



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
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June 14, 2009

Theme: The Humiliation of the Son of God

Text: Matthew 27:27-44

The life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus are the central focus of the NT writings. Much of the Gospel material is devoted the last week of Jesus' life. This tells us that the crucifixion of Jesus is essential to the Gospel message. As Paul would say, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you, except Christ Jesus and him crucified." However, none of the NT authors focus upon gory details of the crucifixion. Matthew, for example focuses upon the manner in which Jesus was mocked by people who stood around the cross as he was dying. Theologians refer to the life and death of Jesus as the humiliation of the Messiah. Matthew focuses upon the human wickedness that was involved in the crucifixion of Jesus. The crucifixion of the Son of God was the most evil act that has even been done. Jesus was not an ordinary Jew. He was the Son of God who had never committed a sin in his life. One commentator has observed that there were four categories of wickedness involved in the humiliation of Jesus: (1) There were the ignorant wicked. (2) There were the knowing wicked. (3) There were the fickle wicked. (4) There were the religious wicked.

The Scriptures teach that all of humanity is responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Jesus died for those who had sinned. However, those who participated in the actual act of the crucifixion bear a special responsibility for this death. Pilate's evil and wickedness was a knowing wickedness. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent of the charges that the Jewish religious leadership had brought against Him. He had done a public ceremonial action of washing his hands of "innocent" blood. But because he saw that a riot was forming, he caved in to the crowd and handed Jesus over to be crucified. Merely washing his hands could not release him from his participation in the evil act that took place on Good Friday. Pilate will be held especially responsible for his part in the crucifixion of Jesus because he knew that Jesus was innocent. In John's Gospel, Pilate says twice, "I find no fault in Him."

The Roman soldiers who actually carried out the crucifixion were the "ignorant wicked." They were truly men who did not know what they were doing. To them Good Friday was just another Friday. Jesus was just another Jew whom they had to crucify. But they were not content to merely crucify Jesus. They spent a fair amount of time mocking him first. They put a scarlet robe on him to symbolized his role as King of the Jews. They jammed a crown of thorns upon His head. They further mocked Him by pretending to honor him as king. They had put a staff in His right hand which they later used to beat him on the head again and again. All though this tormenting, Jesus remained silent, again fulfilling the Scriptures. Isaiah says, "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hid my face from mocking and spitting."



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I have mentioned that the Gospel writers do not give us the gory details of Jesus crucifixion. In the Greek text of Matthew's Gospel, the crucifixion is described with one word only. However, Matthew again describes in great detail the mocking which Jesus received. The most humiliating for which the mocking took occurred when the Romans took all of Jesus' clothes from him. Portraits of the crucifixion picture Jesus as having a loincloth. But the reality is that he was crucified without any clothes at all. This would have been extremely humiliating for a Jewish person.

Matthew focuses on yet another form of the humiliation that was poured out on Jesus. He focuses upon the verbal humiliation that Jesus received as hung upon the cross. One of the most humiliating things that the people said of Him was this: "He saved others but he cannot save Himself." This reveals that those who mocked Him acknowledged that he had healed and saved others. The bystanders also mocked him saying, "Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe Him." The irony of that statement is this: If Jesus had saved Himself—if he had come down from the cross—he would not have saved us. He stayed on the cross for our sakes, and for the reward that God had prepared for him. The author of Hebrews writes, "Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God."