

## The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Years ago, I sat in the back of a Maundy (Holy) Thursday service in Le Sacré-Coeur in Paris, taking in the architecture, art, and music of this famous Catholic church while also attempting to listen to the service (and only successfully catching about every third word). For those who do not know of this celebration (I didn't, until that day), it precedes Good Friday and commemorates the Last Supper and Jesus' washing the disciples' feet. It's the beginning of the end of Jesus' ministry on earth. While sitting in that pew, I reflected on what Jesus showed us during His ministry on earth, as well as what He endured as he prepared for the cross. As He sat and washed the filthy feet of the one who would betray Him. As He broke bread with His closest friends and knew it would be the last. Looking at the faces of those around the table who did not yet fully understand what would take place in the course of the next 24 hours.

Many of us have, at the very least, seen photos or clips of the crucifixion scene reenacted. The physical torment of lashings, thorns imbedded into his scalp, the burden of a 30 to 40-pound tree hauled to the place of his death, thick nails drove into his hands (likely, wrists), and feet (likely, heel bones). Being stripped of clothing, spit on, mocked and cursed, abandoned by some of those closest to Him, slowly suffocating. Dying devoid of human dignity in a manner saved for the lowest of society, adjacent to two convicted criminals. This man who did nothing wrong.

However, as we look back to what some now consider "Holy Thursday," as an account in Scripture, there is even more to the crucifixion that must be considered. "And being in great agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44). Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives to his heavenly Father that night, with whom He had never known anything but right relationship. He knew He was about to endure the full wrath of God for our sins. He was about to experience the fullness of separation from God.

"What *happened* at the cross, for those of us who claim to be its beneficiaries? It is beyond comprehension, of course. A three-year-old cannot comprehend the pain a spouse feels when cheated on. How much less could we comprehend what it meant for God to funnel the cumulative judgment for all the sinfulness of his people down onto one man...What is physical torture compared to the full weight of centuries of cumulative wrath absorption? That mountain of piled-up horrors? How did Jesus even retain sanity psychologically in absorbing the sum-

total penalty of every lustful thought and deed coming from the hearts of God's people-and that is one sin among many?" (Gentle and Lowly, pg. 199-200)

Remember that Christ endured all of this to display His glory and perfect love. As Pastor Koby reminded us on Sunday, this is the epitome of a demonstration that God FOR you. He is for you! "The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. It's a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God." (God is the Gospel, pg. 47). Only through Him can we understand our true identity, purpose, and have a right relationship with our heavenly Father.

For this week, stop and take some time to meditate on the cross and all that it encompasses:

The Gospel accounts of the crucifixion can be found in Matthew 27:32-54, Mark 15:21-39, Luke 23:26-49, and John 19:16-37.

*"...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."*

Romans 5:6-11

*"who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

Philippians 2:6-8

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Luke 9:23

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20

- 1) Thank God for what He has done for you. Don't do this flippantly – consider the weight of your sin and what it cost Him.
  - “You will never make yourself feel that you are a sinner, because there is a mechanism in you as a result of sin that will always be defending you against every accusation...There is only one way to know that we are sinners, and that is to have some dim, glimmering conception of God.” (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)
    - Spend time reflecting on who God is. By knowing Him, we see ourselves more clearly.
    - Resource: [Verse Study on the Attributes of God](#)
- 2) Following Christ also means counting the cost to your own life. For those who know Him, you make a choice each day to follow Him.
  - What areas of my life am I surrendered fully to God and living and desiring His glory?
    - versus -
  - What areas of my life am I living for myself? Some key questions to reveal this might be:
    - What sentences (either out loud or in your head) begin with, “I deserve...” or “I must have...” or “I have a right to...” or “I need...” (etc.)
- 3) Pick a verse listed above and commit to memorizing and meditating on this verse this week.
  - Use a dry-erase marker to write it on your bathroom mirror – read 4-5x while brushing your teeth, or each time you wash your hands.
    - Bonus: erase a couple words each day and see how much you remember.
  - Make it your phone lock screen and read it every time you pick up your phone (before you do anything else with it!)
  - Write it on an index card and tape it to your fridge – read every time you get a glass of water or make something to eat.
  - Fighter Verse is a great app for memorizing.
  - Pray through the verse each night
    - Do more than just memorize words – while it's great to have God's word stored in your heart, you need to use it. Take time to ponder what you are reading, ask God to make this personal to you, and ask yourself what you need to change in your thinking, believing, and/or actions as a result of what you are learning from Scripture.

For further reading:

- God is the Gospel (John Piper)
- Gentle and Lowly (Dane Ortlund)
- The Attributes of God (AW Pink)

- None Like Him (Jen Wilken)
- Booklet: The Attributes of God (Brad Hambrick)