

Lesson 30 Lecture

Matthew 27:32-66; Mark 15:21-47; Luke 23:26-56; John 19:16-42

Good morning/Good evening. Over the last few weeks, we have covered the betrayal, the abuse, the mockery of a trial, and the scourging of our precious Lord Jesus. Today we deal with His crucifixion, death, and burial. It is impossible to overstate the power of the spiritual significance of what happened in today's reading. From one perspective, we can find tremendous sadness and grief over what transpired in today's Scriptures – and that, to a point, is good. It should grieve our souls to the point of conviction and repentance over what Jesus willingly subjected Himself to do on our behalf. However, there is much joy to be found in these events. I'm going to break down today's reading into three areas:

1. The fulfillment of foreshadowed events and prophecies
2. What spiritually happened at the cross
3. Revelations in suffering

By my count, there are 8 scenes in today's reading that fulfilled Old Testament foreshadowed events and prophecies. Jesus was crucified at the third hour, or 9:00am. Once He was nailed on the cross, they offered Him wine with gall to help ease the pain. This was a fulfillment of Psalm 69:21. Notably, Jesus refused this because He wanted to fully experience the suffering from the judgment of the Father for - and as - our sin. The centurions then divvied up his clothes by casting lots, which was a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. He was crucified between two robbers, and this fulfilled Isaiah 53:12. Passers by, the Jewish leaders, and even the two robbers on each side of Him mocked Him by saying things like, "*He saved others, " they said, "but he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.*" (Mark 15:31b-32a) Warren Wiersbe makes the good point, "*But if He saved Himself, then*

nobody else could be saved." This mocking was fulfillment of Psalm 22:6-8. What was Jesus response to all this mocking? The first of seven things Jesus said from the cross in Luke 23:34a, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*" That, my friends, is powerful love.

The second thing Jesus said was in response to one of the robbers on the cross. The robber had become convicted of the truth of who Jesus was, challenged the mocking of the other robber, and asked, *in faith*, if Jesus would remember him when He enters His Kingdom. What was Jesus' response? "*Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.*" (Luke 23:43) No good works, no special tithing or giving, no baptism – **ONLY** by this robbers public confession of faith in Jesus, did the Lord promise this man his salvation. This scene is a defining moment and challenge against those who profess that you need to believe in Jesus and then do something more to secure salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes this point abundantly clear about salvation coming through anything else than the confession of belief in Christ, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*"

The third thing Jesus said was looking at His mother Mary and telling John to take care of her. Bible scholars generally agree that Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, probably died by this time. Therefore, Jesus, even in His pain and agony, was making sure His mother was going to be taken care of.

At the 6th hour, or 12:00pm, a miraculous event happened – for the next 3 hours the sun “stopped shining” according to Luke. Remember, the Passover was the next day. The moon is to be full at that time. The moon cannot be full and have a solar eclipse at the same time. Therefore, this darkness was a miraculous point in history. Halley’s Bible Handbook describes this moment beautifully, “*For three hours, inanimate nature hid her face in shame at the unspeakable wickedness of men. God may have meant the darkness to be creation’s symbolic mourning for*

Jesus while He was suffering the pains of the lost on our behalf.” I mentioned there were moments in today’s reading that were the ultimate events previously foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The 10th plague God waged against Egypt, which is a symbol of sin, was the plague of death on its firstborn. In order for the Jews to prevent this death happening to them, they were to sacrifice a spotless lamb and sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their homes. If the angel of death saw the blood of the lamb on the doorpost, it would pass over that home and its occupants would be delivered from death. What was the 9th plague – the plague that preceded the Passover? - A plague of darkness for 3 days. This 3-day plague of darkness before the Passover was a foreshadowing of the 3 hours of darkness before the Passover lamb would be sacrificed to deliver us from spiritual death.

