



60: **Excruciating Grace** (Mt 27:32-54)

Have you ever felt like you've gone too far to be forgiven?
Thankfully, the message of the cross is that it's not too late for Guilt to meet Grace!
Today we remember and appreciate **EXCRUCIATING GRACE**,
how our crucified King bought us at a great price.

beourguest

Thanks so much for joining us today! Please register with our **CONNECT CARD**.

- Use our **WI-FI: *Worship Center Guest***

getourapp

Download our **CHURCH APP** for sermons & notes, ways to connect, upcoming events, online giving, & more.



GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



CONNECT CARD



CHURCH APP

teachingnotes

Excruciating comes from the Latin (*excruciat*), meaning "out of the cross." - a word coined to communicate inflicting intense pain. And it's on the cross that we see **the grace** of Jesus extended to **the guilty** in the most powerful way.

1 Peter 2:24-25 (NET) **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree**, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness. **By his wounds you were healed**. For you were going astray like sheep but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Today we will see that Jesus' death on the cross means...

BIG TRUTH: It's not too late for Guilt to meet Grace!

Matthew 27:32 (NIV)

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Simon was from **Cyrene**, located in North Africa (where Tripoli is today), almost 800 miles as the crow flies. Cyrene had a large Jewish population and Simon could have, like many other Jews living in foreign lands, made the trip to Jerusalem for Passover. After making this long trip, he likely stayed through Pentecost. It's possible that Simon even moved his family to Jerusalem.

Simon was pressed into service by the Romans and forced to **carry the cross** of Jesus. Contrary to many paintings and pictures, Jesus and Simon were not carrying the entire cross, but the horizontal beam known as the **patibulum** (*Latin*), as the vertical beam usually stayed in the ground where other criminals had previously been crucified.¹

Can you imagine this man later realizing that he carried the cross of the condemned, so the condemned could make him clean?

- Tradition mentions that Simon later became a follower of Jesus, and Mark mentions his two sons by name (Alexander & Rufus - [Mk 15:21](#)), as they likely were known to the Christian community whom Mark was writing to.

Simon would have likely heard this next conversation as told by Dr. Luke.

Luke 23:27-31 (NIV) A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then " they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Jesus knows the destruction that is coming for **these women** in the near future. What happens to **dry trees** compared to **green trees** which are lit on fire? Dry trees burn quickly. Judgment was coming for those who refused to submit to the Messiah, and that judgment would be awful. During the Olivet discourse, Dr. Luke notes that Jesus said...

Luke 21:20-24 (NIV) When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near...For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and **wrath against this people**. They will **fall by the sword** and will be **taken as prisoners** to all the nations. **Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles** until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

¹ Gary M. Burge, John, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 524.

Why would God let that happen? Dr. Luke quotes Jesus regarding the reason for this.

Luke 19:43-44 (NIV) The days will come upon you when your **enemies** will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They **will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls**. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Matthew 27:33-34 (NIV) They came to a place called **Golgotha** (which means "the place of the **skull**"). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

Golgotha comes from the Aramaic word meaning "skull". There IS a place in Jerusalem that you've probably seen before, a place that used to look like a skull (now deteriorating). Jesus is taken to **Golgotha**, just outside the walls of Jerusalem, a rocky place close to the road where Jews would get a terrifying warning of what happens when you defy the Roman Empire.

• "**Calvary**" is never mentioned in an English Bible, BUT...**Calvary** IS from the *Latin term "calvaria" meaning "skull"*, as found in the *Latin Vulgate* -the most popular Bible translation in the world for 1500 years.

Why did they offer Jesus **wine mixed with gall**? *What's THAT all about?* This wine expected to refresh was *NEVER intended to refresh*, but to **MOCK** - **gall** would have been incredibly bitter.

Matthew 27:35-36 (NIV) When they had **crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots**. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

Based on Dr. Luke's writing we know that they nailed the hands (wrist) and feet of Jesus to the cross (Lk 24:39-40). Anyone familiar with this story might recall that this actually fulfills a 1,000 year old prophecy from David's Psalm 22.

Psalm 22:18 (NIV) **They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.**

Matthew 27:37-38 (NIV) Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews. Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

This placard **above Jesus' head** was meant to taunt and haunt anyone claiming to be king without the approval of the Roman Empire. **Two rebels were crucified with Jesus, one on his right and one on his left**. It's likely the **two rebels** were men that Barabbas was supposed to be executed with. Either way, the cross that Jesus was on was originally intended to hold Barabbas. Jesus' death further fulfills the prophecy from Isaiah 53:12, as He was **numbered with the rebels** (NET, CSB)

Matthew 27:39-44 (NIV) Those who passed by **hurled insults at him**, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders **mocked him**. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. **He trusts in God. Let God rescue him** now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also **heaped insults on him**.

This mocking fulfilled what the Scriptures declared 1,000 years before...

Psalm 22:6-8 (NIV) But I am a worm and not a man, **scorned by everyone, despised** by the people. All who see me **mock me**; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. "**He trusts in the LORD,**" they say, "**let the LORD rescue him**. Let Him deliver him, since he delights in Him."

Sometime after this **one of the criminals crucified next to Jesus changes his tune**, from one who had insulted Jesus, to saying,

Luke 23:42-43 (NIV) Then he said, "Jesus, **remember me** when you come into **your kingdom**." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, **today you will be with me in paradise**."

