

The Day That Changed the World: Jesus is the Son of God

A 5-Day Devotional Guide

Day 1: The King on a Cross

Scripture

"Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 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!'"

Matthew 27:37–40

Thought for the Day

Pilate's sign was meant to mock, not honour: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." He didn't write "He claims to be King," he simply gave Jesus the title, dripping with sarcasm and contempt. Yet in God's hands, the sign becomes a proclamation of truth – Jesus really is the long-promised King, descended from David, the true King of the Jews whose throne is a wooden cross and whose crown is made of thorns.

This is not the king anyone expected: no army, no weapon, no visible power, just sacrificial love made visible in weakness and suffering. On the day the world thought it had executed a criminal, God was actually enthroning a King.

Reflection

- Where have you underestimated Jesus by expecting Him to look more "impressive" or powerful by the world's standards?
- In what ways does Jesus' throne (a cross) challenge your idea of what real power and greatness look like?
- Where might you be tempted to join Pilate at a distance – keeping Jesus at arm's length, slightly mocking or slightly cautious – rather than bowing before Him as King?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that you are the true King, even when you don't look like the kind of king I expect. Thank you that Pilate's mocking sign proclaimed the truth about you. Rescue me from judging you by human standards of power and success. Help me to bow my heart before your cross today and to recognise you as my King. Amen.

Day 2: The Son of God Who Stayed

Scripture

"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."

Matthew 27:39–44

Thought for the Day

The passers-by and religious leaders hurled insults at Jesus: "Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" In their minds, the ultimate test of divinity was self-rescue – surely a real Son of God would never suffer like this, never submit to humiliation and pain.

But the shocking truth is that Jesus had the power to come down and chose not to.

His power is seen not in escaping suffering, but in staying in it for our sake; not in tyranny, but in sacrifice. It's not that God was too weak to intervene – it's that His love was too strong to walk away.

Reflection

- Where do you find yourself thinking, "If God really loved me, He would stop this suffering"?
- How does Jesus choosing to stay on the cross, when He could have come down, change the way you see your own pain or unanswered questions?
- Are there places where you're still "testing" God by demanding that He prove Himself according to your expectations?

Prayer

Jesus, Son of God, thank you that you had the power to come down from the cross but chose to stay for me. Forgive me when I assume that love always means instant rescue and comfort. Help me to trust your heart when I don't understand your ways. Let your sacrifice reshape how I see my own suffering, and teach me to rest in your costly love. Amen.

Day 3: The Day Heaven Spoke

Scripture

"From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land... And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split."

Matthew 27:45, 50–51

Thought for the Day

For three hours, darkness covered the land – not just clouds or a brief eclipse, but a supernatural sign that something cosmic was taking place. Then Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and "gave up his spirit"; His death was deliberate, a voluntary act of obedience rather than a life snatched from Him unwillingly.

At that moment, the earth shook and the rocks split – creation itself responding to the death of its Creator. Heaven was not silent; the signs around the cross declared that this was no ordinary death and no ordinary man. The day the world thought it had finished with Jesus was the day God was finishing His rescue plan.

Reflection

- How do the darkness and earthquake challenge the idea that the cross was just another tragic execution?
- Where in your life have you been tempted to see Jesus' death as distant "religious history" rather than God's decisive intervention for you?
- What difference does it make to know that Jesus "gave up" His spirit – that He chose to go all the way to death out of obedience and love?

Prayer

Father, thank you that the cross was not your plan gone wrong but your plan completed. Thank you for the supernatural signs that point to the significance of Jesus' death. Help me never to treat the cross as ordinary or familiar. Move my heart again with the reality that Jesus chose to die for me, to finish your rescue plan for humanity. Amen.

Day 4: From Mockers to Worshippers

Scripture

"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!'"

Matthew 27:54

Thought for the Day

The Roman soldiers had seen it all – they were professionals in death, hardened by violence and cruelty. They were the first to mock Jesus, dressing Him in a robe, pushing the crown of thorns onto His head, and beating Him. Yet by the end of the day, after watching His composure, His silence, His dignity, and the supernatural signs around His death, their hearts were shaken.

Terrified by what they had seen, they exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" – the first to proclaim out loud who Jesus really is. Mockers became witnesses, and their words echo through history, inviting us to join their realisation and their confession.

Reflection

- Where do you most identify with the soldiers – cynical, hardened, used to pain, or even mocking faith?
- What "evidence" in your own life or experience has been nudging you toward the conclusion that Jesus really is the Son of God?
- If you were to honestly say, "Surely he is the Son of God," what would that change about the way you live, speak, or worship?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that even hardened soldiers could have their eyes opened at the foot of your cross. Soften my heart where it has grown cynical or defensive. Help me to see what they saw – your dignity under pressure, your sacrificial love, and the signs of your power. Give me the courage to confess with my mouth and heart that you are the Son of God. Amen.

Day 5: Who Do You Say He Is?

Scripture

"But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'"

Matthew 16:15–16

"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!'"

Matthew 27:54

Thought for the Day

Jesus once asked His disciples, "Who do you say I am?" and Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Later, at the cross, a Roman centurion echoed that confession: "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Across Matthew's account, people take different positions – Pilate keeps his distance, the crowd passes by and hurls insults, the religious leaders sneer, the followers are scared and silent, the soldiers move from mockery to worship. The question comes to us too: where are we standing? With Pilate, the hecklers, the distant followers, or the soldiers who finally recognise the truth?

Today is an opportunity not just to admire Jesus from afar, but to recognise and proclaim Him as our King and our God.

Reflection

- Who do you most identify with: Pilate, the passers-by, the frightened followers, or the soldiers – and why?
- What holds you back from openly speaking the name of Jesus where you live, work, or study?
- What would it look like, this week, to take one concrete step of publicly acknowledging Jesus – in a conversation, a decision, or an act of obedience?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, today I choose to answer your question: you are the Messiah, the Son of God, my King. Forgive me for the times I've kept you at a distance or stayed silent when I should have spoken. Give me courage to speak your name outside the safety of church, and to live as someone who belongs to you. Mocked as a criminal, crowned as my King – I worship you and proclaim you as Lord of my life. Amen.

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