For the next 3 hours, Jesus wouldn’t say a word, but at 3:00, He shouted out what was said in Psalm 22:1, ““*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*”) (Mark 15:33). There are many interpretations of what Jesus was meaning with this statement, but the most common one is at this moment, Jesus, for the first and only time in all of history, the Son of God was not in fellowship with God the Father. Why? – Look in the mirror – because of you and me – because of our sin. God is holy and cannot be in the presence of impurity and sin. At this moment, Jesus was our sin, and, as a result of this glorious sacrificial act, the Father could not look upon His beloved and only begotten Son. I believe it was this moment, being forsaken by the Father, was what caused Him to sweat blood in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He uttered His 5th statement saying He was thirsty, and they put some vinegar on a sponge to whet his lips. With His lips refreshed, He thundered His sixth statement, “*It is finished*”. He used a Greek word, “*Tetelestai*”, and it means, “*It is finished, it stands finished, and it always will be finished.*” Finished means

finished. What “it” was finished? Everything that was required to satisfy the wrath of the Father on the sins of those who choose to believe in what Jesus did at the cross. I’ll expand on this in a few minutes.

The 7th and final words Jesus said were a testimony to the fact that He was in total control of this entire process. Typically, it would take 2-6 *days* for someone to die from a crucifixion. After 6 *hours*, Jesus said in Luke 23:46b, “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*” God did not take Jesus’ life. Jesus gave Himself to the Father – a picture of total control. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers, therefore, came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. This is another foreshadowing moment from Exodus 12:46 which made it clear the Passover lamb’s bones were not to be broken. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear. This was a fulfillment of Zechariah. 12:10’s prophecy.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were members of the Jewish council that condemned Jesus to death. However, they were not present at the vote, as they had come to faith in Jesus. Joseph had a new tomb that was freshly hewn out. It was likely not for him for it is believed it was close to the place of crucifixions. Joseph was a wealthy man, and a wealthy person would likely not want his tomb so close to so much noise and suffering. That being said, it was his tomb, so Jesus being buried in a rich man’s tomb was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9. This is a picture of what Jesus’ tomb was likely similar to. I find it fascinating that the Chief Priests, the Pharisees, and the Romans, but not the disciples, recalled and responded to Jesus’ claim that He would be resurrected. Therefore, they put a large stone – maybe 4’-5’ wide, rolled it in front of the

entrance, sealed it, and set guards before it. The guards were put there to keep the disciples from stealing the body and claiming Jesus was resurrected. Little did these people know that all these things they did to prevent the story of the resurrection becoming real actually made it all that more real!

Eight validations/proofs of the truth of God's Word are seen in today's reading. For as long as it has been available, the Bible has withstood all the challenges and tests of time. Even to this day, archeological discoveries are only solidifying the accuracy of the Bible. God's Word is true and completely dependable, my friends. What is claimed to have happened in this reading really did happen. I hope this brings comfort to you knowing you have entrusted your eternal security in God's Word.

The second section of this lecture seeks to focus on the foundational Biblical truths regarding what spiritually happened with Jesus' death on the cross. I'm going to begin with a brief presentation about God's original design for us. We were created in the image of God. God is a triune Being – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We were created as a lesser triune being – body, soul, and spirit. We were designed to be in constant, uninterrupted relationship with God. The connection point with God was via our spirit. When Adam and Eve sinned, the spirit died, and all of humanity, save for One, lost our connection point with God. All that was left was our body, or our flesh, and our soul. Without the power of the connection point of the spirit to God, our souls became in peril because we became slaves to the desires of our flesh. The flesh's appetite for more is insatiable and leads us to make bad choices to satisfy the needs of our flesh as opposed to what is best for our soul. These bad choices, and they are choices, are sin. Romans 6:23a is clear on the consequences of sin – they are death. Romans 8:13a tells us that if we live according to the flesh we will die. Because of the sin gene that was passed down from Adam and Eve, man has been separated from God

because our point of our connection to God, our spirit, was dead because of sin. There was nothing we could do to get reconnected to God. Thankfully, God not only could do something, but also He did do something.

There is a spiritual world, and there is a massive war going on between good and evil. The evil forces in the spiritual world have only one desire – to destroy God's creation. They do this by tempting the flesh, because they know without the benefit of our spirit connection with God, we are weak to defend ourselves against these temptations. You're probably wondering at this point, "*Good lecture, Dan – real inspiring, right?*" Well, I have good news for you, and it has to do with Jesus's death. I just mentioned God did do something to get us reconnected to Him. We must constantly thank God that He loves us and didn't want this separation to continue. The only thing that would resolve this separation was Jesus' death. Romans 5:10a, "*For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.*" The primary goal of Jesus' death on the cross was to provide a way for us to be reconciled to God – for our connection point to Him to be reestablished.

