

Matthew 27:1-31
What Makes Good Friday Good?
Sermon Outline

Introduction: There are lots of religions out there. The strangest of them is Christianity, since it features as its center-piece the brutal judicial murder of its founder. Matthew does not run away from this strangeness but rather forces it upon us, making us ask, Why?

I) Jesus' death was a vicious miscarriage of justice

A) The man was innocent

B) The hatred driving Jesus' death was vicious and determined

C) The treatment to which Jesus was subjected was horrific

II) Why did this happen?

A) Jesus was a false Messiah

B) He was a threat to Jewish authority

v. 18: Pilate knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up

C) Jesus was a threat to the kingdom of darkness

The strange citation from Jeremiah (Zechariah 11:4-17)

- Citation of a part implies the citation of the whole
- The faithful shepherd: *Become a shepherd of the flock doomed for slaughter (11.4)*
- The foolish shepherd (11.15)
- Exceedingly bleak picture—of both sheep and shepherds

Matthew's meaning

- Sacred history reaching its climax

D) It was God's plan

Meaning for us

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Why do we call Good Friday 'good'?
- 2) Compare Peter to Judas. Both deeply regretted what they had done, but one took his life while the other did not. Why the difference? What does it teach us about the difference between remorse and repentance?
- 3) Note the qualms in the chief priests' discussion over what to do with the money that Judas returns. What is ironic about it?
- 4) Notice that the people do not simply cry, "Kill him!" They cry, "Let him be crucified!" What is the difference between wanting someone dead and wanting someone crucified?
- 5) It was not uncommon for Jews in Matthew's day to assume that Jesus had been crucified because God was cursing him for being a false Messiah. How does Matthew address this explanation? Notice, in particular, all the evidence of Jesus' innocence.
- 6) Another explanation for the death of Jesus is that he had infuriated and frightened the Jewish leaders. How had he done this? Does this fully explain his judicial murder?
- 7) Look up Colossians 2:13-15. What, according to Paul, was happening as Jesus died and what were the results of his suffering?
- 8) Matthew makes vivid that Jesus was not only innocent, but also God's true Messiah (see Matthew 1:21) and beloved Son (Matthew 3:17). Why then did God let this happen to him?