

**Holy Week 2025**  
**“Shouting at the Cross”**  
**Matthew 27:15-23, 45-50**

I'll invite all of you to remain standing for the reading of God's Word. There's a part of me that would like to read all of Matthew 27 to you, and I did add a few verses beyond what will be on the screen, because it's so important for us to know what Jesus did and what he endured. So, I read to you from the Gospel of Matthew, verses 15 to 20, and then 39 to 44 through 50.

This is God's Word describing the work of Christ.

*Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ? The governor again said, which of the two do you want me to release you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate said, and then what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ? Let him be crucified. He said, why, what evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, let him be crucified! A little later, after Jesus is on the cross, we read this.*

*And those who derided him wagging their heads past by saying, you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself if you were the Son of God, come down from the cross. So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying he saved others. He cannot save himself. If he is the king of the Jews. Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He, trusting God, let God deliver him now if he desires him. For he said, I am the Son of God. Even the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now for about the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land. Until the ninth hour, and about the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice. That is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, this man is calling Elijah. And one of them at once ran and took a sponge filled with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the other said, wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Let's pray for a moment where there's a lot of shouting going on in this passage. Let him be crucified. Let him come down from the cross. Even Lord Jesus, you cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

*And you cried out, cried out with a loud voice, and gave your spirit to the father, committing your spirit.*

Lord, we pray that you would give us hearts to receive what you've done for us, to love you all the more. Even by this meditation we pray. In Jesus name, Amen. You may be seated.

Someone said recently that people don't talk about Maundy Thursday very much these days. Maybe it's because this comes from the Latin Maundy comes from, believe it or not, from undertone, which means command. And it allegedly over the years, has been intended to refer to the command that Jesus gave to love one another as I have loved you, love one another. Jesus said that as he was about to go to the cross, and as I have loved you, is manifest in part in the events we read about now through all the things that he did for us.

It's a lot of shouting in the gospel narratives. The crowds shout Hosanna to the Son of David! On Palm Sunday, and some of the same people stirred up by the chief priests, Matthew and Mark say cried out, crucify him! And when Pilate said, what is he done? They said, Crucify him. As if that's an answer. They just shouted.

The high priest at one point struck Jesus and shouted, prophesy to us, you, Christ, tell us who struck you from the cross? Jesus says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And then Matthew says, he gave up his spirit with a loud cry. Luke says the words were, father, into your hands I commit my spirit out of shouting.

I think that's partly because the Lord wants us to emphasize the words that Jesus spoke and the words Jesus said to him. There's a tendency that many of us have to think, perhaps a little bit too much about the pain of Christ on the cross. It's, it's got about three verses in the Bible, which makes me think we shouldn't put our emphasis there.

There's no question. It was terrible. The physical pain was terrible. Crucifixion ends with bleeding to death or suffocation. It's terrible. But as terrible as that is, the physical pain. The Gospels warn us to attend to the suffering that has to do with words and the heart, more than the blows to his flesh. What was the suffering?

Well, at the most obvious level, Jesus was suffering a curse. Curses everyone who was hung on a tree. Jesus was hung on a tree. He's suffering the curse of God, even though he didn't deserve it. You're suffering the curse of God for us as we gathered here. I trust all know he was also suffering public execution. The most humiliating possible way to die.

No. No citizen of Rome could ever be crucified. Only criminals and outcasts. Nobody's insurrectionists. Maybe slaves. Rebels could be crucified. But it's the words. It's the words the Jews shouted for the blood of Jesus. When Jesus was interrogated by High Priest, the high priest said, tell us if you're the Christ. He said, yes, yes. And from now on you will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven.

That is to say, I'm a coming on the clouds of heaven. Christ, I'm not the kind of Christ you want to make me into. I'm. I'm going to define myself by the words of Daniel. I am the Ancient of Days coming into this world. I am not coming to conquer Rome. But of course, the priests had no interest in accuracy.

