

Title: The Christ, The Cross, and the Condemnation

Text: Matt 27:15-50

Life often presents dilemmas. There are seasons of life that it seems we move from one dilemma to the next. One of the things we pride ourselves on is our ability to figure out the dilemma that we are in. We see and understand the problem, and then we figure out a way to get out of that problem.

They write books about problem-solving and even offer classes on the subject.

But there is one problem that we all have that we can't work our way out of. We are stuck! There is nothing that we can do to get out of this particular dilemma.

And here's the bad news, if we do not escape this dilemma, we will forever pay for it!

What's the dilemma?

Well, I know that this isn't a popular notion, but it's true, nonetheless.

Our dilemma is that we have broken God's Law! We have all lied, stolen, cheated, and had other gods before the One True God. We haven't loved our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. We've looked at others and lusted after them. We've coveted our neighbors' stuff and even their spouses. The list goes on and on.

And I am guilty of these things and more - so don't say I'm judging you, because I'm not - I'm just pointing out the first part of our dilemma.

We've broken God's law!

What's the second part of the dilemma? There is a price to pay for breaking His law. A steep price. An eternal price - Separation from Him and everything! This is the very definition of the word Hell.

It's where we get our phrase, *"There will be Hell to pay!"*

Maybe you're thinking, Wow, I thought this was a message about Good Friday!

Well, actually, it is!

There is a solution to our dilemma, and it has everything to do with Good Friday! So, if you'll give me a little of your time, you will be blessed with what you learn!

Main Sermon Idea: Good Friday is the Perfect Solution to Our Dilemma!

Okay, so we've already established that we are all in a challenging dilemma - we have all sinned against God and the bible says,

Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death..."

We deserve eternal punishment - this is our terrible dilemma!

So, what is the solution?

By the way, the solution isn't anything you can do. Rather it is something that has been done for you. This is why we celebrate Good Friday! Because, what happened this day, some 2000 years ago is the most horrific, yet beautiful event in human history.

And this beautiful, horrific event contains three crucial components.

The Christ

The Cross

The Condemnation.

Let's take a look at each...

1. The Christ: The Perfect Man for the Job (vs. Matt 27:15-21)

Lead in... From Genesis 3:15, just after the fall of mankind, God started revealing His plan through His man - the Messiah, the Christ, to redeem the lost. To purchase redemption for an undeserving, lost people.

As Scripture continues to reveal this concept, it becomes more and more clear that this savior isn't simply a conquering king, but a suffering servant as well. Isaiah 53 makes this perfectly clear as the prophet predicts some 700 years before, the events that took place on Calvary to purchase our redemption.

The Christ is the perfect man for this special job. Take a look at Matthew 27:15-21...

Matthew 27:15-21 ESV

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ 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?" ¹⁸ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. ¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas."

The Christ predicted for thousands of years. Pictures and types of this Messiah were foreshadowed for centuries. And now, the time had finally arrived.

Very early Friday morning after the illegal trials of the Jewish leaders took place. Jesus finds himself standing before the Governor of the land.

Pilate knows what's going on here and doesn't really want to have anything to do with this. He is desperately trying to keep the peace. This is why he offers Barabbas.

"Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas (a notorious criminal), or Jesus who is called Christ?"

Pilate wanted to give them a huge contrast between the guilty and the innocent. He hoped they were reasonable people and would choose the innocent.

They, however, were not reasonable. The Chief Priests and the Scribes had gotten the crowds so riled up there was no reasoning with them. There was no placating them. There was no solution other than to give them what they wanted.

Pilate even went against the counsel of his wife who said, *"Have nothing to do with that RIGHTEOUS man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream."*

That INNOCENT man! That RIGHTEOUS Man!

They, the Chief Priests, Scribes as well as the whole crowd deliberately chose a hardened, notorious criminal over the innocent and righteous Jesus.

But friends, as I have told you countless times, Jesus was no helpless victim. He was right where He wanted to be. His aim, His goal was the cross!

Why? Because this is why the Christ came!

Matthew 1:16–17 ESV

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. ¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Luke 24:25–27 ESV

²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

The Christ was sent by God to rescue people from their sin.

