

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

In Our Place

PART

3

TITLE

Condemned

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:15-26



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Good morning to you Providence. It is great to see you this morning. If you're joining us online we say good morning to you as well. If you're a first time guest, we say, thank you for being with us. If you have your Bibles, Matthew chapter 27. So Matthew chapter 27. When we see someone sacrifice for the good of another, it's inspiring, it's life-giving, it's admirable. This week a gentleman that I've followed over the years, because just keeping track with him has been inspiring to my own life, there's a man name Dick Hoyt who died at age 80 this week. Dick had a son named Rick who was born in 1962. And in 1962 when Rick was born he was born paralyzed completely, from the neck all the way down.

As he got older he told his dad he would love to maybe, potentially have dad push him in races. He filled with a sense of freedom even in those races. Well, dad began to train and as dad trained, he began to push his son in multiple races, as a matter of fact, together they did 32 Boston Marathons. They did 257 triathlons, six of those were the Ironman Race, where he actually swam and pulled his son in a boat and as he pulled him for two miles in the ocean, he got out, got on a bike had a special bike with a seat on the front for his son to sit and he would bike 112 miles and then he would run a full marathon, the Ironman, of 26 miles in one setting. That's not three different events. And he did it with his son.

As a matter of fact, in Boston now, they have commemorated his life and legacy of doing this, even before he passed, he passed in his sleep this week, there's a statue of Dick pushing his son, Rick, in that special wheelchair that he made to do all of these races. And when you think of one who sacrifices so much for another, it's not only noteworthy but it's worthy of celebration. And when you think of the one who has sacrificed more than any that's ever, ever lived, Jesus, the Christ, it's noteworthy of celebration. The one who endured not just running a race but a unique race, a race where he was condemned, a race where he felt rejection and a race where he ended his life on a cross, absorbing God's wrath, then being buried and then victoriously, rising from the dead.

Isaiah 53 says it like this, "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and by his wounds we are healed." It should have been us, and it was him. It was him who was betrayed, we looked at, it was him who was accused, it was him who was condemned. This month we're looking at the steps that Jesus took in hopes that come Easter morning, we will celebrate the most glorious events in the history of the world with a new, wakened affection for the Savior. I probably won't wait for two weeks to talk about the resurrection. We'll get to that this morning as well. But to think of the one who's lived a life you and I can not live, and died the death you and I deserve and was buried and then raised from the dead, this is what we call the Good News. This is the Good News. And he did it in our place, condemned in our place. So let me pray and we will read our text.

Father, I pray that you would as you have been gracious to sustain this morning that you would sustain another hour and for this hour, God, would you speak and move and use your word by the power of your Spirit to continue to grip our affections, our allegiance, our joy. God, would you do it this hour we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Matthew chapter 27, the text gets extremely intense. He is then turned over to go to trial. And he is brought before the Roman Governor, who, we will see what the crowds want done to the Savior as we read picking up in verse 15. Verse 15 says, “Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 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?’ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. 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.’ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

The governor again said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ And they said, ‘Barabbas.’ Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said, ‘Let him be crucified.’ And he said, ‘Why? What evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let him be crucified.’ 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.’ And all the people answered, ‘His blood,’ Oh do they know what they’re saying? ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.”

Just let the text land on you for just a moment. I want to show us, this morning, three truths about Jesus that I pray to God, would stir your affections for him. Notice the first, Jesus encountered the condemnation of injustice. Jesus encountered the condemnation of injustice. The most unjust act in all of judicial cases in the history of the world is being discussed in this text. This is the crescendo of the trial. The most lob-sided conversation that’s ever taken place in any courtroom is being discussed in the very presence of the Holy One, Jesus, the Christ, who had never sinned. The most shocking option cast by the crowd and the religious leaders that has ever been offered. We want the prisoner, and the innocent one you take and crucify him. The Son of God who had healed sickness and given sight to blindness and extended forgiveness to sinners and raised dead people to life, he is on trial.

