful nature. Schlink calls for a deep reflection on how we continue to inflict pain on Jesus through our actions and silence in the face of injustice. She urges believers to recognize their complicity in the suffering of Christ and to renounce their anger and sinfulness. Ultimately, she invites the congregation to reflect on the love and sacrifice of Jesus, who bore our sins and shame for our redemption.

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## Transcript

Jesus on trial before Pilate's Supreme Court. Desiring to please Pilate, Herod sent Jesus back with a comment that Jesus was a fool, but that he had found no crime in him. The chief priests and the enemies of Jesus returned by a different route, one that was probably twice as long, in order to exhibit him in his great disgrace in another part of the city.

They also wanted to mistreat him longer on the way, and to leave their agitators enough time to win the crowds for their evil plans. Giving a large amount of money to some of their number, they sent them to another part of the city where many of the Pharisees were staying, with the bidding that they gather in the vicinity of Pilate's palace together with their communities. The money was to be distributed among the people, so that they would demand Jesus' crucifixion with great vehemence, and by no means plead for his release.

Others were sent to threaten the people that if they did not demand the death of this blasphemer, they would be drawing God's judgment down upon themselves. They also spread the rumor that if Jesus did not die, he would join forces with the Romans, and that this was the kingdom of which he had spoken. The path along which Jesus' enemies now took him was considerably worse and extremely rugged.

They were always at his side, continually goading on the executioners that led him. The long garment hindered our Lord as he walked. He fell to the ground several times, raining blows upon his head and kicking him.

The executioners hauled him back to his feet with the ropes. No words can describe the mockery and brutality with which he was treated. Jeering mobs surrounded him, for the sneering Pharisees who led the way had stirred up the rabble everywhere.

The procession now drew near Pilate's residence. As Jesus was dragged up the stairs leading to it, he tripped over his loose garment and fell so violently that drops of blood from his holy head fell upon the white marble steps. Once more our Lord Jesus stood before Pilate.

According to an old custom, the people would gather there about this time of year before the Passover, with a petition for the release of a prisoner. Pilate hoped that the people would demand Jesus' freedom, and he intended to offer them the release of either Jesus or a terrible villain who had already been condemned to death so that they would have no alternative. This criminal was Barabbas, and he was detested by all the people.

He had committed the most vile abominations and practiced sorcery. When the Pharisees and the people now petitioned for a release, the Mother Mary, together with others, hoped and prayed that they would not commit so great a crime as to prefer the murderer to her son. The rumor that Pilate was trying to release Jesus had also reached her ears.

Not far away from her stood large numbers of people from Capernaum, many of whom Jesus had taught and healed. They stole furtive glances at the unhappy veiled women and the disciple John, acting as if they did not know them. Mary thought that these would surely reject Barabbas in favor of Jesus, their benefactor and savior.

But this was not so. After Jesus' first trial, Pilate was adjured by his wife not to condemn Jesus, because she had been shown in a dream that this should not be. He had given her his word, and shortly before Jesus appeared before him for the second time, he had even returned the pledge to her as a sign that he still intended to keep his promise and release Jesus.

Pilate stepped out again on the terrace, sat down on the throne. The chief priests had also taken their seats, and Pilate called out, Which of these two men shall I release for you? Across the forum and from all sides the loud cries arose, Away with him! Give us Barabbas! Pilate called out once more, Then what should I do with Jesus, who is supposed to be the Christ, the King of the Jews? A deafening clamor followed as they all cried, Crucify him! Pilate asked them a third time, Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death. I will therefore chastise him and release him.

But the shouts of Crucify him! Crucify him! thundered across the forum as if a storm from hell had broken out, and the chief priests and Pharisees were almost frantic with raging and shouting. Then the irresolute Pilate released the villain Barabbas. O lament! A murderer is referred to the pure and holy Son of God.

O lament the wickedness of our hearts that prefers to let an evil man live, and the pure and holy Lord be murdered on the cross. O lament the wickedness of our hearts! By exonerating Barabbas, who is guilty, we absolve ourselves. We seek to be free, and thus the innocent Lord is made a victim of death for our sakes.

O lament what we did to Jesus here, and what we inflict upon him today in the wickedness of our hearts. Today too the pure and sinless Son of God is portrayed to the world as a criminal. O lament! Robbers, criminals, and murderers are honored by men today also, whereas the innocent are condemned unjustly.

O lament! All the wickedness and vulgarity in our hearts and lives is attributed to him, and his own do not speak out. O lament that this could happen long ago and once again today. It will be a reproach to us for all eternity.