Matthew 1:21 ESV

²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

There is only one who is capable of this and He is the Christ! Being the second person of the trinity/the Son of God, makes the Christ capable. Being the Son of man make him qualified.

The creator of an elaborate machine. It breaks down.

Bill for \$10,000

The builder of the machine was the perfect man for the job.

Jesus Christ, The God of the universe / the God-man is exactly the perfect man for the job. And the astounding thing is He not only knew this, but He acted on it!

Philippians 2:4–8 ESV

⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This day of all days is a wonderful day to remember the Christ! Remember the One who willingly gave up his life for the ransom of many. For your ransom!

Because of Christ, you have the opportunity for freedom from the ramifications of sin and eternal freedom with our God!

Review - Good Friday is the Perfect Solution to Our Dilemma!

- The Christ: The Perfect Man for the Job

2. The Cross: The Perfect Tool for Punishment (vs. Matt 27:24-50)

We have discussed the perfect Christ who willingly gave up his life, but the method of death used could have been anything - But it was a cross. Why a cross?

Let's get back to the story in Matthew...

Matthew 27:24–50 ESV

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵ And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him. ³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their

heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

There is so much in this narrative that you should really spend time meditating on.

But the one thing I want us to focus on is the method chosen. Crucifixion! There are four aspects of crucifixion I'd like to point out to you!

I received much of this information from an article I found called...

4 Powerful Facts About the Cross of Christ & His Crucifixion by Pastor Sam Storms

The Pain of Crucifixion - The church has grown calloused to the horror of the cross...People wear the symbol around their necks - It's like wearing a small gold electric chair around one's neck. Gruesome. And frankly, an electric chair is far more merciful.

There was a great deal of pain. In fact, the Romans designed crucifixion to be as painful as possible while keeping the victim alive for as long as possible (it's where we get our word excruciating from).

The cross was either in the shape of a T or an X with arms and legs affixed by nails and ropes. Nails piercing the arms or wrists or even palms of the hand to the wood beneath.

Feet on top of each other on the T shaped Cross or spread apart on the X shaped variety. The height of the cross was so that the feet would be about two feet off the ground so that wild dogs and animals could eat them alive.

Martin Hengel (Crucifixion, 9) quotes Pseudo-Manetho as saying, "Punished with limbs outstretched, they see the stake as their fate; they are fastened and nailed to it in the most bitter torment, evil food for birds of prey and grim pickings for dogs."

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/10-things-every-christian-should-know-about-the-cross.html>

The nails used were more like spikes - large enough to ensure someone would stay fixed to the beams.

They often times would include a little seat...

*“Often times a small peg or block of wood, called a **se-deck-ula**, was fixed midway up the vertical beam, providing a seat of sorts. Its purpose was to prevent premature collapse and thus prolong the victim's agony.” **Ibid.***

This was a horrifically painful process!

The Death from Crucifixion - This was no quick and painless procedure. It was purposely a long and drawn-out process for this reason. To demonstrate to lawbreakers or those who would dare oppose Rome that they would die a long, gruesome, and painful death. In short, it was meant to send a powerful message to deter people from opposing the Law of Rome.

D. A. Carson summarizes:

*“Whether tied or nailed to the cross, the victim endured countless convulsions as he pulled with his arms and pushed with his legs to keep his chest cavity open for breathing and then collapsed in exhaustion until the demand for oxygen demanded renewed convulsions. The scourging, the loss of blood, the shock from the pain, all produced agony that could go on for days, ending at last by suffocation, cardiac arrest, or loss of blood. When there was reason to hasten death, the execution squad would smash the victim's legs. Death followed almost immediately, either from shock or from collapse that cut off breathing” (574). **Ibid.***

So, Death would eventually come – but it purposely took a very long time!

The Humiliation of Crucifixion - There was no more humiliating way to die than by crucifixion. One was literally naked and bleeding for hours and even days. Exposed to the elements and the gazing, judgmental eyes of the curious onlookers.

This is why the Apostle Paul says what he says in...