He’s been handed over to the Roman Government. I mean, this is, if you’re a lawyer, this is the easiest of all courtroom cases. This is the no-brainer, this is the simple decision. But no, not this trail full of injustice, no, not those navigating their popularity and their power. Wanting to condemn one who’s never sinned and oh, the one who deserves no condemnation, encounters these conversations with not a word. Did you notice the text of everybody that was speaking, in the text the one person that didn’t speak on the text is the Son of God. Oh, yeah, his silence speaks volumes, 700 years before this day the truth of Isaiah would be fulfilled on this day. It says, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”

Not a word. And notice the text in verse 15, notice how interesting for Matthew to help us know exactly what is going on during this time, it says, "Now at the feast." Do you see that? "Now at the feast." What feast is this that they are celebrating in the midst of this trial, in the courtrooms in a sense a trial's going on in the city of festivals going on. A huge feast, it's the Passover feast, of the 365 days in a year, eight days the Passover is celebrated and it's within these eight days that all of this is going down. The Passover, can you imagine that for a moment? Do you remember there was a famine in the land back in the Old Testament, and the Israelites, they moved from up north, down south to Egypt and as they got down to Egypt and by God's grace, he used a man named Joseph to provide for them and as he provided for them in multiple years of famine, they stayed. The Israelites stayed in Egypt. And they began to grow in number and as they began to grow in number, the leaders of Egypt were like, "They're going to outgrow us and take over us, something must be done." So they put them into slavery, put them into bondage. They put them into bondage for 100s of years, they cried out to God for delivery.

God in his grace raised up Moses who would deliver them from slavery. But it was only a foreshadowing of one who would come and who would deliver us from sin. And he sent Moses to speak to the leaders there and he told them to let his people go and they rejected him and so one plague after another plague and over a period of time, 10 plagues. The 10th plague comes and the 10th plague is the killing of the firstborn of all the land. And God is serious, he's indicting judgment on them for taking his people into slavery. And this is what verse 12 of Exodus 12 says, "On that same night, I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals. And I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord, the blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."

Oh, the irony of the text. It's Passover. Listen, if your great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandparents experienced that type of deliverance, you were at the city celebrating this feast. For he had delivered, think about this, the nation is celebrating a great deliverance when the Deliverer himself is on trial. John would call him, The Lamb of God, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The very Savior himself, is on trial. The very Lamb who would shed his blood for the forgiveness of sin, is on trial while they celebrate the Passover in the city. Oh listen, the condemnation that's coming on Christ, oh my, would be such that he would be willing to shed his blood for even those who put him on the cross. Notice the text, the text says that there was a custom, this custom was to release one person for them, and so they asked and the text describes him as a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.

He's a notorious prisoner because he had caused this insurrection among the Roman Government and the crowds actually see him as a hero in one sense and then the religious leaders who are quickly spreading the word to the crowds to have him crucified because they are intimidated by him, they are jealous of him, they are the self-righteous religious leaders of the day who want nothing to do with this Jesus. And so, it's the perfect storm, it's the perfect storm as the crowds are growing and the rioting is rising and the noise is loud and yet, is it not the providential plot of God thickening right before our eyes in the text? And then comes the

most alarming question in verse 17, do you see it in verse 17? So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Who do you want me to release for you? Barabbas or Jesus, the Christ?” Verse 18 tells us, “For he knew, Pilate, that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.” The jealousy, the envy, Oh, jealousy, listen, it has the power of wanting others destroyed because you don’t have what they have.