God came up with this amazing transaction – *if we choose to believe in Him through His only begotten Son*, then *by our choice* to believe, all of our sins, our slavery to them, and the eternal punishment for them would be taken care of by the death of His Son on the cross. What a deal! Let me say this another way, by our faith in Jesus, Romans 6:3 tells us we are baptized into Christ Jesus' death. This is what the Apostle Paul meant in Galatians 2:20 – "*I am crucified with Christ.*" **By faith**, our sinful nature, our slavery and temptation to sin, and the judgment, the shame, the condemnation, and the regret of our sin were crucified with Jesus! *If you choose to believe* in the complete and finished work of Jesus' death on the cross, then the flesh's power over you is crucified. Why is that so important? If you, *by faith*, believe the flesh's power is crucified, Satan's ability to tempt you is

dramatically reduced. This doesn't mean he won't try, but if you truly believe your insatiable sinful needs were destroyed at the cross, then what does Satan have left to tempt?

We read earlier that Jesus said, "*It is finished.*" I talked about the critical truth that finished means finished. Romans 6:10a clearly states, "*For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all.*" I'm going to challenge each of you to meditate on this fundamental truth of the Christian faith. There is absolutely **NOTHING** you need to do to be saved from the punishment of your sins other than believe that Jesus did **EVERYTHING** that was required of the Father. Now this doesn't mean you can go crazy and sin away. Out of love and appreciation for Jesus' atoning death, we serve and obey Him from a place of "*want to*" – not of "*have to*". Jesus' death on the cross brings a peace to dismiss the works-based mentality that other religions don't enjoy. But...you have to believe this.

Hebrews 2:9 tells us, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*" Jesus tasted death, so we would not have to. Yes, we are all at one point going to stop breathing, and our mortal bodies will stop functioning. However, for those who confess Jesus as Savior and Lord, our soul does not have to taste death – it merely steps into eternity and comes before the One who tasted death on our behalf. *As believers in Jesus Christ, there is no reason to fear death.* Hebrews 2:14b-15 makes this glorious promise, "*through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" Jesus' death on the cross eliminates the fear of death to those who believe in Him. May I have a "Praise the Lord"?!

2 Corinthians 5:21 should be a life verse for all of us, "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of*

God.” Jesus’ death on the cross put to death the things that separated us from God. Our sin made us unrighteous. By our faith in Jesus’ death, we adopt His righteousness and reestablish connection to God. It didn’t cost us anything to be reconnected to God, but it cost Him everything. And that leads me into the third section of the lecture – revelations in suffering.

For some of you, what I am about to share may be initially difficult to understand or accept, but if you’re willing to listen and believe what the Bible says, I assure you will be blessed. One of the most common questions for both believers and non-believers is, *‘Why doesn’t God do something about all the suffering in the world?’* Now I could spend the next hour talking about the total absence of accountability in that question, but you’ll be happy to know I’m not going to go there. There is self-induced suffering that we only have ourselves to blame. If we smoke 3 packs of cigarettes per day, should we be surprised that at some point we get diagnosed with lung cancer or emphysema? Some of our suffering is simply the consequences of our sinful behavior or poor choices.

However, I want you to think about something. Over the last few weeks, we read of the terrible suffering Jesus went through. Yet, something extraordinarily good resulted from all that suffering. What this undeniable truth forces us to consider is the possibility that suffering is neither random nor arbitrary. We must think about the possibility that suffering not only has a purpose, but also it may have a good purpose. I would like to offer you three Scriptural truths of suffering for your consideration:

1. Suffering is part of being a Christian
2. There was great purpose in Jesus’ suffering
3. There is a clear correlation between suffering and glory in the Kingdom

I have previously mentioned my frustration with the deceptions of the prosperity doctrine. This false teaching proclaims that if your faith is good enough,

you should have a prosperous life. By “prosperous” it means we should be happy, rich, and have no problems. Does God reward those who are faithful? Absolutely, but who is to say those rewards are monetary or a simple life? The real evil behind this doctrine is if someone is experiencing pain or loss, then they must conclude they don’t have enough faith to be blessed with wealth and happiness. Then guilt and shame creeps in where it should never be. I hope what I’m about to show you what the Bible says will prevent any of you from believing such hogwash.