We are the ones, the Christians, who in our desire to please others or in fear of causing offense, remain silent when such great injustice is committed against Jesus. In doing so, we deliver up Jesus anew into the hands of his enemies. O lament what we did to Jesus here, and what we inflict upon him today in the wickedness upon him today in the wickedness of our hearts.

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Let us humbly confess together. Jesus is scourged. Pilate, that low-minded, irresolute judge, publicly uttered the contradictory, nonsensical words, I have found no crime in him.

I will therefore chastise him and release him. He gave the order for Jesus to be scourged in Roman style, although he knew that scourging often resulted in death. Thereupon the court servants with pushes and blows led Jesus, our Savior, who had been mistreated and spat upon, through the raging, clamorous crowd to the whipping post.

Four executioners now came with their whips, rods, and ropes, which they threw down at the foot of the pillar. They approached Jesus, uncouth criminals who worked as slaves and convicts on building sites and canals. The most wicked and unscrupulous of them were selected for such tasks as scourging in the praetorium.

The men who were half drunk had something fiendish about them. They struck our Lord with clenched fists and ropes, and in a frenzy they dragged him to the whipping post, although he was so willing to go. No words can describe the barbarous treatment that Jesus suffered at the hands of these frenzied executioners during this short stretch to the pillar.

Tearing off the cloak that they had put on him at the trial before Herod, they almost knocked the Son of God down to the ground. With his hands swollen and bleeding from the ropes, Jesus quickly took off his clothes by himself while the executioners jostled him. All this time Jesus prayed and entreated the Father.

He now embraced the pillar. It was so high that a tall man would have had to stretch his arms to reach the iron ring fastened at the top. Rings and hooks were attached to the other side of the pillar as well.

The executioners, cursing abominably, stretched Jesus' arms, tied his hands to the iron ring at the top and raised his body so high that his feet, which were fastened at the foot of the pillar, scarcely touched the ground. Exposed to the utmost shame, the only begotten Son of God stood bound to the post. A place fit only for a criminal, two of the bloodthirsty villains began in a rage to lash his holy back, covering it entirely with wounds.

Our Lord and Savior, very God and very man, winced and writhed like a worm beneath the strokes of the criminals. Yes, we are the ones who have struck Jesus with our words and actions when we were annoyed or angry. Ultimately it is Jesus who is made to suffer the consequences of our lashing out.

The scourging is an appalling illustration that ever since the Fall, we men who were actually created in the image of God have a strong evil satanic impulse to beat and torment others. Six million Jews were killed by us Germans, and over ninety million people have been put to death in atheistic countries. All the countless blows ever dealt by man have fallen upon Jesus, including ours.

Jesus suffered the scourging once long ago and suffers it today anew when millions give vent to their rage and destructiveness and violence. And even if we have not taken part in such acts, must we not ask ourselves as Christians, have we lashed out at others in our reproachful thoughts and words, criticizing them or condemning them by what we say or by the way we act? And when anger got the better of us, have we sometimes actually struck them? Jesus bore all these blows and continues to do so, also suffering them with the many innocent ones who undergo such treatment. Jesus bears these blows as no one could ever bear them, with infinite humility and immeasurable love as the Lamb of God, who was always found patient.

For the sake of Jesus' suffering at the whipping post, let us now renounce all our vehemence and anger which can lead to real blows, torment and murder. Let us renounce our determination to have our own way, our irritability, our fault-finding, our anger and hatred. These sins are the cause of many crimes now at the dawn of the anti-Christian era.

When no day passes by without assaults and even sadistic murders being committed, Jesus sighed and moaned in heart-rending agony, his high-pitched cries of lamentation rising like a loving prayer above the swish of the lashes cast by his tormentors. From time to time these painful tones of lament and blessing were drowned by the shouts of the people and the Pharisees, which were like the rumbling of a terrible black storm cloud. Once more the crowds began to shout, Crucify him! for Pilate continued to negotiate with them.

When he wished to interrupt the tumult of the crowd with a few words, a trumpet was blown to command silence. Then once again the sound of the lashes, Jesus' plaintive cries and the curses of the executioners could be heard, but also the bleeding of the paschal lambs which were being washed east of the praetorium in the sheep pond near the sheep gate. It was heart-moving to hear the bleeding of the helpless lambs, for theirs were the only voices that blended with the sighs of our Savior.