And the good news of the Gospel is that Jesus was destroyed for us so we would have no need of what others have. We would not need the approval of man, but can rest in God’s approval demonstrated by his love. For that while we were yet sinners, he condemned Jesus rather than us. Jesus condemned wrongly, yet we’re made right by his substitution and his sacrifice. This is good news in a bad news world. Jesus, listen he encountered, he’s leaning in and listening but he’s not giving lip service, he’s not defending, he knows what is about to happen. So notice the second truth, Jesus, he embraced, not only did he encounter, but he embraced the condemnation of all humanity. Now notice the irony, it gets thick, you notice in verse 19, verse 19 says besides, “While he, Pilate, was sitting on the judgment seat,” now think about that for just a moment. Let that just land on you for just a minute, Pilate sitting on the judgment seat making judgments about the judge of the world. Making judgments about the one who he will one day give an account because Matthew 16 says, “For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”

Verse 19, the irony of the text, this, the irony of the trial. Notice what happens next, his wife has a dream, verse 19. And she sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” Listen, the wife whispers wisdom and the crowds shout and he caves. Listen to your wives, listen, listen. Do you see what’s happening, verse 20, I mean does Pilate glance over at the Son of God who created all things, does he do a double take, does he just focus in on the crowd, is he looking around? What is going on?

Look at what happens in verse 20, verse 20 says, specifically that the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd, they’re spreading the rumors, they’re spreading the word to the crowd to not only, notice how the text gets thicker, not only to ask for Barabbas, but to actually destroy Jesus, to destroy Jesus. And then he asks again in verse 21, the Governor, he again said to them, he already said it once and he’s already been told, but you can see the conundrum he finds himself in, the Governor again says, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?”

And they said, “Barabbas.” And Pilate said then, in a profound question, a great question that maybe you and I should have an answer to, he says, “Then what shall I do with Jesus,” and he could have left it there, but he says, “Who is called Christ?” How penetrating is that specific question because Christ was not his last name, it was the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the One Who Has Come. Pilate asks this, the hatred is rising. And what’s interesting about this particular text is that it says he was a notorious prisoner, but you read the other Gospels, the account of Barabbas, they actually gave descriptions of this particular prisoner with words such as murderer and thief, robber. And they want him released. Now how sovereign is God in all of

this? How sovereign is the One in this particular case, at this particular time, at this Passover Celebration, with this particular prisoner, how God is sovereign in putting this in the text, putting this in the Bible, that the very prisoner, the very prisoner whose name is Barabbas has a meaning to his name. It's two words put together, bar abba, which means a son of a father, a son of a man.

In other words this would be a name that would represent all of humanity. All are daughters or sons of a father. And it's this particular man's name that means this, that points our eyes past Barabbas to all of us in this event and reminds us of the totality of the depravity of humanity. Oh, he is the picture of all humanity, and he is the one that points us to this reality, and he and we are the guilty ones and Jesus is the innocent one. Oh, listen, you and I are the ones that should be condemned; not the Son of God. You think about it, of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the only ones that record a physical miracle is the feeding of the 5,000. It's in all of the Gospels and it speaks volumes of his provision for us. But what's fascinating is this man, Barabbas is mentioned in all four of the Gospels as well, and I think there's even a spiritual miracle that takes place, because it shouts volumes of how God pardons us. It's Christ in our place.

Now listen, it's easy, isn't it? It's easy to start critiquing Barabbas immediately. We go there sometimes, "Oh yeah, he's the one that deserves death." And yet he's released and yet we go into this mindset where we look at the text and we see maybe Barabbas, well, we're not like him, so maybe we don't deserve as much. But I think Pilate, the crowd and Barabbas, they're all in us. Think about Pilate for a moment, desiring the praise and approval, desiring popularity of the crowd, desiring power and position. He releases Barabbas and rejects Jesus, he's starving for success, he's longing to be liked, he's compromising convictions, he's in envying what others enjoy, he's pondering more popularity, he's prizing power, he's critiquing the counsel that he's heard and he's caving to culture. And what happens is, we find ourselves questioning this Jesus and his teaching and we quickly put him on trial, do we not? And condemn him as being more loving than we are, when we encounter, even cultural issues.