My first point about suffering is that it is inevitable for the Christian who is walking as closely as he/she can with Jesus. As I said, we read about the incredible suffering Jesus experienced these last few weeks. He said in John 15:20-21, “*Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.*” I suppose I could just stop here with that statement – seems pretty clear to me – does it to you? Let’s take a look at another verse about the undeniable link between being a follower of Jesus and suffering: 2 Timothy 3:12: “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*” Why does there have to be suffering for the Christian? I said earlier there is a massive spiritual war going on around us. Satan and his forces hate God and his forces. Anyone who aligns himself with the Son of God is a member of His forces. We are targets because our Savior was a target. We are not defenseless – remember Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you. Here’s the really good news – we’re on the winning team!

Now I’m going to really challenge you on the topic of suffering, but I promise if you just keep listening you’ll find what I’m about to say is actually good news. Let’s look at a couple of Scriptures. 1 Peter 4:19, “*Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good,*

as to a faithful Creator.” Philippians 1:29, “*For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*” Yes, these are real scriptures – they are challenging us to understand that our suffering could be according to the will of God – our suffering has been granted to us on behalf of Christ for His sake. In other words, God is intentionally initiating or allowing suffering. I know this is tough for some of you to listen to, but it is important for your faith journey that you believe it to be true. In his powerful book, *Pain, Perplexity, and Promotion*, Bob Sorge makes a great point about the real problem of not accepting the truth of God initiating or allowing suffering, When we can’t handle the truth of God initiating or allowing suffering, “*we come up with our theology of God doesn’t like you, He’s angry with you, and it’s because of your wickedness.*” This is one of Satan’s favorite footholds in humanity – to distort the truth of God’s character in our suffering.

This is why it is so important that we understand and accept that what we read today regarding Jesus’ death was according to the will of God. If God would submit His only begotten Son to suffering, why wouldn’t He do the same for His adopted children? Biblically, the greatest example of human suffering was Job, excluding Jesus. When Satan told God that he was roaming the earth, **God** offered up Job as a target. What’s more extraordinary and what shouldn’t be lost on us is that Job was a righteous man. *Job suffered not because of what he did wrong, but because of what he did right.* We as believers in Jesus have His righteousness through His blood that covers us for our sins. So why in the world would God’s will allow or for Him to grant, suffering in our lives? There has to be a reason for this, or that makes God weak, uncaring, or cruel. If you are unwilling to listen to what I’m about to say as an important truth of our faith, drawing to such a false conclusion about God would be pretty easy.

Thankfully, God is not weak, uncaring, or cruel, and this brings me to my second point about suffering – there can be great purpose in suffering. Let's take a look at some Scriptures that demonstrate the good purposes that came from Jesus' suffering.

- **We fellowship with God in suffering.** (Philippians 3:10) When things are going smoothly, it is easy to become complacent about our relationship with God. In our suffering, we become more willing to seek and spend time with God for relief and healing and for Him to unveil more of His love to us.
- **We can offer aid to those who have suffered as we have.** (Hebrews 2:18) There are incredible support groups for various illnesses, addictions, and tragedies. These support groups are usually made up of those who have experienced similar sufferings. We can take the things we learned in our suffering and be a blessing to those going through their sufferings.
- **We can learn obedience and follow His steps in suffering.** (Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21) Some suffering may be as a result of us getting out of line in our walks with God. Like dumb sheep, we've wandered off from the Good Shepherd. God will allow suffering to correct our path and become more obedient in following Him.
- **We can emphasize the truth of goodness and righteousness in suffering.** (1 Peter 3:14a; 1 Peter 3:17) In a world that has become so corrupt and evil, examples of goodness and righteousness are more desperately needed than anytime in history. The problem is the enemy sees these acts of goodness and righteousness as a threat, so he is going to bring suffering upon us to discourage us from being Christ-like. Should we hold our grounds and maintain our character, then we are shining a light of hope and something better to choose from in suffering to a world that largely only sees darkness and evil.

