

HOME GROUP QUESTIONS FROM SERMON 6th April 2025

Sermon – Matthew 27:32-56 – Personal / Group Study and Reflection

“From His Suffering To Our Healing”

Matthew 27:32-56 (English Standard Version)

The Crucifixion

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.

The Death of Jesus

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land[g] 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. 9 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.

51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son[i] of God!” 55 There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The following questions relate to the morning 8.30 and 10.30 services on Sunday 6th April 2025 (available on the church website).

Feel free to pick and choose questions / sub-questions as appropriate for your group’s interest, preferred study style and time available. They are simply there to facilitate good discussion / reflection. Do **NOT** feel you need to go through them all.

(1) Opening Icebreaker.

- (a) To what extent do you take what people do for you for granted, especially if it involves sacrifice on their part?
- (b) Does this extend to the crucifixion, especially as it is such a familiar event, and how special is Easter to you?

(2) His Physical Suffering. Jesus suffered excruciating pain on the cross but Matthew's focus is interestingly more on factors which made His suffering so hard than on details about the crucifixion itself.

(a) What messages about Jesus' death is Matthew conveying with his focus on Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross, the darkness that enveloped the land, and Jesus refusing a narcotic drink to deaden the pain? How does this make you feel?

(3) His Emotional and Spiritual Suffering. Matthew stresses how Jesus was rejected and forsaken on the cross.

- (a) In what ways exactly is Jesus rejected and forsaken by Jews, Gentiles and His own Father?
- (b) How could the Father forsake His Son (v46), especially given the Trinity is the perfect model of a loving relationship and Jesus was totally blameless? What does this tell us?
- (c) Are there times when you have been rejected or forsaken and how did you respond?
- (d) If you have been rejected / forsaken, to what extent have you been able to turn Jesus for comfort given that he has experienced total rejection, understands what you have been through, and intercedes for you? Has this helped or not?

(4) Our Role in His Suffering. In Isaiah 53:5, the prophet foretells that the Messiah "was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities".

- (a) When you think about the crucifixion story, to what extent do you apportion all the blame onto those involved (e.g. religious establishment, Pilate, crowd)?
- (b) How do you see your own involvement in Jesus' suffering? To what extent do you downplay your own sin (e.g. not as bad as sin of some others around me or in the news; nothing like those wicked people at the time)?
- (c) When you reflect afresh on your complicity in His Suffering, how does it make you feel and how does it make you want to respond?

(5) Our Healing. Jesus died for a purpose. Not just to take the punishment we deserved but to bring us healing in multiple ways. Isaiah 53:5 goes on to say, "the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed".

- (a) Jesus's death was accompanied by dramatic events in v51-53 (e.g. temple curtain being torn in two, dead bodies being raised and going around Jerusalem). How do you understand these dramatic events and in what senses might they represent the ushering in of "healing"? Think about what the word "healing" might encompass.
- (b) Why do you think Isaiah focuses on our "peace" as an outcome of Jesus's suffering and punishment, and what is this peace? Think about what the word "peace" (Hebrew word "Shalom") might encompass. Can you identify personally with this?