They took him to pilot to get him to murder Jesus. Judicially. The pilot also asked, are you a king? And Jesus said, yes, but my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my people would fight for me. They're not fighting for me. And Pilate said, I find no cause. I find no cause in this man I see no charge.

But of course he lacked the strength of his convictions, because he loved this career far more than he loved justice. And so then he acted as if Jesus had done something that was worthy of death and pretended that Jesus was guilty, although he knew he wasn't and said, well, I have two criminals here, and you know, we have this custom of letting somebody go.

Surely you're going to want Jesus trying to get out of his duty, but stirred by the priests, the crowds said, crucify him! They shouted it, crucify him! I said, what crime is he committed? And they said, crucify him, because they knew there was no answer other than sheer rage of a crowd. Pilate washed his hands. He said, I'm innocent of this man's blood.

And the. And the Jewish people who were there said, okay, we'll take the guilt of his blood. They said, let his blood be on us and on our children. Possibly the most chilling words anybody ever spoke in human history. And yet, in God's wisdom in the gospel narratives over and over again, people tell the truth even though they don't know they're telling the truth.

Remember the high priest who said it's better for one man to perish than that the people perish? And John explicitly says, over in John chapter 11 that he said this because he was the high priest. He was speaking without knowing. God inspired him to say these words, even though he had no intention of doing so. And the people who mocked Jesus on the cross, they also told the truth without knowing it.

He saved others. You can't save myself. That's exactly true. If Jesus could save others, he would not save himself. He would not be able to come down from the cross, but not in the way they think. They think. He does have the power. But the gospel narratives, the gospel writers know that he has all the power, but also all the love to not come down.

And so when we hear these words, May his blood be on us and our children, it chills us. How can you say such a thing to call condemnation on yourself for murdering the Son of God? And yet it's their only hope that his blood will be on their heads and on their children. In a way, that's why we're here.

Although we weren't there, we would curse God apart from his grace, as surely as anybody on earth would curse God, we would curse God if he didn't stop us. Now our only hope is his blood is on us and on our children as we love them. And people kept telling the truth without knowing it. They put Jesus on the cross and they said, King of the Jews, because he is King of the Jews.

What does the king do? The king protects his people. Jesus was protecting his people from the most dire enemy of all, the last enemy, which is death.

King of the Jews. The passers by tempted him. Come down from the cross. If you're the Son of God. You said you could destroy the temple. Surely you can hop down from the cross. The priests said he saved others. You can't save himself. True, true. If you would save others, you can't save himself. It was a fist in the face of God.

And Jesus kept silent. He didn't say the words. I will not come down from the cross. I don't know most of us, honestly, if we if we were there, if we had the power to punish people for that kind of thing, we would have come down from the cross and punish them on the spot. But Jesus didn't. You know, when somebody insults us, we think of the words we would say back, you know, a week later, right?

Jesus had the words right then. He didn't utter them. Instead, he uttered another word. He shouted it, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Now people stumble over this word. They try to explain it away. They say Jesus was in so much pain. He didn't know what he was saying. They say, you know, he wasn't really forsaken by the father.

Really. He was just he just was quoting Psalm 22. So we would go back and quote Psalm 22 and read it and realize it all ends well. No, I think I think he said it because it was true. He was forsaken at that moment because he had become sin. He bore sin and became sin, gave us his righteousness.

He took the curse. The one who knew no sin became sin. And at that moment the father who was too holy, too pure to look upon sin, the Bible says, turned his face away. The father turned away. He descended into hell. The essence of hell is separation from God. Hell is hearing from Jesus away from me. You doers of iniquity.

In Jesus took on the iniquity of the world. And so the father turned away. No one knows how this can be all theological truth. All truth ends in mystery for mere humans, we can never get to the bottom of any doctrine. And so we let it stand. We wonder, how can the Triune God experience separation, the perfect union?

The father, Son of Spirit always had is somehow gone, but it is gone. It's true. It's only one of the paradoxes. Jesus, who is omniscient God said, why? You also ask questions like who touched me? Sincere questions. The omnipotent God fell under the burden of the cross. He gave up his power and the Holy God bore sin. The man named Richard Sims, who lived about 400 years ago, and he said something that I read 30 years ago and that I reread every Easter season.

He said this Jesus was never more obedient, never pleased the father more than when he uttered the words, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It's true, it's true. The father

forsook him, and he said those words because it was real, so that we would never say those words. Jesus said, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me while bearing sin, so that we would, even if we feel it, never truly say God has forsaken us because all the breach by faith, trusting in Christ, all the breach that we would ever experience between God and ourselves is gone forever.

Because the work of Christ, he had done what the father sent him to do, he said the words the father gave him the same, and so he could say something else. It is finished. That is the work that the father gave me to do is complete as high priest to atone for sin as king he protected his people.

As prophet. He said more than enough so that we could understand what he was doing and what it meant for us. And he shouted as he left this world, because he says, I laid down my life of my own accord. No one takes it from me. And so he laid down his life. He said, father, into your hands.

He didn't say, father, I'm dying. He said, father into your hands I commit my spirit. After that happened, the gospel say four more things happened in close succession. Gospel Matthew.

The first is that the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, not from bottom to top, as if a man would do it, but from top to bottom, because God did it. Because the whole temple system, all the all the veils and all the rooms and all the ranks of entry, have one purpose to keep sinners away from a holy God.

And it's doesn't need to happen anymore because Jesus covered our sin when Jesus died, some of the saints who had recently died in Jerusalem got up and walked around the city as a sign that Jesus death is resurrection of life for all who believe in him. And then third thing that happened is an earthquake struck the signified.

Something stupendous has happened. And then a Roman centurion said, surely, truly, this is a Son of God, because he is known at last by his tormentors in the moment of his death, because no one ever lived like this man, but no one ever died like this man. He says, what all the Romans and all the Jews should say at the moment.

At the moment, most people did not believe. Many of his disciples had fled, but there were people showing us how to love Christ, how to believe in him even in the most terrible hour. Joseph of Arimathea, who'd been part of the Sanhedrin, risked his status, his wealth, his freedom by saying, I'll take the body and give him a proper burial.

The women, the women sat at the feet of the cross. Even Mary's mother. I don't even know how any tears were left in her eyes. She stayed. She stayed. Sometimes that's all we need to do to

stay with Jesus and the centurion who forsook all of his people, all the mockers, all the powers he was part of, said, you know what?

I align with that guy. We were wrong to kill him. Truly. He was a son of God.

And so the words of the mockers are true.

His blood. His blood is what covers us. Friends, I hope you believe that. I call some of you friends. I know some of you by now. Others are visitors. I still call you friends. Friends? I hope that you know that his blood is on you and on your children, and that you pray that. And I hope you know that Jesus did not stay in the cross because he had to physically.

He had to spiritually. He stayed in the cross for you. By his wounds, we are healed. And so this is our hope. You've come tonight to remember. And that's good. I'm glad you're here to remember, to prepare for Good Friday or Bad Friday, depending on what you like to call it, and to prepare for Easter. But I hope that you're not only looking forward.

I hope you're savoring Jesus now as the one who gave himself for you, as the one with whom you can commune. Even in these elements, and all through your life and honestly, forever and ever, I hope that your heart. I hope that your love, your longing. I hope that you're feeling, if you have perhaps even a sorrow that's so great you can hardly stand it on this day and tomorrow.

And yet it's mixed with joy unspeakable.

Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for what you've done. We can hardly even begin to fathom it. How could we? We can't. You try to grasp a little by your spirit, by your word? We try to hold on to it, praise you for it. Help us to love you as you ought to be loved. Worshiped as you ought to be worshiped. Pray in Jesus name. Amen.