1 Corinthians 1:18–25 ESV

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

*“the message of salvation through faith in a crucified Savior was deemed “foolishness” and a “stumbling-block” because the cross was itself the embodiment and emblem of the most hideous of human obscenities. The cross was a symbol of reproach, degradation, humiliation, and disgust. It was aesthetically repugnant. In a word, the cross was obscene.” **Ibid***

Israel's King on a Cross was laughable!! Why would anyone one believe in a defeated King?

The Curse of Crucifixion - For the Romans, crucifixion was a demonstration of the powerlessness of the victim. For the Jew however, the crucifixion was a demonstration of God's curse upon them.

To be clear, the God who orchestrated this way of death for the Christ before the beginning of time also wrote these words through Moses...

Deuteronomy 21:23 ESV

²³ his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

Carson - In Jewish law (see Deut. 21:23) "the corpse of a judicially executed criminal was hung up for public exposure that branded him as cursed by God. The words were also applied in Jesus' day to anyone crucified; and therefore the Jews' demand that Jesus be crucified rather than banished was aimed at arousing maximum public revulsion toward him" (Carson, 574). Ibid.

Galatians 3:13 ESV

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

And this is the point of the crucifixion, isn't it? Jesus was in fact cursed by God! Cursed that you would no longer be!

John 3:36 (ESV)

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

The Pain, Death, Humiliation, and the Curse! All of the reasons for the crucifixion fit together so well!

God's method for crushing His son was meant to demonstrate His disdain for sin, His process to fulfill prophecy, and ultimately cause the innocent Holy one to pay the criminal's debt, our debt so before God, we could be debt free!

Isaiah 53:3–5 ESV

³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Why would the Father crush the Son?

John 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Review - Good Friday is the Perfect Solution to Our Dilemma!

- The Christ: The Perfect Man for the Job
- The Cross: The Perfect Tool for Punishment

3. The Condemnation: The Perfect Punishment for the Crime (vs. Romans 8:1-4)

There was a terrible crime committed when Adam rebelled against God's law. Actually, crimes committed since the time when Adam rebelled to today, countless crimes or sin have been perpetrated against God. And because of this, God, to remain true to his holiness and justice must punish! But who shall pay for these crimes against God?

Well, this is the best part of Good Friday! You can be spared the eternal punishment that you are destined to pay. This can change today! If you but "put on Christ" you can be saved from His wrath. Listen to the words of the apostle Paul...

Romans 8:1-4 ESV

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

No condemnation! We who are in Christ are SET FREE! Sin and death hold no power over us any longer!

God sent His son in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh!

God fulfilled His righteous and holy and perfect law through Christ's death so we can walk according to the Spirit!

This is the beautiful Gospel message - This is what makes Good Friday so Good!

You see, eternal hell is the proper punishment for breaking God's law.

James 2:10 ESV

¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

And we are guilty of all of it! We have all broken his Ten Commandments over and over. And so, we must pay for the crime!

But there is One who is willing to pay for your crime! And that One is Jesus Christ, the Son of God! God Himself. God requires punishment for breaking His law and God is willing to pay this punishment through Christ!

Standing before the judge...

Jesus didn't write a check of one million dollars to free you, He paid for your crime with His very own blood!

Romans 5:7-9 ESV

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

For those of you that are SAVED FROM THE WRATH OF GOD, this is be best Good Friday ever!

2 Peter 3:9 ESV

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

This is why Christ willingly hung on the cross! So, you would no longer stand condemned before God!

Review - Good Friday is the Perfect Solution to Our Dilemma!

- The Christ: The Perfect Man for the Job
- The Cross: The Perfect Tool for Punishment
- The Condemnation: The Perfect Punishment for the Crime

Conclusion

So, hopefully you not only understand that you, if you are not a follower of Christ, are in a dilemma. A dilemma with very serious consequences.

But hopefully you also understand that the dilemma has be solved for you by God himself!

***"The first Adam, originally** created in the righteousness of God, by his sin stripped us naked. The last Adam, suffering the shame of nakedness, by his obedience clothes us in the righteousness of God." - Sam Storms*

Won't you trust what Christ has accomplished for you? He loves you so much, He not only was willing to endure the horror of the Cross, but also, He bore the wrath of God, so you won't need to!

That really puts the "Good" in "Good Friday!"

Do you know what would make this an even better Friday? If you accepted His free gift of salvation!