

DATE: APRIL 12, 2009 EASTER SUNDAY

TEXT: MATTHEW 27:11-31

TITLE: "JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD"



Truthfully, I am preaching a somewhat different sermon for Easter Sunday. Rather than look at just the Resurrection... I want to look at the entire crucifixion/resurrection story. We are in the middle of a series looking at the individuals who were part of the drama of the crucifixion. Thursday, we looked at Judas. Friday, we looked at Pilate. As I prepared for Friday's sermon I discovered a wealth of truth. I have decided to look at the same text this week but from a different perspective. Rather than look at Pilate I want to focus our attention on Jesus. Friday, we saw the motives and actions of Pilate. They were not hard to understand. He was a corrupt official that desired to keep the peace at any cost including the crucifixion of a man he knew to be innocent. But what about Jesus? Why did He act the way He did? What were his motives? We must never forget that Jesus had the power to stop these events immediately. If he would have defended himself I believe Pilate would have released him. He is God almighty and could have called down a host of angels to end his pain and suffering at any time. He choose not to. He never defended himself. He

suffered humiliation, great pain and suffering, and death by the cruelest of all execution methods ever conceived. This morning I want to see three lessons to help us understand the actions of Jesus.

Lesson # 1 Jesus offered no defense because we are without defense. READ *Matt 27:12*

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.

I believe Jesus was silent, defusing to defend himself for two reasons. **First**, he was choosing a path of obedience. *Isaiah 53:7* states this

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Jesus knew that He had come to this earth to die. Scripture is clear he did not desire this end.

In the Garden of Gethsemene he pleaded for a change in this plan. There was no change and he accepted his calling.

Second, Jesus refused to defend himself because he took upon himself our sins and our sinfulness is indefensible. Let me once again return to the *53rd chapter of Isaiah*. This is the great prophecy of the death of Christ. *Verse 6* tells us this

We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 gives this truth

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Out text points to the total sinfulness of humanity. Everyone was corrupt. The Governor was corrupt, the clergy were corrupt, and all the people were corrupt. We must not be too quick to point accusing fingers. When we look in the mirror we too see corruption.

Be careful to not fall into the trap of comparing yourself with other people. We say to our selves "I'm better than the Judas...I would not have betrayed Jesus." That is probable true, but it doesn't matter. Or you say to yourself "I would not have fallen to the level of corruption of Pilate.... I would not have sentenced Jesus to death." Again that may be true but it doesn't matter. Or we say to ourselves "I'm better than the crowd...I would not have cried for the crucifixion." Maybe that is true, maybe it is not but it does not matter. We must not compare ourselves to other people. Either people in the Bible or contemporaries today. Scripture tells us we must only compare ourselves to God and the standard He puts before us. When we do this we discover that we all terribly fail. **"We all fall short of the Glory of God."** We have no defense.

After our death we will stand before the judgement seat of God. *Romans 2:5,6* tells us

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up God's wrath, when his righteous judgement will be revealed. God will give each person according to what he has done

If we stand and try to plead our innocence we will fail. If we stand and compare ourselves to others, we will fail. We are without defense. Jesus took our sins. He became sin, he took on our iniquity. This is called the imputation of our sins onto Jesus. As he stood before Pilate with our sins he had no defense. This moves me on to the second lesson

Lesson # 2. Notice the substitutionary death of Christ. *Matthew 27:26* states....

he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Barabbas, the criminal, the murderer, the sinner was set free. Jesus, the innocent, was crucified.

Jesus died on the cross that was intended for Barabbas. But there is a greater truth. Jesus died on the cross that was intended for you and for me. We see this truth throughout scripture. Let me

return a third time to *Isaiah 53. This time verse 4 and 5*

Surely he took our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God...but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities.

And 1 Peter 3:18

For Christ died for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

By his death we are set free. To return to the judgement example. We can make no defense. We are absolutely, totally guilty. There will be one thing and only one thing to say "I have surrendered to Jesus and receive his punishment for my sins. We can then rely upon the promise of God found in *Romans 5:9*

Since we have now been justified (that is declared not guilty) by Christ's blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him.

Also *Colossians 1:21*

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

Our sins were imputed to Christ. He took these sin to the cross and paid the price for our sins.

He satisfied God's need for justice. He demonstrated God's great love for us. If we accept this payment we then receive the grace and the love of Christ with us. His righteousness is imputed into us. Technically this is called double imputation. Our sins are imputed into Christ, His righteousness is imputed into us.

Think with me how Barabbas must have felt as he witnessed the crucifixion. He knew that

cross was intended for him. It is most likely that the two thieves that were hanging on either side of Jesus were friends of Barabbas and had been caught at the same time. Add to that the knowledge that we have, that Jesus was not forced to hang there by the Roman officials or the Jewish leaders...he hung there by his own choice. Imagine Barabbas' feelings. Share in those feelings knowing that we too deserve to hang between those two thieves. Christ is hanging on our place.

This moves me to the final lesson for this morning

Lesson # 3 Note that our Lord suffered for us and is therefore able to understand our suffering. READ *Matthew 27: 27-31*

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Hebrews 2:18 gives these word of comfort

Because Christ Himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted

We never suffer alone. We do not have a God who is distant and aloof. We have a God who

greater than any of us understand what it is like to suffer. Jesus suffered tremendous physical pain. Jesus suffered tremendous emotional pain. Jesus suffered tremendous humiliation and mockery. Our God understands when we suffer. Yes, we as Christians suffer.... but we never suffer alone. Our Lord is always with us.

We have heard this morning the greatest news ever proclaimed. Christ died to forgive our sins. He paid the price needed for forgiveness. For us to receive this gift we must surrender to Christ. This is the truth Christianity is not something we do. Going to church doesn't make a person a Christian. Being good doesn't make a person a Christian, as we saw we can never be good enough. Not something we do... something we are. I am a Christian because I have surrendered my life to Christ and received his righteousness. Praise be to God that He understands what it is like to suffer and gives to us forgiveness and righteousness.

AMEN