In accordance with their law, the Jewish people kept their distance from the whipping post. About the width of a street, only the width of a street, there they stood as spectators and jeered. Jesus' body was brown and blue and red, covered with wheels.

Blood was trickling down from his wounds. He trembled and winced. Taunts and jeers sounded on all sides.

After a quarter of an hour, the first pair of executioners was relieved by a second pair, who fell upon Jesus savagely. They applied a different type of rod studded with thorns and barbed hooks. At their frenzied lashing, all the wheels on Jesus' holy body were ripped open.

Who can comprehend Jesus' immeasurable heartache today? After having submitted to the cruel lashes of the scourging because of our sinful desires, he now has to experience that even Christians, though knowing of his passion, disrespect his commandments and indulge in the sins of the flesh, including fornication. In doing so, they are guilty of scourging and beating Jesus anew. How the angelic choirs must fill the heavens with their strains of lament! Had not the angels, full of grief, once seen their Lord cruelly scourged for the sake of the sons of men and their sins? But today the angels are witnessing how Jesus must suffer anew because of human lust, a sin that even Christians indulge in.

Today the hate-filled opponents of Jesus attribute their sins to him, the pure and spotless Son of God, branding him as one of their own kind, as a sensualist without any inhibitions, who gave free reign to his drives. Thus he is presented in a fiendish, degrading manner to mankind in publications, film and stage productions. This is the most flagrant form of blasphemy.

How serious, therefore, is every sin of self-indulgence! For we are to blame that these sins are now attributed to Jesus. It is for our sins that he must once more suffer such agony. The heart of God is bleeding, filled with anguish deep, wounded by his children.

Oh, who can plumb his grief? Men rob him of his honour, despising him, despise his majesty, and tread his glory in the dust. Oh, untold agony! The angel hosts are weeping that those whom God created should dare attack their Lord, who is their Maker, God. And Jesus, humbled to the dust, is filled with suffering, for none today believes that he is Lord and Saviour, that he alone is King, deprived of all his honour, disfigured and disgraced.

Portrayed by man as though enslaved to sin, he is despised and hated, our Lord, who is pure love. Oh, who can fathom such iniquity as this? The Holy One is standing disgraced before all lands. Man's wickedness holds sway.

And Jesus, silently he waits, humbly, till the day when he will be revealed to all as God, the living God who judges sin. Finally the executioners cease their thrashing, and Jesus, as if in a faint, sank down at the foot of the whipping-post in a pool of blood, his body so cruelly disfigured. The executioners took a drink and called out to the soldiers who were busy in the guardhouse, telling them to weave the crown of thorns.

Throughout the scourging, as the strokes rained down upon him, causing him dreadful agony, Jesus surrendered himself continually to the Father for the sins of mankind. But now as Jesus lay in his blood at the foot of the post, an angel strengthened him. Then the executioners returned.

They pushed him with their feet and ordered him to stand up, saying that they were not yet finished with the king. The villains laughed scornfully and kicked him back and forth, so that Jesus painfully rised on the ground like a worm trodden underfoot. Here, Jesus had to suffer the fulfillment of the prophetic words in the Psalm of Suffering, I am a worm and no man, scorned by men and despised by the people.

God himself, the second person of the Godhead, writhes in his own blood like a worm, naked because of our shamelessness. Jesus' wounds are bleeding because of our carnal sins, our sensualism, and the other desires of our lower nature, which manifest themselves in many different ways. How dearly Jesus had to pay for all these sins! Let us never forget the image of Jesus writhing like a worm at the whipping post, a spectacle for the people.

The Son of God took upon himself human form and offered up his body to such inhuman treatment that it was disfigured almost beyond recognition. The sins of sensuality are so terrible that nothing less than the cruel torture of his holy body could pay for them. Jesus, crowned with thorns While Jesus was being scourged, Pilate spoke with the people several times, during which one of them cried out, He must go, even if it means death for us all! And when Jesus was led away to be crowned with thorns, they continued to cry, Away with him! Away with him! The messengers sent out by the chief priests had gathered more and more people and incited them to join in the clamor.

Jesus was now led into the inner courtyard of the guardhouse to be mocked and crowned with thorns. About fifty executioners and slaves, unscrupulous ruffians, took an active part in ill-treating Jesus here. At the beginning, the crowd surged forward, but then hundreds of Roman soldiers surrounded the building.

They stood in formation laughing and scoffing, and thus inciting Jesus' tormentors to even greater brutalities. For the latter responded to the laughter and jests as actors would to applause. It is almost incomprehensible that Jesus could endure more suffering and still survive.

Supernatural strength must have been imparted to him. Angels may have come to strengthen him so that he could bear even more suffering. Jesus was now led to be crowned with thorns, half-dead and yet unable to die, since he had to complete the full measure of suffering and atone for the sin of all mankind.

His tormentors had rolled the pedestal of an old pillar into the middle of the courtyard. On top of it they placed a low footstool, which they maliciously covered with sharp stones and fragments of pottery. Once again they tore all the clothing off Jesus' wounded body and placed upon him a tattered red soldier's coat that did not even reach his knees.

They now dragged Jesus to the seat covered with broken pottery and sharp stones. Then they set the crown of thorns upon him, placing it like a bandeau round his forehead and tying it together at the back. The sturdy thorn branches were woven together by hand, with most of the thorns intentionally pointed inward.

Next they placed in Jesus' hand a thick reed ending in a tuft. All this they did with mock ceremony, as though they were really crowning him king. They took the reed out of his hand and vehemently struck the crown with it.

Blood filled the eyes of Jesus. They knelt down before him, stuck their tongues out at him, struck him, and spat in his face and shouted, Hail, King of the Jews! Jesus suffered terrible thirst. The lacerations of the inhuman scourging had given him wound fever.

He trembled. His flesh was torn and places down to his very ribs. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth, and only his holy blood that flowed down from his head took mercy upon his burning lips.

For about half an hour Jesus was subjected to the cruel treatment, and the cohort that stood in formation round the praetorium laughed and shouted their approval. Well, Jesus is the pure and innocent Lamb of God who did only good to all. It is incomprehensible that man dared to torment him with his diabolical laughter and scorn and derision.

But far more incomprehensible was Jesus' response. Lovingly he looked upon his tormentors with a mild, forgiving expression on his sorely bruised countenance beneath the crown of thorns. His countenance is shining, gentle and deepest suffering beneath the crown of thorns.

It is stronger than the scoffing, has power for atoning, for blotting out each sin and curse. Jesus was now led by the soldiers back into Pilate's palace, the crown of thorns upon his head, the reed as a scepter in his bound hands, the purple cloak draped round his shoulders. Our Lord was unrecognizable because of the blood that filled his eyes and trickled down into his mouth and beard.

His body was covered with wheels and wounds. He walked bent over with faltering steps. His cloak was so short that he had to stoop in order to conceal his nakedness, for they had torn off all his clothing again when they crowned him with thorns.

As Jesus was brought before Pilate, a feeling of pity mingled with disgust ran through even this cruel man. After Jesus was painfully dragged up the steps, he was placed in the background while Pilate stepped forward on the terrace. A trumpet was blown in order to gain the attention of the people, for Pilate wished to speak.

He addressed the chief priests and all who were present, saying, Behold, I am bringing him out to you once more, that you may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus was now brought forward by the soldiers and placed next to Pilate on the terrace, so that all the people in the forum could see him. Jesus stood there before Pilate's palace in his purple cloak, his body lacerated, his face covered with blood, his bowed head pierced by thorns, his bound hands holding the reed as a scepter.

He stood there in immeasurable gentleness and sadness, filled with grief and love. It was a terrible heart-rending sight, which at first evoked dread and a stunned silence, as the Son of God, mistreated and blood-stained, bearing the terrible crown of thorns, turned his eyes upon the surging crowds. Pilate stepped beside him, pointed at him, and called down to the Jews, Behold, here is the man.

Jesus was now brought forward, saying, Behold, I am bringing him out to you once more, that you may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus was now brought forward by the soldiers of the Jews, saying, Behold, I am bringing him out to you once more, that you may know that I find no crime in him. And in whose radiance mankind found healing is now disfigured, its radiance gone.

O Lord Jesus, we can see our sin in your disfigured human countenance so filled with grief. Today we see millions of young people with disfigured faces, distorted by sins and addictions, although you have redeemed them to bear your image. What immeasurable grief the sight of them must now bring to your heart! You bore this disfigured, distorted, and ugliest of all human faces, so that there no longer need be a disfigured human face.

And we shall reflect your image, if we behold your countenance of eternal majesty beneath the crown of thorns, and let your traits be imprinted upon us, thanking you for your redemption and giving you our love. We want to dedicate ourselves to you and say... O Lord Jesus, we can see our sin in your disfigured human countenance so filled with grief. Today we see millions of young people with disfigured, distorted, and ugliest of all human faces.

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