That man found out that...

BIG TRUTH: It's not too late for Guilt to meet Grace!

Matthew 27:45-47 (NIV)

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**"). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

Eli is short for **Elohim** (God), but it is short for **Elijah** (Heb. Elyah) as well. Eli-God + Yah (Yahweh) = Yahweh is God.

Jesus is quoting Psalm 22 which begins with the same thing Jesus cried out. Our sins had been put on Jesus and His sacrifice was almost completed.

Matthew 27:48-50 (NIV) Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, **he gave up his spirit.**

The King has been killed, completing the prophesied plan, to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29).

The apostle John's gospel recalls what Jesus **cried out in a loud voice** just before He died, "It is finished!" (Jn 19:30). The single Greek word John translates into Greek is *tetelestai*, used often in this sense on ancient Greek receipts, "Paid in full." And that IS the claim of the New Testament writings, that what happened on this wicked, wonderful day...was **Excruciating Grace.**

Matthew 27:51-53 (NIV) At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

This is the only Gospel that mentions **holy people who had died** being **raised to life** after the resurrection of Jesus. What an incredible proof of Jesus' resurrection & authority! And what a great hope of what we look forward to - the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns! More about this NEXT WEEK.

The **curtain of the temple was torn in two top to bottom**. Of the **13 curtains in the temple**, many scholars suppose this was largest and most grand curtain that separated every person from the Most Holy Place - where the Ark of the Covenant used to sit.

According to the Mishnah (first written collection of Jewish oral traditions), this curtain was 60 feet high and 30 feet wide ², very heavy with layer upon layer of folded fabric woven with expensive yarns from Babylon in blue, white, red, and purple with images of angels.³ It was **torn in tow from top to bottom**, as if slashed in two by a great sword of God. WHY?

- This speaks to the future judgment of those who rejected *the TRUE TEMPLE of God - the Messiah*. The man-made temple & city would be destroyed in judgment.
- The tearing of the curtain demonstrates **the access that the death of Jesus gives to all who trust in Him**. No longer does anyone need a high priest & an unblemished sacrifice as Jesus fulfills BOTH of those roles - forever! You can read more about this in the writing we call **Hebrews**.

Matthew 27:54 (NIV) When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were **terrified**, and exclaimed, "**Surely he was the Son of God!**"

These were the same men given the responsibility to execute Jesus by crucifixion. While they probably don't know exactly who Jesus is they had been a part of many executions and never seen anything like this:

- Jesus insulted by His own people, hearing them mock Jesus & taunt Jesus saying, "**Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God.**" (Mt 27:40)
- Jesus showing grace to others (e.g. Jesus telling John and his mother to take care of one another - Jn 19:25-27).
- Jesus showing grace talking to the criminal crucified next to Him.
- Watching the 3 hours of darkness in the middle of the day, followed by an earthquake!

What these soldiers saw had left them **terrified**. They probably understand that **God is ANGRY** because of how **the Son of God** has been treated...*and that includes THEM!*

We later hear of other Roman soldiers coming to follow Jesus. I wonder if they understood that THEY TOO realized that...

BIG TRUTH: It's not too late for Guilt to meet Grace!

There's no doubt that Matthew's purpose for pointing this out was that WE would trust that Jesus is the Son of God, that WE TOO would recognize WHO Jesus really is and respond appropriately.

Are you thankful for this Excruciating Grace?

1 Peter 2:24-25 (NET) **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree**, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness. **By his wounds you were healed**. For you were going astray like sheep but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

- ① Have you been forgiven?
- ② Are you livin' forgiven? (That includes forgiving others.)
- ③ Are you telling others how they can be forgiven?

² Michael J. Wilkins, Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 904-905.

³ R. Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 391-392.

heretoseveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Rob & Rebecca Leatherberry** (229-232-1087), or **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged you, encouraged you, or left you scratching your head, from today's teaching?
2. **Read Psalm 22:1, 6-8, 15-18.** Knowing that this was written 1,000 years before the death of Jesus, name how these prophecies were fulfilled according **Matthew 27:32-50.**
3. **Read Matthew 27:51.** What does the tearing of the temple curtain symbolize in the context of Jesus' death? How does it relate to accessing God's presence?
4. **Read Matthew 27:54.** The soldiers, who initially mocked Jesus, eventually called Jesus "The Son of God" after witnessing the extraordinary events of the crucifixion.
 - a. How does the transformation of the soldiers challenge us in the way we perceive those who initially reject or mock faith?
 - b. Take a few minutes and talk about what the soldiers would have seen, heard, and participated in that day.
5. **Read 1 Peter 2:24-25.** Explain the correlation between *being forgiven* & *livin' forgiven*. Consider digging into this statement and talking further about it: "We can't live for the things Jesus died to pay for, anymore." How can we avoid the trap of taking that grace for granted, and instead, let it transform our actions and relationships?
6. How can we effectively share the message that "It's not too late for guilt to meet grace" with others who feel weighed down by their past? Share some ways we can be more intentional about showing the grace of Jesus to those around us, especially those who seem "guilty" or unworthy in the eyes of the world.
7. How can we pray for/care for one another this week? (Pray for one another.)