

Jesus' First Three Hours on the Cross Matthew 27:32-44

by David Servant

Jesus' crucifixion was a demonstration of His love and forgiveness, and it shows that salvation is possible at any time, even in the last moments of life.

Scripture: Matthew 27:34, Mark 15:31, Luke 23:34, Luke 23:40, John 19:17-26

Topics: "The Cross", "Gods Mercy"

Description

David Servant preaches on the crucifixion of Jesus, highlighting the intense suffering He endured, His refusal to lessen the pain as He bore the weight of our sins, and His ultimate sacrifice to fulfill God's will. Despite the mockery and division among the spectators, Jesus showed love and forgiveness, even towards His executioners and the repentant thief on the cross, demonstrating God's amazing grace and mercy that offers salvation to all, regardless of their past sins or the timing of their repentance.

Transcript

According to John's Gospel, Jesus initially carried His own cross on the way to Golgotha, but at some point the Roman soldiers forced a man named Simon, visiting from northern Africa, to carry Jesus' cross. Due to His physical condition, Jesus must have been unable to carry it Himself. Remember that He had endured several beatings and had been mercilessly whipped by the Roman soldiers, no doubt losing lots of blood.

Once at Golgotha, just outside the walls of Jerusalem, Jesus was offered wine mixed with bitter gall by the soldiers. It would have considerably lessened the excruciating pain He was about to suffer, but upon tasting it, Jesus refused to drink. Because He was paying for our sins, Jesus knew that it was God's will that He suffer to the full degree. So He refused what would have made Him less conscious as the nails were pounded through His wrists and feet.

The soldiers then stripped Jesus of His clothing so He was completely naked, nailed Him to the cross as it lay on the ground, and then raised it upright. Amazingly, according to Luke's Gospel, Jesus prayed that His Father would forgive the soldiers because they didn't know what they were doing (see Luke 23:34). To them, Jesus was just one more condemned criminal. It was their responsibility to remain stationed at Golgotha until all the condemned men were dead, lest someone rescue them from their fate. In some cases, it took days for people to die by crucifixion. Jesus had been so abused prior to being crucified that

He died in six hours.

John reported in his Gospel that as the four soldiers waited for death to claim its victims, they divided Jesus' clothing into four shares. However, because His robe was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, they didn't want to tear it. So they drew lots to decide who would get it. This fulfilled exactly what David had predicted in Psalm 22:18: "They divide my clothes among themselves and cast lots for my garments," proving again that Jesus was the Messiah.

John also reported that the words on the sign posted above Jesus' head which read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," were Pilate's idea and were written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. Normally, the crimes of crucified individuals were written on signs above their crosses so that everyone would know why they were being executed. The leading priests complained to Pilate about the sign, requesting that he change it to read, "He said, I am King of the Jews" (John 19:21, emphasis added). But Pilate refused. It was his small way of showing his contempt for them and to gain some revenge for the way they had pressured him into condemning Christ.

Many people came to watch Jesus hang on the cross. Some came because they loved Him and others because they hated Him. Those who loved Him may have been hoping to witness His being miraculously delivered. According to John's account, two of those people were Jesus' mother, Mary, and His one disciple, John, who were standing together. Apparently, Jesus' stepfather, Joseph, was dead by this time, and Jesus was concerned for His mother's wellbeing. So He said to His mother, "Woman, he is your son," referring to John. And to John, Jesus said, "She is your mother" (John 19:26-27). From then on John took Mary into his home to take care of her. This was before any of Jesus' brothers believed in Him, and so it's probable that after they became believers they took responsibility for caring for their own mother. It also indicates that Jesus' four half-brothers may have alienated themselves from their own mother, perhaps due to her faith in Jesus. Jesus had predicted that families would be divided over Him, and His own certainly was.

According to Matthew and Mark's accounts of Jesus' crucifixion, the two thieves who were crucified on either side of Jesus mocked Him. However, Luke reveals that after almost three hours of hanging on a cross, one of the thieves had a change of heart. Perhaps he was moved to repentance by witnessing Jesus' prayer for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him, and that he did not return the insults of the many who mocked Him. Jesus loved those who hated Him. The one thief realized that Jesus was an extraordinary person, obviously innocent and holy, and came to believe that He really was the Messiah. He rebuked the other thief for mocking Jesus, saying, "Don't you fear God even when you are dying? We deserve to die for our evil deeds, but this man hasn't done anything wrong" (Luke 23:40-41). Then, without shame, he asked the Lord, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom" (Luke 23:42). Jesus promised him even more than he asked for, saying that they would be together in paradise that very day (see Luke 23:43).

Q. Is it possible for a person who has led a sinful life to be saved right before he dies and go to heaven?

A. Yes, and the one thief on the cross is proof. Because salvation is a gift of God's grace, people can be completely forgiven at any time in their lives, even with their last breath. God's mercy is amazing.

Q. The one thief was saved by God's grace by means of his faith. But like all authentic faith, his had corresponding actions. Can you list any of his actions that proved his faith was genuine?

A. First, he openly confessed that he was a sinner, which is the first step toward salvation. Second, he stated his belief that Jesus was innocent and unworthy of death, defending Him before the other thief. Third, without shame he looked to Jesus as the source of salvation and publicly asked him for it before a hostile crowd.

Application: Those who hated Jesus also made a point of coming to see Him as He hung on the cross. The chief priests and teachers of the law who had condemned Him stopped by to mock Him, calling for Him to come down from the cross if He was actually the Messiah. Unknowing, in their mocking, they declared the reason for His death, saying, "He saved others.... but he can't save himself!" (Mark 15:31). The only way we could be saved was if Jesus didn't save Himself.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/jesus-first-three-hours-on-the-cross-matthew-2732-44/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net