We think we have, as a people, humanity, a more loving way to do things. Oh, there's questions, do we not? Do we question him? Sometimes out of anger, hatred and other times out of just desire of objection being answered. One question that's a tough one that, we have a safe place here in Providence for you to navigate and engage with, but can a loving God send and allow people to go to hell? It's a real question. But when you lean into the text and you see all Christ has done, you need to add the question as well, how in the world can a Holy God allow any of us to live anymore? That's the question we should be asking ourselves, a question, which is again it's the right questions in the objections to Christianity that needs to be addressed. We have a safe [inaudible 00:26:55] to do that here at Providence. But the one that goes something like this, "Why doesn't God allow multiple ways to himself?" "Why doesn't He allow multiple ways to himself?"

You know what I ask in counter to that particular question, I'm shocked he allows even one way, knowing the wretchedness of my heart, the wretchedness of sin before a Holy God, who's created us and made us in his image and we rebelled and turned against him, how? How in the world is there even one way to know God,

right? And listen, Satan, he loves to condemn you, he loves it. He knows your name and he calls you by your sin, but God knows your sin and calls you by name, for those in Christ. This is why we sing, this is why we shout when we sing, Man of Sorrows, what a name for the Son of God who came ruined sinners to reclaim. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood; sealed my pardon with His blood. That's why we sing hallelujah, what a Savior. This is what Corinthians teaches, II Corinthians 2 says it like this, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, that in him, we might become the righteousness of God." Imagine that for just a moment, imagine this, you and I in all of our state of sin, Christ becomes that for us. The righteousness that the Son of God has he grants, imputes, gives to us as a free gift of grace, this is what he does.

John Stott sums it up like this, a pastor and theologian, he passed away a few years back over in London, England in a church called All Souls, he says, "For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be. God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be." Jesus, the Christ, listen, he embraced the condemnation of humanity, he took it on. But notice third and lastly that Jesus endured the condemnation of God, condemned by God in our place, Isaiah 53:6 says, "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." John 10:18 Jesus says, "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down, I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, I have authority to take it up. This command I received from my Father." Oh he is going to receive what looks like Pilate who was gaining nothing, washes his hands, leans in as the riot is rising and says, "You take the thief, the robber, the murderer, you take him, he goes free."

What did that look like when they went and freed him? What is Barabbas even thinking in that moment? What is he thinking in that moment? Romans teaches, be quick to die for a righteous man, but for sinners? Who does this? I'll tell you who does it, the Son of God does it. Listen, the very one, the Passover Lamb in preparation to be taken to the cross, many writers and theologians believe the three crosses that are historically shown and the depiction of Jesus on it were actually for three who were insurrectionists among the Roman Government and one of them even is believed to and was going to be Barabbas. And yet literally, Jesus takes his place upon that cross. The crescendo of the book in one sentence. There's one who's going to make things right and no one saw this coming. God, in his wisdom, infinite wisdom, demanding sacrifices all throughout the history of the world and yet now, his very son condemned in Barabbas' place, condemned in our place, why? Why would the Son of God do this? Why?

Oh listen, Hebrews 12:2 says it like this, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, the pioneer of our faith, who for the joy set before him, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Do you know why? Do you know why the Son of God endured the condemnation of God upon a cross where he drank every drop of the wrath that's rightly due all of humanity, you know why the Son of God did that in your place and my place? You know why? For the joy set before him. What joy? Set where? Set before him on the other side of the cross, for you. It was his pleasure, it was his joy to take and drink the wrath of God in your place. Praise God for this.

Oh listen, please don't get too familiar with this story. Please don't get too familiar with Easter. Don't be too familiar with it. Oh no, listen, Jesus Christ endured condemnation so we might enjoy a relationship with God today. Jesus endured condemnation so we might escape the wrath of God on judgment day and Jesus endured condemnation so we might enter eternal life with God on our last day. Romans chapter 7, Paul was writing and he says in Romans 7, it's a fascinating text, there's this turmoil going on inside and he says, he expresses, he writes, he goes, "Oh, wretched man that I am. Oh, wretched man that I am. What hope, what help do I have?"

And he says, "Oh, but thanks be to God. Oh, but thanks be to God." For King Jesus. And then he writes Romans 8:1 He writes, "Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Therefore, there is now no, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Listen, are you in Christ Jesus this morning? What have you done with him?

Let me encourage you with a couple of thoughts of application, one I would encourage you to say, "Yes," To Jesus. I would encourage you to say, "Yes," To the Son of God. I would encourage you, if you've said yes to him years ago to ask him what he would want you to say, "Yes," To today, in obedience, in following him. And listen, God's Word says that his commands are not burdensome and so if you see Christianity as a complete burden, because you are constantly in your heart measuring and weighing out your good deeds against your bad deeds, in hope that he would accept you, based on what you've done, that's not Christianity, that's other world religions. Christianity says there's not enough that you can do to earn favor with God, that's why he came, lived a life that we can not live and died the death that we deserved. And so if you've said, "Yes," To him, and you are a follower, you've entrusted your life to him, but then also know that following him now, it may be hard but it's hopeful, and those restrictions and things that he said to do and not to do in the book, they're for your joy. He's laid them out for your joy and he desires for you to walk in a place of obedience to honor and make much of his name.

And if you're not a Christian, let me encourage you to say, "Yes," To him today, to say, "Yes," To him. You know all about him, maybe you know the Easter story better than some of us, but you've never said, "Yes," To him, let me encourage you, let today be that day to say, "Yes," To him, to surrender your heart. Let me encourage you to tell many about him, listen, if there's no condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus, that is glorious good news, and you need to tell somebody because somebody told you. And I would encourage you to just start with one, just start with one and invite them to Easter Service, encourage them to lean in and listen to read the Bible with you, maybe just start with one. And then last, oh, listen, last, marvel, would you marvel at Jesus. Would you be more enamored with him and in awe of him than anything this world has to offer? Would you marvel at the one who has come and was condemned in our place? Would you ask God, would you ask God to stir anew affections for the Savior and listen.

If you're bored with Christianity, if you're a believer and you're just bored with it, I'm just going to encourage you to repent. It's not boring, the Son of God has drank every drop of the wrath of God in your place and he loves you, and he died for you. Oh, if you're bored with Christianity? Oh listen, repent and ask God to stir affections anew for what he's done. If you're marveling at videos on a screen that's four by six more than you marvel at the wonder of what Christ has accomplished, you need to repent. Attention span, a video. And the Son of God has taken your sins away, the Son of God has taken your sins away and placed them upon himself. This is the greatest news in a bad news world and the problem with the church today, we got over it, we got over it.

I'm just asking you, please, don't get over it. Ask God to stir your heart, you're going to stand before him, no screens, you're going to stand before the Holy Son of God and give an account for your life and his face will radiate all the light of the heavens and there'll be no need for the sun to shine because of his face, that's where we're headed. Let's pray.

Father, we love you. God we love you. We thank you for your grace and your kindness and your mercy. God, to again, allow us to be in a place where we were mic-ed up to be able to talk about you. This, we don't take for granted, we don't take it for granted, God. So many of our brothers and sisters around the world, for the joy, for the joy set before him he endured the cross, he's redeemed people from every tribe and tongue from China to Myanmar to Indonesia to India to the Middle East, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and into Morocco and Africa and Europe and North America and South America.

God, for the joy set before you, you endured the cross to purchase and ransom a people for the praise of your name. So God, would you continue to stir us up as a people to love you. To humbly engage with our friends and neighbors and coworkers. To speak life and hope in a winsome, loving way. Oh God, would you do it? God would you protect us, would you protect us from being too familiar with what's coming in two weeks? We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.



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