- **We can be perfected, established, strengthened, and settled in suffering.** (1 Peter 5:10) I've mentioned before that Vickie and I went through a very painful season of suffering. Because we didn't give up our faith in God or each other, we are much stronger today. That refining fire didn't burn us up, it welded us more closely to God and to each other. Without that suffering, we would likely not have the strength we have today.
- **There can be healing in suffering** (Isaiah 53:5) For the purpose of improving the quality of our relationship with Him, the quality of our life, or the quality of our witness, God will bring or allow suffering to raise up issues in our life that need to be healed. Things like unforgiveness, roots of bitterness, a critical spirit, or a spirit of judgmentalism all inhibit our relationship with God. Since He knows a close relationship with Him is what is best for us - and it is what He desires for us, He is willing to bring/allow suffering, so these things can bubble up, be revealed, confessed, forgiven, and healed.

I mentioned earlier that Job is probably the most celebrated human when it comes to suffering, not including Jesus, in Scripture. In the fifth chapter of his book, verses 17 & 18 offer the following, *“Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.”* The key word in this verse is “Blessed”. What is being said here is that amidst our suffering that may be initiated or allowed by God, there is a blessing. What blessing could that be? I pose to you that it can be an opportunity for an upgrade in your relationship with God – to elevate His role in your life and prepare you for your ultimate purpose in the Kingdom. As He fellowships with you in your suffering, He becomes more real, and His character becomes more dependable. His role as Lord, Savior, and friend in your life is more clearly understood and believed.

This leads me to my third truth about suffering - there is a clear correlation between suffering and glory in the Kingdom. When we confess our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, we immediately become citizens of the Kingdom of God. We may still be living here in our earthly tents, as Paul called them, but with our faith in Christ, our citizenship – our eternal home – is in the Kingdom of God. Let's look at the great promises of hope in the Kingdom via our suffering:

- We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ that in our suffering we are glorified with Him. (Romans 8:17)
- Our sufferings of Christ that abound in us are matched by the consolation in Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:5)
- We gain more of Christ as we suffer loss (Philippians 3:8)
- God sees our enduring grief in our sufferings as commendable (1 Peter 2:19-20)
- The sufferings we experience here in this life are not worthy of comparison to the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

I hope none of you think I'm being flippant about the awfulness of suffering. It hurts, it's painful, it can be very lonely, it can be scary, and it can be very hard to shift our thoughts to consider these Scriptural truths about suffering. This is why we must in our desperation go to God and ask Him to confirm these great promises of Scripture and ask Him to elevate us above our suffering to see these awesome truths. Jesus spoke of the hour had come for the Son of Man to be glorified. What hour was He speaking of? - His crucifixion, death, and burial. His suffering was inevitable as it was the will of God. His suffering had a great purpose because it would provide the vehicle to put to death the sin and all its eternal consequences to those who would believe in Him. Finally, His suffering would ultimately glorify Him. – How is Jesus glorified in His death? - It isn't just His death that glorifies

Him. What else glorifies Him? You're going to have to come back next week and let Carol tell you the other reason.

I hope you see what I see in Jesus that reveals God to us in today's reading. I see:

- A God Whose Word is true as it is proven in fulfilled foreshadowing and prophecies.
- God came up with and executed the greatest spiritual transaction in history – doing everything necessary to make it possible to give to Him all of our ugliness in exchange for all of His goodness and righteousness. God's price for the transaction: His Son suffering and dying on a cross. Our price: to believe in the One Who did this for us.
- Although suffering for Christ is inevitable, Jesus' suffering ultimately had a good purpose. Therefore, we can look at least some of our inevitable suffering likely may have a good purpose. As a result, God will be glorified in our suffering, and so shall we.

All this suffering Jesus went through was for one reason and one reason only. He did it for each one of you because He loves each one of you. He wants *that desperately* to reconcile you to Him – to have the kind of relationship with Him you were always designed to have. He did it all to make it possible. All that's left is for you to receive and believe it's true. If you do, the following words will simply flow out of you in joy and in gratitude. Let's stand and sing the Doxology.

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise Him above the heavenly hosts.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen!