

Matthew 27:32

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald's sermon on Matthew 27:32 explores the profound significance of Jesus' crucifixion and the events surrounding it, highlighting themes of sacrifice and fulfillment of prophecy.

Duration: 45:48

Scripture: Matthew 27:32-35, Matthew 27:37-39

Topics: "Cyrene"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the events surrounding it. He emphasizes the significance of Jesus dying in the full strength of his manhood, crying out with a loud voice before giving up his spirit. The preacher also highlights the betrayal of Judas and the consequences of his actions, including the purchase of a cemetery with the 30 pieces of silver. The sermon concludes with a mention of Jesus standing before Pilate and the unjust trial that took place.

Transcript

Thank you, you may be seated please. Now we'll hear from our brother, Mr. McDonald, from Chicago. Friend, our Bible's pleased to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 27.

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, beginning with verse 32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.

And when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

And sitting down, they watched him there, and set up over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him.

For he saith, I am the Son of God. The thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there when they heard that said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. It was just a short time before that Judas had come out with a multitude with staves and spears, and planted that treacherous kiss upon the cheek of the Son of God. And then they hurried him to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest for the religious trial.

You know, it is most unusual to do that. Ordinarily a man who is accused of a crime is permitted to go to prison and to have opportunity for his case to be prepared. Ordinarily it would have been most unusual to disturb the high priest at that time of the night, but he didn't care.

In fact, he rather welcomed the intrusion, because the hearts of the people had been filling with hatred for the Son of God for three years now. And at last his time had come, and the cup of their hatred was bubbling over, and they were determined to take action and to take it quickly. And so the words of the prophet Isaiah were fulfilled.

He was hurried away from prison and from justice. And who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living. So Caiaphas was the judge, the chief priests and the elders were the prosecution, and the lovely Lord Jesus was the defendant.

Those who should have been the first to recognize him as the Messiah of Israel were the first to try him in an attempt to put him to death. And at the outset of this trial there was an embarrassing lack of witnesses. There was no one to come forth and state the charges against the Son of God.

And finally they found some false witnesses who were willing to come with a garbled account of something the Lord Jesus had said. They said, they quoted him as saying that he would destroy the temple in Jerusalem and would rebuild it in three days. What he had said was, destroy this temple that is his body, and I will raise it again in three days.

And when these charges were made, the Lord Jesus had nothing to say. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is done. So he opened not his mouth, and his adversaries could not stand the silence of the Lord of life and glory.

And finally the high priest said to him, I adjure you by the living God that you tell me whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God. And the Lord Jesus stood before him as a Jew. And the Lord Jesus well knew the Jewish scriptures.

He wrote them. And his mind would then have gone back to Leviticus chapter 5 and verse 1, where the Jew was instructed that when heard the voice of adjuration, the voice of swearing, he must testify. The Lord Jesus could be silent up to that point, but now he had heard the voice of adjuration.

He had heard the voice of the high priest, and he said, thou hast said. And you know, sometimes as we read that in our English Bible, it might sound as if he said, well, you said it, but I didn't. But that isn't what it

means.

It means you've said it, and it's absolutely true. And then it was as if the Lord Jesus said to Caiaphas, yes, it's true, I am the Messiah, the Son of God, but you see me today in humiliation standing before you? You see me with the glory of deity veiled in a body of flesh, but the day is coming when you will see me coming on the clouds of glory at the right hand of God the Father. The high priest, in a great dramatic gesture, said, why this is blasphemy, he said.

And he took and he rent his garments as an indication of the fact that blasphemy had been committed in those most sacred to him precincts. And so he turned to the crowd and he said, what is the verdict? But he well knew before he asked. And they said, he's worthy of death.

And the only lovely man who ever lived, they spat upon him at that point. They slapped him and they pushed him around and committed all of these indecencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it was at that time that Peter was not very far away and he was warming his hands at the fires of the world.

And a maiden came to him and she said, let's see, aren't you a follower of this Jesus? Peter said, I don't know him. And then he left the court and went out to the porch. And another maiden was waiting for him there.

And she said, you were with this Jesus of Nazareth, weren't you? But he said, I don't know what you're saying. And not very long after that, somebody else came to him. They said, yes, but your accent is just like the accent of all of those who are with Jesus.

They have a Galilean accent and you do. And you know, just a simple denial from Peter would no longer do, he felt. And so now he confirmed his denial with oaths and with curses.

And with disquieting promptness, a rooster in the neighborhood crowed. And Peter remembered the words of the Lord Jesus. And he went out and wept bitterly.

This was a night of all nights. And strange and discomfoting things were happening in the city of Jerusalem. Now, the Jewish people had no power in themselves to inflict capital punishment.

They could pronounce their own verdict on the Messiah of Israel. But they themselves were subject to the power of Rome. And ordinarily, the Jews would have something less than love for a man called Pilate.

They would look on him with scorn and with contempt. But now it was very pleasing to them that they could rush Jesus off from the home of Caiaphas to the palace of Pilate. It's strange, isn't it, how enmity against the Lord Jesus binds men together, men that otherwise would be hostile one against another.

And it was just at about this time that a man named Judas began to realize something of what he had done. Judas, who had accompanied with the Lord Jesus for those three years, who had heard the lovely words that proceeded out of his mouth, who had seen the miracles that he did, and who had received nothing but kindness from him. Judas, who held the bag, who was jealous of the ointment that was poured upon the feet of the Lord Jesus, who sold his lord and master for thirty pieces of silver.

And now we learn that Judas repented. But just a minute. It wasn't godly repentance.

Judas' repentance was the repentance of remorse, and that's all it was. Judas was sorry for what his sin had brought upon himself, but he wasn't sorry for what he had done to the Prince of Life. And so he took

those thirty pieces of silver, and he went back to the temple, and he went back to the chief priests and the elders, and he said, in effect, I want to return this money to you, for I have betrayed innocent blood.

You know, the way of a transgressor is hard. They said, you can't return that money to us now. Strange thing.

They were the ones who paid it, but they wouldn't take it back now. These men were too spiritual to do that. They said, why, this is the price of blood.

We couldn't take that back. They washed the outside of the cup, as the Lord Jesus had so aptly said, but inside it was filled with deceit and treachery and murder. And they said, no, we can't take that money back.

That's your problem. You see to it. You know how characteristic that is of the world.

Gets a man down to where it wants him, then turns its back on him. And so Judas took the money, the thirty pieces of silver, and in an act of despondency, he threw it down on the floor of a sanctuary. We don't know exactly where he threw it, but there it was.

And they said, now, now, we must take careful action with this money. And so they decided that they would buy a cemetery for it, with it. A little cemetery where they could bury strangers.

Dear friends, little did they know the significance of that act. Little did they know that down through the centuries, their land would be invaded by strangers, by the Gentile hordes, by the Crusaders, and all the rest. Little did they know how they would be chased from pogrom to ghetto.

And little did they know how some of those invading conquerors would perish in the battle and would need a place for burial. And so they purchased the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver that the Lord Jesus had been betrayed for. And so now he's before Pilate, and a trial begins that was the gravest miscarriage of justice that this world of ours has ever seen.

He stands before Pilate, and Pilate says to him, Are you the King of the Jews? And the Lord Jesus acknowledges the fact, and when he does, a torrent of abuse and evil epithets comes forth from those in the courtroom, from those who were standing by. Now it was the custom at that time for the Roman power to seek to ingratiate the Jewish population, which was always stirring up and always uneasy against Rome, and they thought at the feast time it would be a good political thing to release some notorious criminal to the Jewish people. And they had a notorious criminal at that time.

His name was Barabbas. It seems to me from the record that actually Barabbas had committed insurrection against Rome that he had led in one of the great uprisings against the Roman power, and of course in a sense this would make him a great national hero. And so Pilate said to the crowd, Now you know it's the custom for us to release a prisoner to you at that time.

Whom shall I release? Shall I release Jesus, or shall I release Barabbas? And you know the scripture says, For he knew that for jealousy they had delivered up Jesus. What a condemnation. And so of course their answer was Barabbas.

Barabbas was their hero, not Jesus. And then at that moment a very strange thing happened. A messenger came stalking up to Pilate.

He brought a message from Pilate's wife. She had had a disquieting dream, and she told him that the man who stood before him was a just man, that he shouldn't get involved. But you know the message was too late.

Pilate was already too deeply involved in this mock trial of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he thought that just by releasing Barabbas to them, well this would satisfy the Jewish populace. They wouldn't want anything more than that.

But dear friends, it wasn't Barabbas' life they wanted. It was Jesus' death. And so when he was willing to release Barabbas to them, they began to chant with insane mob hysteria for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, their own creator.

And so in this symbolic act of self-righteousness, Pilate took and he publicly washed his hands before them. And he said, I'm innocent of the blood of this just man. But oh dear friends, water would never wash away the guilt of Pilate in the matter.

Some people feel sorry for Pilate. They can say all kinds of gracious things about Pilate. But dear friends, the scripture writes his condemnation.

It says, Pilate willing to content the people. He was more interested in what the people said than in what God thought. And he was willing to trample upon all the principles of justice to deliver up to them the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so he did. He delivered Jesus to them. He scourged him.

And he delivered Barabbas to freedom. And so now the Lord Jesus was in the hands of that Roman guard. Rough, crude, profane, vile Roman soldiers.

And the first thing they did was to call the whole cohort together. Probably 500 or 600 more soldiers. Because they must have their little fun.

They must have their party at the expense of the Son of God. And so when they had all gathered together, they said, oh, so you are the king of the Jews. Very well, they said, the king must have his robe of glory.

And so they took off him his own clothes and put on him a scarlet robe. That scarlet robe will always speak to me of my sins placed on Christ. Though your sins be as scarlet.

And little did they know the object lesson they were presenting that day when they put on him the scarlet robe. And they said, now let's see. They said, a king has to have a crown, doesn't he? And so they took and they wove a crown of thorns and placed it on his blessed brow.

He wore a crown of thorns that I might wear a crown of glory. And they said, oh, they said, a king needs a scepter, doesn't he? And so they took a scepter, they made it out of a reed, perhaps something like a shoot of bamboo, and they placed it in his hand. And then in utter mockery, they trailed in front of the Lord Jesus, and they bowed in knee, and they said, Hail, King of the Jews.

Bowing the knee in mockery before one for whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess him, Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And then it says they spit on his face and smote him on the head with the reed. It speaks to my heart that when God visited our planet in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, they did to him something I've never seen done to any man.

They covered his face with shame and with spit. I know many of his servants have endured much at the hands of men, but not many have gone through such humiliation as that. And so they led him out from the place where he was tried, and from the place where the soldiers mocked him.

And as they went out, it seems that he carried his cross part of the way. And then they laid hold of Simon of Cyrene. He was probably a Jew who came from the northern part of Africa.

Maybe he had come to Jerusalem for the feast. And they laid a hold of him, and he either assisted the Lord Jesus in carrying the cross, or he carried it alone. Perhaps he did not think so at the time, but what a privilege he had that day.

He bore the cross for the one who gave him breath, for the one who was soon to suffer, bleed and die, for him. And so they led him forth to a place called Golgotha. Golgotha means skull, or a place of a skull.

Perhaps it was called that because of the appearance of the hill. Perhaps it was called that because it was a place of execution, and skulls could often be found there. But this is where they took him, the Lord Jesus, to the place of a skull.

And they gave him vinegar mingled with gall. And he tasted it, and he realized that if he drank it, that he would not bear our sin's heavy load with his full consciousness, and so he refused it. Because when he went to the cross to accomplish redemption's work, he must do it with all his consciousness, with all his powers.

And dear friends, my heart was bowed in worship when I read the word of God, and read those simple words, they crucified him. I noticed that in the revised version, verse 35 reads, and when they had crucified him, and when they had crucified him. I suppose if there were any English teachers present, they could remind us that that is known as a subordinate clause, when they had crucified him.

And I don't mean to suggest by this that there was anything subordinate about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, but all the restraint with which the Holy Spirit of God describes that most important of all events, when they had crucified him. No dwelling on the details of his crucifixion, such as it would be if man had written this book, but a simple statement of a wonderful fact that will never lose its glory, and never lose its power. And then, of course, the soldiers must have their share in the spoil, you know.

And so they began dividing the garments of the Lord Jesus among them. Just, just think of it. And when they came to that seamless robe, and they could not defy that, they cast lots for the seamless robe.

And then they put over his head the accusation, this is Jesus, the King of the Jews. You know, men who think themselves clever go to the Gospels, and they find in the Gospels that the wording of that accusation is different in the different Gospels. They think that they have found something very important, and the Bible is full of contradictions, they say.

But the Bible is truly wonderful. You know, it says in the scriptures that the superscription was written in letters of Hebrew and Greek and Latin. And there's no reason to believe that the words were exactly the same in each language.

In fact, it would be rather unusual if they were. And so why should not one Gospel writer give the translation from Hebrew, and another from Greek, and another from Latin? And so there is his accusation, and this is why he is nailed to the cross, Jesus, the King of the Jews. And he hangs there upon that cross

of shame, flanked by two thieves, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

He was numbered with the transgressor. Dear friends, nowhere does the vile guilt of human nature appear more vividly than at the cross of the Lord Jesus. A perfect man comes into the world, and fallen human nature puts him on a cross.

There's nothing good in man. And yet these were the creatures for whom he came to die. Wonderful story of love.

Now, I think it's important to realize that the people who attended this event were religious people. He was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, and the crowd was passing by. Where were they going? They were milling into the city, because it was the feast time.

Why were they going into the city? Why, dear friends, they were going into the city to observe the Passover. They were remembering that night in Egypt so many years ago, when the Passover lamb was killed. And when God delivered his people by a mighty and outstretched, they were religious people.

And as they passed by, they saw the Passover lamb expiring for them, and they had nothing but contempt. Going in to celebrate the Passover in the city, and outside the Passover lamb was dying. And there were the chief priests and the elders, and oh, they didn't know how true those words that they spoke were.

He saved others. Himself he could not save. And how we rejoice in that fact tonight.

But dear friends, it wasn't because it was physically impossible, but because it was impossible according to the eternal counsels of God. He on the cross must die, or mercy could not come to ruin sinners. Yes, Christ the Son of God must bleed that sinners might from sin be freed.

Those words they spoke in jest and mockery are precious to our hearts tonight. Himself he cannot save. And some of the others came along and they said, Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

Dear friends, you don't have to look very deep to identify that voice, do you? Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him. It's the voice of unbelief, and it's the voice of modernism. The voice of unbelief says, Show me, and I'll believe.

Show me a sign or a miracle, and then I'll believe. But I just won't believe on faith. I just won't believe according to the naked word of God.

I must have evidence, or I'll never come. And so there they were, personifying unbelief. So they said, If you just come down from the cross, we'll believe.

Would they have? You know they wouldn't. And then it's the voice of modernism. You come down from the cross.

The cross is offensive to us. If you would just remove the offense of the cross, then we could all get together and have happy fellowship together. And the Lord Jesus hangs there on the cross and listens to that.

And then there were those three hours of darkness, the crucial, central time of all. It says from the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And, oh dear friends, this is the time that is veiled, that is shrouded as far as human sight is concerned, when Jesus took our sins upon Him and bore them away in His body on the tree.

During those three hours on Him, almighty vengeance fell that must have sunk a world to hell. He bore it for a sinful race and thus became my hiding place. During those three hours, God poured out His wrath upon the Son of His love.

And the Lord Jesus bore the punishment in His body that sinners who reject Him will bear for all eternity. Down to the depths of woe, Christ came to save my soul. And none of the ransomed ever knew or will ever know what the Lord Jesus went through during those hours of darkness.

Who can ever plumb the depths of those words that He cried, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Eli, Eli, lama sabaxoni, most blessed, most awful sight. Now, those who were standing by heard Him say that word, Eli. I think they know, they knew what He meant.

And I think they said in mockery, He's calling for Elias. I don't think they were just ignorant or deceived. They knew.

It was just a further case of mockery. And they said, Oh, He's calling for Elias. Let's see if Elias will come and help him.

And they ran and put vinegar, sour wine, on a sponge and gave it to him to drink. Dear friends, this is the awful prostitution of all human intellect and of the use of the human body that the creatures whom His hands had made should ever treat the Savior so. And then at the end, it said He cried with a loud voice, It is finished.

And when He cried that, He gave up the ghost. And we see in this, first of all, the fact that He died in the full strength of His manhood. He cried with a loud voice.

And we see, too, His deity. It said He gave up the ghost. That's something we can't do.

He gave His life voluntarily. We die when the end comes. And just at that time, a very strange thing happened in the temple at Jerusalem.

There was the veil separating the most holy place from the holy place. And that veil was a heavy braided veil, heavily woven. It couldn't be torn by a human hand.

And yet a wrench appeared at the top of that veil and went right down to the very bottom of it. A strange thing indeed. Imagine the consternation of any who might have been there at the time.

And yet what a wonderful object lesson it was. God was saying, The veil has been rent. The veil, that is to say, His body and access to God has been made through the death of My beloved Son.

The veil is rent. Our souls draw near unto a throne of grace. The merits of the Lord appear.

They fill the holy place. At that time, too, nature itself reacted with violence. There was a great earthquake.

The graves were opened. And after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the bodies of some of the saints came out of those graves and went into the holy city and appeared to many. The Roman centurion that was standing there with his guard of men by the cross, seeing all the things that had transpired, said, Truly this was the Son of God.

God did not leave Himself without witness in this dark hour. Dear friends, this is marvelous. That person who died on the center cross was no mere man.

That person was God manifest in the flesh. Now, that proves shocking and surprising to you tonight. There is something that should be even more so, and that is this.

He died for you. I don't know anything that should impress us more in all our lives than this, that someone has died as a substitute for us. And that person was not a sinful man, but the sinless, spotless Son of God.

We would have perished in our sins forever, but God sent His only begotten Son that He might pay the penalty that our sins deserved, that we might be everlastingly saved, blessed with Him in heaven forever. And now God is saying to men and women, Yes, the Savior has died. A righteous basis has been found upon which I can save ungodly sinners and still be just in doing it.

But, dear friends, you must accept Him by an act of faith. You must come to the Lord Jesus Christ and in total commitment of yourself, spirit, soul, and body, you must bow to Him and say, Lord Jesus, I believe you died for me, that you were buried, that you rose again and ascended back to heaven. And I believe that through that work of thine, I can have eternal life as I here and now accept you as my Lord and Savior.

And, dear friend of mine tonight, without that, you'll never see heaven. This is the gospel. This is the good news of salvation.

Jesus died. The invitation is given. The command goes out.

You must make the choice. And we invite you tonight at the close of this meeting, if you have never done so before, to come to the Lord Jesus Christ in comprehension, in repentance of sin. And by a definite act of faith, receive Him, acknowledging Him to be your Lord and your Savior.

The moment you do that, God will save your guilty soul and the value of His work at Calvary's cross will be credited to your account. May the Lord give you grace tonight to step out for the Lord Jesus Christ, to make sure that your soul is saved, that you'll have a home in heaven.

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