



# “Good Friday-death of the King”

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Matthew 27:27-56

Rev. Bruce Stanley

Sermon audio and text available at [www.waitara.anglican.asn.au](http://www.waitara.anglican.asn.au)

## What would you say?

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If you were there at the crucifixion, watching Jesus crucified, what do you think you would have said?

I think I would have just asked: Why? Why crucify someone who has done so much good? Who has helped so many people? He said he was God, he showed his power over nature, over demons, over sickness and even over death. But why crucify him? Even if you believed he was a liar, he still was a good person!

Today I want us to begin by looking at the Roman soldiers. What do you think they were thinking?

## The soldiers mock:

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It's hard not to feel anger towards the soldiers when you see what they do to Jesus. After his trial and arrest, the governor's soldiers take Jesus into the Pretorium – that's in the governor's house. The whole company of soldiers, up to around 600 men, mock him. Verse 28:

*“They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, King of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.”*

They dress him as a King. They kneel in front of him and hail him as a King. Everything they do is to **mock him** as a King.

And then they lead him out to be crucified. And they put a sign above his head, which said: *“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”* Again, to mock him.

Even the criminals crucified next to him mock him. The chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mock him – *“He saved others but he can’t save himself!”*

What a joke of a King! He claims to be King, he claims to be God’s saviour for the world, but he can’t do anything. He was a joke. A joke of a King. A King who had no power. A King humiliated. Mocked. Spat on. Beaten. And then the mocking stops.

At midday until 3 pm, darkness came over the whole land (verse 45). Jesus cried out to God, and then breathes his last breath.

## The soldiers see

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And what did the soldiers **see** then? In the midst of that darkness, an earthquake. Rocks split in half. Tombs break open. What the soldiers saw was something that was not normal. Something that they could not explain. Something that was powerful and overwhelming.

And they were terrified. These soldiers, these tough, dangerous, strong soldiers, are terrified. Verse 54:

*“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!’ ”*

The soldiers **see**. They finally **understand**. They put it all together. The man they mocked as the Son of God, **is** the Son of God. The one they mocked as a King, **is** the King.

This was a significant moment. Here they were looking at Jesus, face to face, this bloody, beaten, and crucified man **they** had mocked and flogged and spat on and killed. There they were, a few **feet** away from him. And they say: “We were wrong!” This **was** God’s son. We’ve killed a King! They see. And they understand.

## Today

Even in our world today, it’s easy not to see Jesus clearly or understand him. It’s easy to think of him just as a good man, or a good teacher, and not see that he’s the King and Saviour. It’s easy to dismiss him as a legend

or a made up story. It's easy to come face to face with who he is in the Bible and still not understand.

Even for people who **follow** Jesus. We can be face to face with Jesus... and dismiss him. And even mock him. How do we mock him?

When we stop caring about the cross.

When what he did on the cross stops being important to us.

When the cross loses its significance in our daily life.

Has that happened for you? That's when we stop seeing and understanding – when we lose the power of the cross in our life. So what IS the power of the cross?

In verse 42, the church leaders and teachers call out:

*“Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him.”*

The truth is that if Jesus DID get off that cross, WE could not be saved. This is the power of the cross. That we were saved by Jesus staying on that cross. How?

## **Responding to the Cross of Justice**

You see, God is a God of justice. God is **just** and **fair**. And because he is just and fair, God cannot **ignore** sin. He can't sweep it under the carpet as if it didn't happen. Justice means that there are consequences for sin. Justice requires that a price is paid when people do the wrong thing.

But because of God's love for us, he doesn't WANT to punish us. Because the punishment is death and an eternity in hell. God doesn't want that for us. But he still requires justice. And so he carried out his justice upon Jesus. Who was crucified in our place.

If Jesus came down from that cross, he could not take the justice of God upon himself. Which means we would have to take it upon ourselves. It is precisely **because** he was King and Saviour, that he did not get down off that cross.

Today, Jesus is mocked for being a weak King, having to die on a cross. But let me ask you – what strength would it take for **you** to do this:

To be beaten and mocked and spat on. To allow it to happen and to stay up on that cross, humiliated and in such pain, and to do that for people who rejected you, people who hated you.

Does that sound like weakness? To stay on a cross of humiliation to take the punishment for those who are your enemies? That is a King of great strength and power. A King who will sacrifice his life to save others.

**III** – at the moment, there are a lot of ads on TV encouraging people to think about organ donation. I wonder if you can imagine being the recipient of a donor organ. Having a heart transplant. Or a hand transplant, or an eye transplant. **Do you think there would be a single day of your life when you didn't think about that heart, or hand, or eye?** Do you think a day would pass when you didn't perhaps think about the person who died and gave you that heart, or hand, or eye? I imagine that would be on your mind every day. What a gift.

The power of the cross of Jesus is that it is the greatest transplant in history. Jesus **gave us** his innocence, and took our guilt. Jesus **gave us** freedom and took our punishment. Jesus **gave us** eternal life and took our death.

### **What about us?**

Our King died for us. He hung there in our place. He took our guilt on himself. And because of that, WE are innocent. How does that make you feel today? How do you respond to that? Because of the blood Jesus shed, because of the guilt he took upon himself, YOU are innocent of everything you've done against God.

You see, that's the power of the cross. No guilt. No punishment. No hell. Instead, we have innocence, freedom and eternal life.

**How can we forget that?** How can one day go past when we forget that? Today God is saying: Do not forget. Do not forget what happened on that cross for you. **Live each moment** remembering that day when Jesus ***gave*** you innocence, freedom and eternal life.

Let's pray.